

PLATO'S
Account of
Falsehood

A Study of the Sophist

PAOLO CRIVELLI

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PLATO'S ACCOUNT OF FALSEHOOD

In the *Sophist*, Plato addresses the 'falsehood paradox', an argument which purports to prove that one can neither say nor believe falsehoods (because to say or believe a falsehood is to say or believe something that is not, and is therefore not there to be said or believed). In this book Paolo Crivelli closely examines the whole dialogue and shows how Plato's brilliant solution to the paradox is radically different from those put forward by many modern philosophers. He surveys and critically discusses the vast range of literature which has developed around the *Sophist* over the past fifty years, and provides original solutions to several problems. His book will be important for all who are interested in the *Sophist* and in ancient ontology and philosophy of language more generally.

PAOLO CRIVELLI is Professor of Ancient Philosophy at the University of Geneva. He is the author of *Aristotle on Truth* (Cambridge, 2004).

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For Annamaria

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Abbreviations of titles of Plato's works

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Alc.</i> 1, 2 | <i>Alcibiades</i> 1, 2 |
| <i>Ap.</i> | <i>Apologia</i> |
| <i>Chrm.</i> | <i>Charmides</i> |
| <i>Cra.</i> | <i>Cratylus</i> |
| <i>Cri.</i> | <i>Crito</i> |
| <i>Criti.</i> | <i>Critias</i> |
| <i>Ep.</i> | <i>Epistula</i> |
| <i>Euthd.</i> | <i>Euthydemus</i> |
| <i>Euthphr.</i> | <i>Euthyphro</i> |
| <i>Grg.</i> | <i>Gorgias</i> |
| <i>Hp.Ma., Mi.</i> | <i>Hippias Major, Minor</i> |
| <i>Lg.</i> | <i>Leges</i> |
| <i>Ly.</i> | <i>Lysis</i> |
| <i>Men.</i> | <i>Meno</i> |
| <i>Phd.</i> | <i>Phaedo</i> |
| <i>Phdr.</i> | <i>Phaedrus</i> |
| <i>Phlb.</i> | <i>Philebus</i> |
| <i>Plt.</i> | <i>Politicus</i> |
| <i>Prm.</i> | <i>Parmenides</i> |
| <i>Prt.</i> | <i>Protagoras</i> |
| <i>R.</i> | <i>Respublica</i> |
| <i>Smp.</i> | <i>Symposium</i> |
| <i>Sph.</i> | <i>Sophista</i> |
| <i>Tht.</i> | <i>Theaetetus</i> |
| <i>Ti.</i> | <i>Timaeus</i> |
| <i>Virt.</i> | <i>De virtute</i> |

Note on the text

References to pages, sections, and lines of Plato's works are based on Burnet's edition except for vol. 1, where I use the edition by E. A. Duke, W. F. Hicken, W. S. M. Nicoll, D. B. Robinson, and J. C. G. Strachan.

'LSJ' abbreviates the well-known Greek–English lexicon. For Greek authors I use LSJ's abbreviations. For Latin authors, I employ abbreviations that are easy to decode.

'Cf.' at the beginning of a footnote indicates that the passages subsequently referred to express views close to those formulated in the corresponding portion of the main text. If I disagree with an author, I say so explicitly (I never use 'cf.' in case of disagreement).

Introduction

In the *Sophist* Plato presents his mature views on sentences, falsehood, and not-being. These views have given an important contribution to the birth and growth of the subjects now identified as ontology and philosophy of language. I have two main objectives: to offer a precise reconstruction of the arguments and the theses concerning sentences, falsehood, and not-being presented in the *Sophist* and to gain a philosophical understanding of them. In this introduction I offer an overview of the main problems addressed in the *Sophist* and their solutions and then discuss the methodology whereby I pursue my primary goals.

O.1 THE MAIN PROBLEMS ADDRESSED BY THE *SOPHIST* AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

Purpose and structure. The *Sophist*, whose professed purpose is to define the sophist, has a nested structure, with a frame surrounding a core. The frame (216A1–236D4 and 264B11–268D5) endeavors to define the sophist by the method of division. The core (236D5–264B10) presents and solves some puzzles related to falsehood.

The connection between frame and core is straightforward. A definition of the sophist is attempted whereby he is described as someone who speaks falsely and thereby instils false beliefs. This description clashes with the falsehood paradox, summoned by way of objection. The falsehood paradox is a family of arguments whose conclusion is that it is impossible to speak falsely and to believe falsehoods. I say a ‘family of arguments’ because there are many subtly different arguments with this counter-intuitive conclusion. Accordingly, I sometimes speak of a ‘version of’ the falsehood paradox.

The *Sophist*’s core (236D5–264B10) divides into an aporetic part (236D5–251A4) and a constructive one (251A5–264B10). The aporetic part rehearses several puzzles. It divides into two components: the first (236D5–242B5) contains puzzles about not-being, images, and false sentences and beliefs;

the second (242B6–251A4) contends that being is no less problematic than not-being. The constructive part also has two components: the first (251A5–259D8) contains an analysis of negative predication based on the concept of difference, and on its foundation develops an account of not-being that is free from paradox; the second (259D9–264B10) deploys this account of not-being to explain false sentences and beliefs.

The main question addressed by the *Sophist* is that of how it is possible to speak falsely and believe falsehoods. The falsehood paradox provides reasons for claiming that both are impossible.

The main version of the falsehood paradox considered in the *Sophist* is the following argument:

- [1] To speak falsely is to say what is not.
- [2] It is impossible to say what is not.
- [3] Therefore it is impossible to speak falsely.

A subordinate argument supports premiss [2]:

- [2.1] Saying what is not implies not saying what is.
- [2.2] Not saying what is implies not saying anything.
- [2.3] Not saying anything implies not accomplishing an act of saying.
- [2] Therefore it is impossible to say what is not.

Parallel steps lead to the result that it is impossible to have false beliefs.

Most philosophers, including Plato, reject the claim that it is impossible to speak falsely or believe falsehoods: they stand by the commonsensical view that speaking falsely and believing falsehoods are not only possible, but real. Of course, philosophers base their rejection of the counter-intuitive claim that it is impossible to speak falsely or believe falsehoods on a refutation of the reasons supporting it. The refutation usually targets premiss [2], the claim that it is impossible to say what is not (I focus on the case of saying – that of believing may be treated analogously).

A modern strategy. Some modern philosophers reject [2]: they claim that it is possible to say what is not. Their rejection of [2] is accompanied by a criticism of the subordinate argument supporting [2], in particular by a denial of this subordinate argument's first step [2.1]: saying what is not, in the sense relevant to falsehood, does not imply not saying what is in a sense that in turn implies not saying anything.

The strategy adopted by these modern philosophers relies on distinguishing an existential use of 'to be' (whereby 'to be' is roughly equivalent to 'to exist') from a veridical use (whereby 'to be' is roughly equivalent to

'to be true'). According to this modern strategy, some things both are (in that they exist) and are not (in that they are not true). Specifically, it is assumed that there is a special ontological category of existent things which are the unitary targets of acts or states of saying or believing (or knowing, supposing, etc.): propositions. All propositions are (in that they exist), but some propositions are (in that they are true) while others are not (in that they are not true).

Plato's strategy. In agreement with the modern philosophers just mentioned, Plato also maintains that it is possible to say what is not, contrary to [2]. He also agrees with these modern philosophers on the reason why it is possible to say what is not: saying what is not, in the sense relevant to falsehood, does not imply not saying what is in a sense that in turn implies not saying anything, contrary to [2.1]. Plato's strategy for implementing this position is, however, radically different from the modern one sketched in the last subsection.

Plato does not rely on a distinction between an existential and a veridical use of 'to be', nor does he appeal to propositions. Rather, Plato's solution assumes that a person who speaks falsely *says what is not* in that he or she *says* about something *what is not* about it to be. In general, there are no proposition-like unitary targets of acts of saying. If one carries out an act of saying, there is no single x such that one says x . It is not the case that if one utters the (true) sentence 'Theaetetus is sitting', then there is a single thing, that-Theaetetus-is-sitting or sitting-Theaetetus, which is the target of one's act of saying. Similarly, it is not the case that if one utters the (false) sentence 'Theaetetus is flying', then there is a single thing, that-Theaetetus-is-flying or flying-Theaetetus, which is the target of one's act of saying. When one carries out an act of saying by means of an affirmative sentence, there are an x and a y such that one says x to be about y . If one utters the (true) sentence 'Theaetetus is sitting', then one says the kind sitting to be about Theaetetus; similarly, if one utters the (false) sentence 'Theaetetus is flying', then one says the kind flying to be about Theaetetus. In both cases, the act of saying targets two distinct things.

Why does Plato not adopt something like the modern strategy involving propositions? Since he does not say, one can only guess. Perhaps he shuns entities that exist independently of thinkers or speakers but are false because there could be no falsehood if there were no minds to make mistakes.

Avoiding propositions as unitary targets of acts or states of saying or believing has its costs. For instance, whoever accepts propositions has a straightforward explanation of what it is to say that if it is day it is light:

it amounts to exercising the act of saying on the proposition that-if-it-is-day-it-is-light. It remains unclear how Plato's approach can deal with such cases (because it is hard to see how someone saying that if it is day it is light could be described as saying something to be about something).

Not being so-and-so and inexistence. To be successful, Plato's solution must avoid a difficulty analogous to the one that motivates the claim that it is impossible to say (or believe) falsehoods. Specifically: since Plato's solution relies on the assumption that a person who speaks falsely *says what is not* in that he or she *says* about something *what is not* about it to be, the solution's viability requires that if x is not about y , it does not follow that x does not exist. Otherwise, whoever speaks falsely would be deprived of one of the targets of his or her speech act: speaking falsely would again be impossible.

So, Plato must show that if x is not about y , it does not follow that x does not exist. To achieve this, he offers an analysis of negation, i.e. an explanation of what it is for x not to be so-and-so. The purpose of the analysis is to establish that if x is not so-and-so, it does not follow that x does not exist. By substituting 'about y ' for 'so-and-so', Plato obtains as a corollary the desired result: if x is not about y , it does not follow that x does not exist.

Plato's analysis of negation appeals to the concept of difference: for x not to be so-and-so is for x to be different from everything that is so-and-so. For instance, for Socrates not to be a poet is for him to be different from everything that is a poet. Clearly, if x is different from everything that is so-and-so, it does not follow that x does not exist. For instance, if Socrates is different from everything that is a poet, it does not follow that he does not exist.

Apply this analysis of negation to the special case that is relevant to falsehood, i.e. the not being about something that plays a role in falsehood. Since for x not to be so-and-so is for x to be different from everything that is so-and-so, the result is that for x not to be about y is for x to be different from everything that is about y (simply substitute 'about y ' for 'so-and-so'). Consider Plato's example of a false sentence: 'Theaetetus is flying'. The sentence 'Theaetetus is flying' is false because it says flying to be about Theaetetus while flying is not about Theaetetus in that it is different from everything that is about Theaetetus. But the fact that flying is different from everything that is about Theaetetus does not render flying non-existent. Such an account eradicates any temptation to claim that 'Theaetetus is flying' cannot be false because if it were, then what it says to be about Theaetetus would not exist since it would not be about him.

An objection based on negative false sentences. As I repeatedly pointed out, Plato's solution to his main question is that someone who speaks falsely *says what is not* in that he or she *says* about something *what is not* about it to be. This solution is open to an objection based on negative false sentences.

It might be objected that Plato's solution works for false speech embodied in *affirmative* sentences, but does not cover false speech that involves *negative* sentences. It is all very well to declare that someone uttering the affirmative sentence 'Theaetetus is flying' speaks falsely because he or she says that flying is about Theaetetus while in fact it is not about him (in that it is different from everything that is about him). But it would be wrong to claim that someone uttering the negative sentence 'Theaetetus is not sitting' speaks falsely because he or she says that sitting is about Theaetetus while in fact it is not about him: for someone uttering that negative sentence says that sitting is not about Theaetetus, and what brings it about that the person speaks falsely is the fact that sitting is about Theaetetus. Plato's account of how someone speaking falsely says what is not applies to only some of the cases of false speech, namely those where affirmative sentences are used. But, since in all cases speaking falsely may be reasonably described as saying what is not, an account covering all cases of false speech would be desirable.

Two replies to this objection are available to Plato. The first is simply to claim that the description of false speech as saying what is not covers only the cases where affirmative sentences are used. Whoever speaks falsely by uttering an affirmative sentence does indeed say what is not in that he or she says about something what is not about it to be. But whoever speaks falsely by uttering a negative sentence does not say what is not; rather, he or she says what is in that he or she says about something what is about it not to be. Once the false speech that says what is not has been restricted to that embodied in affirmative sentences, Plato's original solution to his main question works: whoever speaks falsely in such a way as to say what is not says about something what is not about it to be.

Plato's second reply relies on the assumption that negative sentences are also used to say that something is about something. What someone uttering a negative sentence says to be about something, i.e. what he or she attributes to that thing, is a negative kind. For instance, whoever utters the negative sentence 'Theaetetus is not sitting' says that the negative kind not-sitting is about Theaetetus. Whoever speaks falsely by uttering a negative sentence therefore also says about something what is not about it to be: for instance, someone uttering the negative sentence 'Theaetetus is not

sitting' speaks falsely in that he or she says the negative kind not-sitting to be about Theaetetus while in fact the negative kind not-sitting is not about Theaetetus (because it is different from everything that is about him).

Plato's two replies correspond to different but compatible ways of looking at negative sentences. The second reply is offered as a back-up to the first, for the sake of those diehards who stand by the idea that whoever utters a false sentence says what is not.

Negative kinds. Plato's second reply introduces negative kinds. But one might resist acknowledging such things. In fact, many modern philosophers reject negative kinds. They argue that if there were negative kinds, some of them would hold of completely heterogeneous things which 'have nothing in common'. For instance, not-sitting would have to hold not only of all animals that are not sitting, but also of all plants, rocks, artefacts, mental states, geometrical shapes, numbers, and forms: what traits do so diverse things share?

So, if Plato wants to appeal to negative kinds, he had better justify and explain them. And he does. He has an elegant account of negative kinds as 'parts of difference'. The account is based on an analogy between knowledge and difference. Just as, for every kind, there is a single part of knowledge corresponding to it, namely knowledge of everything that falls under it, so also, for every kind, there is a single part of difference corresponding to it, namely difference from everything that falls under it. For instance, there is a single part of knowledge corresponding to the kind letter: it is knowledge of everything that falls under the kind letter (i.e. knowledge of all letters). Its name is 'literacy'. Similarly, there is a single part of difference corresponding to the kind beauty: it is difference from everything that falls under the kind beauty (i.e. difference from all beautiful things). Its name is 'not-beauty'. Such a part of difference is a negative kind. It can be easily proved that the things falling under the part of difference in question, i.e. under difference from everything that falls under beauty, are all and only those that do not fall under beauty. Those who deny that the parts of difference thus defined are unified kinds must also take on themselves an unpalatable commitment to denying that the parts of knowledge defined by a parallel procedure are unified kinds (for instance, they will have to deny that literacy is a unified kind). Plato's account of negative kinds also accomplishes the remarkable feat of specifying a common trait shared by all and only the things falling under a negative kind.

Plato is therefore in a position to offer his second reply to the objection and uphold the same account of falsehood for both negative and

affirmative sentences: whoever speaks falsely, whatever sentence he or she uses, affirmative or negative, says about something what is not about it to be. However, even after the introduction of negative kinds, Plato's account of false speech is limited to predicative sentences: it remains unclear how the account could be applied to sentences like 'It is raining' or 'If the match takes place then Tim will play Volker'.

Difference and contrariety. Plato indicates why someone could be inclined to maintain that what is not so-and-so does not exist. As I said, whoever maintains this is committed to rejecting Plato's solution of the main question he addresses in the *Sophist*: how it is possible to say or believe falsehoods.

Plato observes that people tend to associate negation with contrariety: they often think that what is not-so-and-so is in the condition that is contrary to that of so-and-so things (where the condition contrary to a given one is the one 'polarly opposed' to it, i.e. as much as possible removed from and incompatible with it). For instance, many would feel offended at hearing that they are not-beautiful because they would regard being not-beautiful as equivalent to being in the condition that is contrary to that of beautiful things, i.e. to being ugly. And if someone is told 'You are not permitted to do so', he or she will normally regard it as a prohibition to do so. If this approach is applied to not-being so-and-so, it turns out that what is-not so-and-so is in the condition that is contrary to that of things which are so-and-so. (I introduce hyphens to distinguish the case where 'not' modifies 'is' from that where it modifies the complement of 'is' in formulations of the form 'is not so-and-so': Greek accomplishes such a distinction by word order.) Now, to exist is part of being so-and-so: to be so-and-so is to exist in a so-and-so way. Hence, if something is in the condition that is contrary to that of things which are so-and-so, then it is in the condition contrary to that of things that exist in a so-and-so way, i.e. in the condition 'polarly opposed' to that of things that exist in a so-and-so way, so that it does not exist. For such a reason someone could be inclined to believe that what is-not so-and-so does not exist.

Plato's solution to this difficulty is to point out that it is wrong to associate negation with contrariety: the partner of negation is not contrariety, but difference. In other words, it is not the case that for x to be not-so-and-so is for it to be contrary to so-and-so things; rather, for x to be not-so-and-so is for it to be different from all so-and-so things.

The difficulty considered by Plato depends on the view, which Plato shares, that to exist is part of being so-and-so, i.e. that to be so-and-so

is to exist in a so-and-so way. One might describe this as the view that the copula has existential import. It might be objected that the view is mistaken: one does not want to say that ‘Pegasus is winged’ and ‘Homer is a poet’ are false because to be winged is to exist in a winged way and to be a poet is to exist in the way poets do. Plato would dismiss such putative counter-examples by stressing that every sentence must be about something existent: he explicitly claims that a form of words that looks like a sentence that fails to refer to something existent is not really a sentence (or at least is not a sentence that may be evaluated as true or false). No counter-examples may be generated with sentences that do not refer to something existent: for there are no such sentences (or at least no such truth-evaluable sentences). This of course leaves Plato with the problem of explaining how forms of words such as those just mentioned are to be treated: after all, they look like sentences (and truth-evaluable ones). It is not clear how Plato would answer this challenge, but it is worth pointing out that his position bears some resemblance to that of Frege and other modern philosophers of language, who have devised ways of facing the challenge I outlined.

Problems about being. The *Sophist’s* main version of the falsehood paradox is an argument that relies on a controversial premiss: that it is impossible to say what is not. Thus, the main puzzle addressed by the *Sophist* depends on a difficulty about not-being.

Plato, however, thinks that being is as troublesome as not-being. He makes this clear by engaging in an imaginary debate with earlier thinkers: pluralists and monists, ‘giants’ (who maintain that only perceptible bodies are) and ‘gods’ (who insist that only intelligible forms are) – all are put to the test. They are asked what they mean by the word ‘being’. Their interrogation leads to the result that although both change and stability are, being itself is different from both change and stability. From this it is inferred that being ‘by its own nature’ neither is stable nor changes. And from this it is further inferred that being neither is stable nor changes. The argument starts with a truth, namely that being is different from both change and stability, and ends with a falsehood, namely that being neither is stable nor changes. The argument is therefore invalid. There are textual indications that Plato is well aware of its invalidity.

A distinction between linguistic uses. Given that Plato is conscious of the invalidity of the argument about change, stability, and being, one expects him to take steps towards exposing it. He does so by distinguishing

linguistic uses. His distinction concerns ways in which predicative sentences may be understood.

On the one hand, if 'φ' signifies a kind, then 'σ is (a) φ' has an 'ordinary' reading, whereby it is true just if the entity signified by 'σ' instantiates the kind signified by 'φ' (throughout this subsection, 'σ' and 'φ' are schematic letters to be replaced, respectively, with a name and a general term). The account carries over to negations: if 'φ' signifies a kind, then 'σ is not (a) φ' is true on its 'ordinary' reading just if the entity signified by 'σ' does not instantiate the kind signified by 'φ'.

On the other hand, if both 'σ' and 'φ' signify kinds, then 'σ is (a) φ' has (not only an 'ordinary' reading, but also) a 'definitional' reading, whereby it is true just if the kind signified by 'σ' is identical to the kind signified by 'φ'. Again, the account carries over to negations: if both 'σ' and 'φ' signify kinds, then 'σ is not (a) φ' is true on its 'definitional' reading just if the kind signified by 'σ' is different from the kind signified by 'φ'.

For instance, 'Change is stable' is true on its 'ordinary' reading because the kind change (signified by 'change') instantiates the kind stability (signified by 'stable') (since all kinds are stable). 'Change is stable' is, however, false on its 'definitional' reading because the kind change is different from the kind stability. The same fact makes 'Change is not stable' true on its 'definitional' reading. For similar reasons, 'Change is identical' and 'Change is not identical' are both true: the first on its 'ordinary' reading, the second on its 'definitional' reading. So also with 'Change is different' and 'Change is not different', and with 'Change is a being' and 'Change is not a being'. Moreover, if 'φ' signifies any kind different from the kind being, then 'Being is not (a) φ' is true on its 'definitional' reading. This enables Plato not only to state that, in a way, being is not (and he says this explicitly, in a polemical though respectful reaction to Parmenides, who regarded such a claim as anathema), but also to explain why the argument presented in the last subsection has a semblance of validity (a task which he 'leaves to the reader'). Since being is different from both stability and change, 'Being neither is stable nor changes' is true on its 'definitional' reading. 'Being neither is stable nor changes' is, however, false on its 'ordinary' reading because being instantiates either stability or change (in fact, it instantiates the first). The argument has a semblance of validity because it trades on a slip from the 'definitional' to the 'ordinary' reading of a sentence.

When an affirmative predicative sentence is understood according to its 'definitional' reading, it is taken to offer a complete description of the nature or essence of the entity signified by its subject-expression (which must be a kind because only kinds have natures or essences). The 'definitional'

reading of sentences is close to that whereby they are understood as making statements of identity. But the two readings do not coincide. The sentence ‘Goodness is the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*’ is true on the reading whereby it is understood as making a statement of identity, but false on its ‘definitional’ reading. This is because although the definite description ‘the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*’ picks out the kind goodness (which makes the sentence true when it is understood as making a statement of identity), ‘the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*’ signifies (not the kind goodness, but) the characteristic (possibly a kind) of being a kind which in the *Republic* is more highly praised than any other (which makes the sentence false on its ‘definitional’ reading).

A distinction between ways of being. The distinction between ‘ordinary’ and ‘definitional’ readings of sentences explains not only the semblance of validity of certain arguments, but also the validity of others put forward by Plato in the examination of certain particularly important kinds within the core section of the dialogue (it enables one to see that arguments which at first blush could be easily deemed invalid are instead valid). However, its most important contribution lies in its generating a distinction between ways of being. Specifically, it yields a distinction between the ways in which perceptible particulars and kinds are.

Consider any perceptible particular and any true sentence ‘ σ is (a) φ ’ where ‘ σ ’ signifies that perceptible particular and ‘ φ ’ signifies a kind (here and in the rest of this subsection, ‘ σ ’ and ‘ φ ’ are schematic letters to be replaced, respectively, with a name and a general term). Since no kind is a perceptible particular, the kind signified by ‘ φ ’ is different from the given perceptible particular. Thus, any true affirmative predicative sentence involving ‘to be’ where the predicate-expression signifies a kind and the subject-expression signifies the given perceptible particular introduces something different from that perceptible particular. This warrants the claim that the being of perceptible particulars is always ‘in relation to other things’. Consider now any kind and any sentence ‘ σ is (a) φ ’ where both ‘ σ ’ and ‘ φ ’ signify that kind. This sentence is true on its ‘definitional’ reading. Thus, some true affirmative predicative sentence involving ‘to be’ where the predicate-expression signifies a kind and the subject-expression signifies the given kind does not introduce anything different from the given kind. This warrants the claim that the being of kinds is ‘in its own right’. Roughly: in the case of perceptible particulars, the correct application of the predicative use of ‘to be’ always involves something different from them; in the case of kinds, the predicative use of ‘to be’ may be correctly applied

without bringing in anything different. From a different angle: perceptible particulars rank as beings only thanks to their bearing a relation to something different; kinds rank as beings thanks to their bearing a relation to themselves. As I pointed out earlier, existence is an aspect or a component of the predicative use of 'to be': for this reason different ways of being (of existing) reveal themselves in different types of predicative sentences involving 'to be'.

0.2 METHODOLOGY

Almost a commentary. The close interconnection of themes and concepts invited by the dialogue-form makes it difficult to address a Platonic dialogue by examining some of its themes and concepts in isolation from the others: if an operation of this sort is attempted, the impression arises that some factor essential for the understanding of the issues under consideration is ignored. Mainly for this reason I decided to have my examination of the *Sophist* unfolding in parallel with the development of the dialogue. So, the present study covers most of the dialogue and follows its progression, almost as a running commentary.

Nevertheless, my examination of the *Sophist* is selective: not all the themes and concepts emerging from the dialogue are discussed with the same care or depth. The approach I have privileged is that of philosophy of language (in the comprehensive sense in which it addresses also ontological matters). In particular, I ask Plato some of the questions that a modern philosopher of language would regard as important and I consider what answers Plato is committed to offering. Establishing what answers Plato is committed to offering requires an accurate historical reconstruction of what he actually does say: modern questions, Plato's answers. The present study therefore combines exegetical and philological considerations with a philosophically minded attitude.

On some specific points I dare to go beyond Plato's position. While remaining anchored to what I take Plato's outlook to be, I develop his conception so as to cover ground he does not envisage. Such a development is one of the ways in which 'history of philosophy' differs from 'history of ideas'. Of course, I take care to indicate when it is that I am thus expanding on Plato.

Another trait of this study's approach to the *Sophist* is the attention dedicated to argument. Great care is dedicated to analysing how certain key arguments develop. I aim for interpretations whereby the arguments Plato may be plausibly taken to endorse are good, where a good argument

is at least valid, if not sound (Plato of course can, and does, portray some of his characters as putting forward poor arguments). The quality of the arguments they attribute to Plato is occasionally employed as one of the criteria for the assessment of competing interpretations.

A biased outlook? Some commentators will perhaps be disturbed by my candid admission that I am approaching Plato from the vantage point of modern philosophy of language. They will probably regard this as a reason for regarding the present study as an example of how analytic philosophers distort Plato by bending his text to fit their interests.

My reply to this criticism is that it is impossible to approach any text without some interest, which involves a viewpoint and specific questions. The idea that one can look at the 'original text' in a completely 'neutral' way is a delusion. The best one can do is to try to be clear as to what one's perspective is, and be aware that many alternative approaches are possible. Even those who attempt to offer a 'photograph' that is as faithful as possible will inevitably privilege certain themes and ideas.

A formal appendix. The last portion of this study is an appendix where the results of my inquiry are presented in a formal setting of symbolic logic. The reason for this is twofold. On the one hand, such a presentation is the most precise and unambiguous expression of where Plato stands (or at least of where he stands according to the text-based examination carried out in the earlier chapters). On the other hand, the formal presentation enables one to discover commitments of the theory which one would have otherwise overlooked (and, conversely, to avoid ascribing commitments which are not there).

The formal presentation is offered in an appendix not only in order that those unfamiliar with symbolic logic may ignore it, but also because it can be regarded as a compact summary of the exegetical inquiry's results – and the natural position of a résumé is at the end.

CHAPTER I

The sophist defined

The stated purpose of the *Sophist* is to define the sophist. The definition is pursued by applying the method of division, to a discussion of which section 1.2 is devoted. Plato offers a salvo of six descriptions of the sophist based on the method of division: each one focuses on certain traits shared by at least some sophists. Section 1.3 is about the connection between the sophist and the concept of appearing. The six descriptions of the sophist show that he appears to have many skills. Precisely the point that the sophist *appears* to have many skills provides the starting point for a new characterization, which turns upon the concept of appearing: the *essence* of the sophist is exactly his *appearing* to have skills which he in fact lacks. But the concept of appearing and the connected concept of falsehood generate puzzles: until these remain unresolved, the sophist can evade ‘capture by definition’.

I.1 CHARACTERS AND TASK OF THE DIALOGUE

The task of defining the sophist. Here are the last words of the *Theaetetus* (210D1–4, Socrates is speaking): ‘Now I must go to the King’s Porch to meet the indictment that Meletus has brought against me; but let us meet here again in the morning, Theodorus’. And here is the beginning of the *Sophist* (216A1–2, Theodorus is speaking): ‘We have come at the proper time by yesterday’s agreement, Socrates’.¹ Thus, the conversation recorded in the *Sophist* is a continuation of that of the *Theaetetus*. It may be inferred that the *Sophist*’s dramatic date is 399 BC, the year of Socrates’ death. It may also be inferred that the discussants of the *Sophist* include those of the *Theaetetus*: Socrates, Theodorus, Theaetetus, Young Socrates, and other unnamed adolescents.² But there is also someone else.

¹ Cf. *Plt.* 258A3–4.

² Cf. *Thr.* 144B8–144C3; 146B2–3; 147D1–2; 168D8; Apelt (1897), 41.

Theodorus has taken along a visitor from Elea. The Visitor is described by Theodorus as ‘a companion from among those of the circle of Parmenides and Zeno’ (216A3) and as ‘very much a philosopher’ (216A4). This remark prompts Socrates to observe that it is difficult to recognize philosophers: as gods sometimes disguise themselves as humans and roam the earth unrecognized (216C4–6),³ so philosophers, who are god-like humans (216B8–216C1), cannot be easily identified.⁴ Sometimes philosophers look like statesmen, sometimes like sophists, and sometimes they seem completely mad (216C8–216D2). The concept of disguise, which will play a major role in the remainder of the dialogue, occurs for the first time. Curiously, it is the philosopher who puts up a disguise – later the sophist will be the one who does so.⁵

Since philosophers can be easily confused with sophists and statesmen, Socrates asks the Visitor about the views held in Elea concerning philosophers, sophists, and statesmen (216D3–217A4, cf. *Plt.* 257A3–5). Specifically, Socrates wants to know whether people in Elea think there are three distinct kinds corresponding to the three names, ‘sophist’, ‘statesman’, and ‘philosopher’ (217A5–11). The Visitor reports the Eleatic view to be that three distinct kinds correspond to the three names (217B1–2).⁶ He immediately warns that defining these three kinds is a difficult job (217B2–4). He accepts to attempt to define them. He will do so by posing questions to an interlocutor (rather than by holding a long speech on his own). Theaetetus is the chosen respondent for the first part of the enterprise: to explain what the sophist is by means of a definition (218B7–218C1).

Sophist, statesman, and philosopher. The view that three distinct kinds correspond to the three names, ‘sophist’, ‘statesman’, and ‘philosopher’, is never argued for in the dialogue. It is controversial: in Plato’s time there was a debate about whether these three names refer to practitioners of the same discipline or different ones.⁷ It is probably because of this debate that Socrates carefully couches his question as about the Eleatic view on the issue.

³ Cf. *Od.* 17. 484–7: line 486, partially quoted here, appears in its entirety at *R.* 2. 381D3–4.

⁴ Cf. 254A8–254B1.

⁵ Cf. Wolff (1991), 20. In the *Sophist* the speakers often disguise themselves as absent characters by asking or answering questions on their behalf: cf. 239C9–240C6 (the Visitor poses questions on the sophist’s behalf); 243D6–244B5 (Theaetetus answers on behalf of the pluralists); 244B6–244D13 (Theaetetus answers on behalf of the monists); 246E2–248A3 (Theaetetus answers on behalf of the giants); 248A4–248E6 (first Theaetetus and then the Visitor answer on behalf of the friends of the forms).

⁶ Cf. 254E2–255A3; *Prt.* 349A8–349C5; *Phlb.* 60B1–3. ⁷ Cf. Wolff (1991), 19–20, 23–5.

The discussions leading to definitions of the sophist and the statesman are reported in the homonymous dialogues, the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*. Plato never wrote a third dialogue, the *Philosopher*, aimed at defining the philosopher.⁸ The definition of the sophist is undertaken with a view to defining the philosopher: defining the sophist will enable one to distinguish a merely apparent philosopher from a genuine one.

1.2 THE METHOD OF DIVISION

An outline of Plato's method of division. The method of division⁹ enables one to find a definition by 'dividing' kinds into kinds.¹⁰ Plato never offers a 'textbook description' of the method of division (the passage coming closest is *Phlb.* 16B5–18D2).¹¹ Here is a rough characterization based on Plato's scattered remarks and his practice.

To divide a kind is to identify either two or a larger finite number of kinds that are (1) immediately subordinate to the kind that is being divided, (2) pairwise disjoint, and (3) exhaustive of the kind that is being divided. For instance (cf. *Sph.* 219A8–219C9), the kind art is divided into two kinds: productive art and acquisitive art. These two kinds are (1) immediately subordinate to the kind art (for they are both subordinate to it and neither is subordinate to some kind that is subordinate to it), (2) disjoint (since nothing falls under both), and (3) exhaustive of the kind art (since whatever falls under the kind art falls under either of them).

If one is trying to define a kind *F*, one begins by identifying a kind *G* to which *F* is subordinate. If *G* can be divided into kinds with one of which *F* is coextensive, one executes this division and the process comes to an end. If instead *G* cannot be so divided, then it can be divided into kinds to one of which *F* is subordinate. One then proceeds with this kind in the same way as with *G*. The operation is repeated until a situation is reached

⁸ Some commentators (e.g. Lauer (1966), 146; Frede (1996b), 149–51; Notomi (1999), 24–5; M. L. Gill (2010), 174) believe the *Philosopher* was not even planned. According to Davidson (1993), 114, although 'for a number of reasons [...] the *Philebus* could not be called the *Philosopher*', there are grounds for thinking 'of it as taking the place of that unwritten dialogue'.

⁹ Plato uses the noun 'μέθοδος' in connection with division: *Sph.* 218D5; 219A1; 235C7; *Plt.* 286D9. At *Sph.* 235C9 'τρόπος τῆς διαίρησεως' could mean 'method of division' (cf. LSJ s.v. 'τρόπος' vi). Aristotle speaks of division as 'ἡ διὰ τῶν διαίρέσεων ὁδός' (*APo.* 2.5, 91^b12, cf. *Pl.* *Plt.* 265A2, 266E1) and as a 'μέθοδος' (*APr.* 1.31, 46^b26; *de An.* 1.1, 402^a18–20).

¹⁰ Cf. Moravcsik (1973a), 327–8.

¹¹ *Sph.* 253D1–253E3 was traditionally taken to describe the method of division: cf. Cornford (1935), 266–8; Lauer (1966), 155; Berman (1996), 28–9; Fattal (1991), 155–6. Some commentators have recently denied that the passage's second part (253D5–253E3) concerns the method of division: cf. Trevaskis (1967), 120–3; Gómez-Lobo (1977), 36–47; Bordt (1991), 523–4.

where a kind is divided into kinds with one of which *F* is coextensive. The definition of *F* is obtained by successively mentioning the kinds to which *F* was found to be subordinate and that with which it is coextensive.

The central concept of this rough characterization of the method of division is that of subordination. I shall not attempt to define subordination. But note that it cannot be reduced to proper extensional inclusion: it is not the case that for all kinds *F* and *G*, *F* is subordinate to *G* just if *G* holds of everything of which *F* holds and other things besides. Subordination is stronger than proper extensional inclusion: although for all kinds *F* and *G*, *F* is subordinate to *G* only if *G* holds of everything of which *F* holds and other things besides, the converse fails (capable-of-laughing holds of everything of which male-human-being holds and other things besides, but male-human-being is not subordinate to capable-of-laughing).¹² For a kind *F* to be subordinate to a kind *G*, a further necessary condition seems to be that *G* can be truly and appropriately mentioned in answering the question ‘What is it?’ asked about *F*.¹³ A metaphysical presupposition of the last paragraph’s account of the use of the method of division in definitions deserves mentioning: if a kind *F* is subordinate to a kind *G*, then either *F* is coextensive with a kind into which *G* can be divided or *F* is subordinate to some such kind.

The method of division as dialectic. The method of division gains progressively more importance in Plato’s late philosophy. Something like it appears in the *Gorgias* (454DI–455A2 and 463E3–466A6)¹⁴ and the *Republic* (5.454AI–9). The method is described in the *Phaedrus* (265C8–266CI, cf. 271C10–271D5 and 277B5–8), where it is identified with dialectic (cf. *Phlb.* 16E4–17A5). It is used in the *Cratylus* (424B7–425C8), the *Sophist*, the *Statesman*, and the *Philebus*. Here is its presentation in the *Phaedrus*:

SOCR. It would be quite wonderful to master by means of an art the power of two traits of these chance utterances. 265C
265D

PHDR. Which ones?

SOCR. The first consists in seeing together things that are scattered about in many places and collecting them into one kind, so that by defining each thing we can make clear the subject of any instruction we wish to give. Just so with our discussion of love: whether its definition was or was not correct, at least it allowed the speech to proceed clearly and self-consistently.

PHDR. And what is the other trait you are mentioning, Socrates?

¹² Cf. Moravcsik (1973a), 334–9, 341–2. ¹³ Cf. below, subsection to n. 33.

¹⁴ Cf. Moravcsik (1973a), 325; Moravcsik (1973b), 158–9.

- SOCR. To be able, in turn, to cut up into species along the natural joints and not to try to splinter any part, as a bad butcher might do. In just this way, our two speeches placed all mental derangements into one common kind. Then, just as each single body has parts that naturally come in pairs of the same name (one of them being called the right-hand and the other the left-hand one), so the speeches, having considered unsoundness of mind to be by nature one single kind within us, proceeded to cut it up – the first speech cut its left-hand part and continued to cut until it discovered among these parts a sort of love that may be called ‘left-handed’, which it correctly denounced; the second speech, in turn, led us to the right-hand part of madness, it discovered a love that shares its name with the other but is actually divine, set it out before us, and praised it as the cause of our greatest goods. 265E
266A
266B
- PHDR. You are absolutely right.
- SOCR. Well, Phaedrus, I am myself a lover of these divisions and collections, so that I may be able to think and speak; and if I regard someone else as capable of discerning a single thing that is also by nature capable of encompassing many, I follow ‘straight behind in his tracks as if he were a god’.¹⁵ God knows whether this is the right name for those who can do this correctly or not, but so far I have always called them ‘dialecticians’. 266C

Since the method of division deals with kinds, its identification with dialectic may be regarded as a sharpening of the *Republic’s* view that dialectic studies forms (cf. 7. 532A1–532B5).

Some characteristics of the method of division:

- (1) The kinds reached by a division are not arbitrarily chosen. One must follow the objective articulation of kinds and not ‘splinter any part, as a bad butcher might do’ (*Phdr.* 265E1–3).¹⁶
- (2) In the *Statesman* (262A3–264B6) Plato says that in divisions one should avoid isolating a ‘small’ species by contrasting it with its remainder within the genus. For instance, one should not divide the genus animal into man and beast. Were one to divide like this, the remainder of the small species within the genus (as beast is the remainder of the small species man within the genus animal) would only be a ‘part’ of the genus, not also a ‘species’ of it. Every species of a genus is a part of it, but not every part is a species. One should always divide genera so as to obtain parts that are also species.¹⁷

¹⁵ Hom. *Od.* 2. 406. ¹⁶ Cf. *Plr.* 259D10–11; 287C3–4; Philip (1966), 346.

¹⁷ Cf. Trevaskis (1967), 126; Cavini (1995), 131; below, subsection to n. 113 of Ch. 5.

- (3) The same genus can be divided in more than one way. For instance, at the beginning of the *Sophist* (219A8–219C9) art is divided into productive art and acquisitive art. But at the beginning of the *Statesman* (258B7–258E7) the Visitor says that ‘it is not in the same place’ that he can ‘see a cut’: this time knowledge is divided into practical knowledge and purely cognitive knowledge (art and knowledge seem to be the same kind, cf. *Sph.* 257C7–257D3 and *Plt.* 258B7 with 258D5).¹⁸
- (4) Sometimes the division leads to more than two subordinate species. Their number must be the smallest possible and finite (cf. *Plt.* 287C3–5; *Phlb.* 16C10–16E2).¹⁹
- (5) The method of division serves several purposes. (5.1) It contributes to defining kinds. (5.2) It produces classifications. While in the pursuit of a definition the branches to which the kind to be defined is not subordinate are not divided, in a classification all branches are.²⁰ The use of the method of division to produce classifications need not be regarded as a philosophically uninteresting exercise in the construction of kind-ladders after the manner of Linnaeus. Classifications may illuminate the conceptual structure of certain subject areas (consider for instance classifications of the kinds of change or of enjoyment).²¹ (5.3) The method of division is also used to disambiguate (e.g. ‘just’, ‘good’, ‘love’, and ‘sophist’, cf. *Phdr.* 263A2–263D1; *Sph.* 218C1–5).²² (5.4) The method of division can finally be practised as an exercise to improve one’s intellectual skills (cf. *Phdr.* 266B3–7; *Plt.* 285C8–285D8).²³
- (6) Division goes on until indivisible kinds are reached (cf. *Phdr.* 277B7–8; *Sph.* 229D5–6). If it aims at definition, then only one kind counts as indivisible: the one to be defined. If division aims instead at classification, then only kinds count as indivisible that encompass no subordinate kinds.
- (7) In earlier dialogues Plato emphasized that definitions must have explanatory power: if ‘so-and-so’ defines piety, then being so-and-so must explain why anything pious is pious.²⁴ It remains unclear whether or how the use of the method of division to produce

¹⁸ Cf. Cavini (1995), 131; Natali (1995), 140; Brown (2010), 157, 167–8; M. L. Gill (2010), 192.

¹⁹ Cf. Philip (1966), 346–7; Krohs (1998), 239–40; Notomi (1999), 77.

²⁰ Cf. Brown (2010), 154. ²¹ Cf. Cornford (1935), 171; Ackrill (1970), 104–8.

²² Cf. Trevaskis (1967), 128–9; M. L. Gill (2010), 180. ²³ Cf. Trevaskis (1967), 129.

²⁴ Cf. *Euthphr.* 6D10–11; *Prt.* 332A8–332B1; 332B4–6; 332D6–332E2; 360C1–2; *Grg.* 520D1–2; *Men.* 72C6–72D1; *Hp.Ma.* 287C1–287D2; *Phd.* 100D7–8; 100E5–6; Rickless (2007), 29.

definitions contributes to the satisfaction of this explanatoriness requirement.²⁵

- (8) The dialectician will not care if some branches of the division are bizarre. Dialectic ignores the emotional reactions prompted by the kinds encountered (cf. *Sph.* 226E8–227B6).²⁶
- (9) The dialectician is allowed a cavalier attitude with names: if a branch singled out by the division is nameless, the dialectician may either leave it nameless (cf. *Sph.* 220A1–3; 225B13–225C6; 226D5; 267A10–267B2) or introduce a neologism (cf. *Sph.* 220C7–8; 222C9–222D2; 223D6–9; 224B4–224C3; 225A9–12; 267D4–267E3; *Plt.* 261E1–7).²⁷
- (10) Plato sometimes associates division with the reverse procedure of collection (cf. *Phdr.* 265C8–266C1). While division starts from a single kind and reaches two or more subordinate kinds, collection starts from many specific instances (which can be either perceptible particulars or kinds) and reaches a single kind encompassing them. One might expect collection to be carried out before division begins.²⁸ For, in order to divide a kind into two or more subordinate kinds, one must identify the general kind to be divided: shouldn't this identification be based on a collection? However, none of the examples of division given by Plato begins with a preliminary collection: the kind from which the division starts seems always to be identified by something like an immediate intuition.²⁹ Plato's practice instead reveals that collection is deployed (not before, but) during a division. For, when one is looking for two or more kinds into which a kind *F* is to be divided, one often collects many specific instances of *F* and thereby identifies the kinds into which *F* is to be divided (cf. *Sph.* 219A10–219C1; 219C2–9; 222C3–222D2; 226B2–226C9; 226E5–227A10; 267A10–267B2; *Plt.* 258C3–258E7).³⁰
- (II) The method of division was a successful aspect of Plato's late philosophy. (II.1) Speusippus wrote an extensive work, now lost, on *Similar Things* (cf. Ath. *Deipnosoph.* 2. 58; 2. 78; 3. 32; 3. 65; 4. 10, etc.). The few available fragments suggest that it was a classification of plants and animals based on division. Moreover, Diogenes Laertius (4. 5)

²⁵ Cf. Brown (2010), 151–2.

²⁶ Cf. Wolff (1991), 47. In *Prm.* 130C1–130E4, Parmenides criticizes the young Socrates for eschewing forms of 'hair and mud and dirt, or anything else totally undignified and worthless'.

²⁷ Cf. Notomi (1999), 75–6. ²⁸ Cf. Cornford (1935), 170. ²⁹ Cf. Philip (1966), 338–41.

³⁰ Cf. Hackforth (1945b), 142–3; Philip (1966), 341–2; Moravcsik (1973b), 167, 170–1; Krohs (1998), 238; Notomi (1999), 75. M. L. Gill (2010), 186 maintains that 'collections can occur at any stage of division'.

mentions titles of works by Speusippus that dealt with division.³¹ (II.2) In his *Analytics* (*APr.* 1.31, 46^a31–46^b37; *APo.* 2.5, 91^b12–92^a5) Aristotle criticizes Plato's method of division: it fails to supply valid arguments to establish conclusions from premisses, and it provides no clue as to how one should separate the characteristics that are essential to the kind that is being defined from those that are merely accidental. In *De partibus animalium* (1. 2–3, 642^b5–644^a11) Aristotle levels other criticisms at the method of division which question its ability to reveal essences. Aristotle's criticisms presuppose that he regards the method of division as one of the most important aspects of Plato's philosophy and as the only competitor to his own great logical discovery, the syllogism. Also note that Aristotle himself extensively discusses and applies the method of division in his biological works and enriches it with technical distinctions and terminology (e.g. the idea that a genus combines with a *differentia* to constitute a species).³² (II.3) In a fragment from an unidentified play by the comic poet Epicrates (in *Ath. Deipnosoph.* 2. 54), Plato, Speusippus, Menedemus, and their disciples in the Academy are described as intent on applying the method of division to define a gourd. Epicrates describes the scene in the appropriate technical language. The fact that the passage comes from a comedy presupposes that non-philosophers would know about the method of division and regard it as a remarkable aspect of Plato's teaching.

Definition and classification. There is a blue book on the table in front of me. I shall now ask some questions about this book by using the pronoun 'it' to refer to it: 'Where is it?', 'What is it like?', 'What is it?'

Answers to the question 'Where is it?' can be evaluated with respect to both truth and appropriateness. The answer 'It is on the table' is true and appropriate; the answers 'It is blue' and 'It is a book' are true but inappropriate; the answer 'It is on the floor' is false but appropriate; finally, the answers 'It is green' and 'It is a tea-cup' are both false and inappropriate.

Similar considerations apply to the question 'What is it like?' In this case too, answers can be evaluated with respect to both truth and appropriateness. The answer 'It is blue' is true and appropriate; the answers 'It is on the table' and 'It is a book' are true but inappropriate; the answer 'It is green' is false but appropriate; the answers 'It is on the floor' and 'It is a tea-cup' are both false and inappropriate.

³¹ Cf. Philip (1966), 336–7.

³² Pace Wedberg (1955), 42–3, there is no indication that Plato has the concept of *differentia*.

Similar points can be made in connection with the question 'What is it?' Also in this case, answers can be evaluated with respect to both truth and appropriateness. The answer 'It is a book' is true and appropriate; the answers 'It is on the table' and 'It is blue' are true but inappropriate; the answer 'It is a tea-cup' is false but appropriate; the answers 'It is on the floor' and 'It is green' are both false and inappropriate.

The appropriateness or inappropriateness of the answers to the question 'Where is it?' is determined by the fact that this question is asking for the position of its referent within a certain 'grid'. Specifically, the question 'Where is it?' is asking for its referent's position within the grid of locations: it requires a specification of which location is occupied by the object. The answers 'It is blue', 'It is a book', 'It is green', and 'It is a tea-cup' are inappropriate because they do not mention locations: they do not pick from the right grid. Something analogous can be plausibly said about the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the answers to the question 'What is it like?' It is asking for its referent's position within the grid of qualities: a specification of which quality or qualities the object has. The answers 'It is on the table', 'It is a book', 'It is on the floor', and 'It is a tea-cup' are inappropriate because they do not mention qualities: they do not pick from the right grid.

Something analogous can perhaps be said regarding the question 'What is it?' This question is also asking for its referent's position within a certain grid. In the case of the 'What is it?' question, the grid from which the answerer is required to pick is neither that of locations nor that of qualities: rather it is that of the classes of a fundamental ontological classification of what there is. In view of the circumstance that to define something is to answer the question 'What is it?' asked about that thing, one sees why definitions are intimately linked with classifications, and why one and the same procedure, namely division, is used for the sake of both classifying and defining. Observe that as one can answer the question 'Where is it?' in more or less specific and informative ways ('It is in the room', 'It is on the table', 'It is on the table's front-right corner'), so one can answer the question 'What is it?' in more or less specific and informative ways ('It is an animal', 'It is a terrestrial animal', 'It is a man'). This amounts to introducing informativeness as a third parameter of evaluation alongside truth and appropriateness.

I suggest that considerations not dissimilar to the ones of the preceding paragraphs are present to Plato's mind when he links definition and classification: for Plato, one and the same activity, that of dividing reality at the joints, lies behind both classification and definition. One consideration in support of this suggestion is that Plato explicitly mentions the difference

between the questions ‘What is it?’ and ‘What is it like?’ (cf. *Men.* 71B3–4, 87B3) and the search for definitions is normally introduced by the first of these.³³

Six descriptions of the sophist. Before employing the method of division to define the sophist, the Visitor and Theaetetus give an example of the method by using it to define angling (218C5–221C5). When they apply the method to the sophist, they get six different descriptions (221C6–232A7). In the first (221C6–223B7), the sophist is a hunter of rich and prominent young men. In the second (223C1–224D3), he is a merchant of words and learning who buys his goods in one city and sells them in another. In the third and the fourth description (224D4–224E5), he is a merchant of words and learning who operates within a single city and either buys or produces the goods he sells (the difference between the two descriptions depends on whether he buys or produces his goods). In the fifth description (224E6–226A5), the sophist is a verbal fighter. Finally, in the sixth description (226A6–231B9), he is an educator who by means of refutation purifies the soul from its pretence of knowledge.³⁴

Faced with these six descriptions, Theaetetus confesses: ‘I am puzzled [ἀποροῶ]’ (231B9). His puzzlement is ‘due to the fact that the sophist has appeared in many ways’ (231B9–231C1): each of the six descriptions gave Theaetetus the impression of capturing the sophist’s essence, but he also accepts the reasonable view that the sophist has only one essence. Although the text does not explicitly say as much, it may be plausibly inferred that none of the six descriptions is a genuine definition: rather, each one of them is an account of how sophists, or certain sophists, were viewed in public opinion or in humorous accounts thereof.³⁵ After summarizing the six descriptions (231C9–231E7), the Visitor and Theaetetus agree that the sophist appears to have many competences and that whoever is taken in by this will find it hard to spot a single aspect of the sophist’s art in which all these presumed competences converge (232A1–7). A fresh start is needed.

³³ In the *Theaetetus*, after the suggestion that knowledge is perception has been rejected, the question ‘What is knowledge [τί ποτ’ ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη]?’ resurfaces (187B2–3). Theaetetus’ new answer is that knowledge is true belief (187B6). Socrates then asks: ‘Do you define [ὀρίζῃ] knowledge as true belief?’ (187C5). This is a clear Platonic example of ‘to define’ applied to an answer to a ‘What is it?’ question.

³⁴ The six descriptions portray the sophist as progressively more similar to a philosopher (in the sixth they are almost indistinguishable). Recall that at the dialogue’s beginning (216D1) Plato hinted that philosophers sometimes take on the semblance of sophists.

³⁵ Cf. Wolff (1991), 29–44.

I.3 THE MASTER OF APPEARANCE

Apparent omniscience. Before attempting again to define the sophist, the Visitor and Theaetetus embark on a discussion (232B1–236D4) of his art that is supposed to provide some background. They begin by recalling some points from the earlier six descriptions. The sophist engages in disputes and teaches others to do so (232B1–10). What topics does he cover? The simple answer is: ‘All’. He teaches his pupils to engage in discussions about divine things hidden from common eyes, perceptible objects both in the heavens and on earth, problems of being and becoming, issues of law and politics, and questions concerning the crafts (232B11–232E5).³⁶

In the discussion’s next step (232E6–233D2) the idea of apparent knowledge is introduced. Nobody knows everything. So, although the sophist teaches his pupils to engage in disputes about all topics, he cannot know about all these topics. On the other hand, he brings young people to believe that he does know about these topics: otherwise they would not pay him to be taught. Therefore the sophist has apparent knowledge about all things (the expression ‘δοξαστική ἐπιστήμη’, 233C10, conveys the idea not only of apparent knowledge, but also of expertise at appearing in certain ways). Precisely the point that the sophist *appears* to have certain skills provides the starting point for a new attempted definition, which turns upon the concept of appearing: the *essence* of the sophist is exactly his *appearing* to have skills which he in fact lacks.³⁷

Plastic and verbal imitations. Matters are clarified (233D3–236D4) by means of a model (a παράδειγμα, 233D3)³⁸ which institutes an analogy between the skill of producing plastic imitations (sculpture) and the sophist’s art. A plastic imitator (a sculptor) produces plastic imitations of all objects and leads ‘those young children who are silly’ (234B8) to think that these plastic imitations are the real objects they imitate and that he can produce all objects (i.e. that he is a sort of god).³⁹ Analogously, a linguistic imitator (a sophist) produces linguistic imitations of true sentences and leads young people ‘who stand even farther away from the truth of things’ (234C4) to think that his linguistic imitations are the true sentences they imitate and that he can produce all true sentences (i.e. that he is wise) (234B5–234D1).

³⁶ The alleged universality of the sophist’s competence is not a straw man: sophists did feign universal wisdom (cf. *Dissoi Logoi* 8. 1–13; Wolff (1991), 24–5).

³⁷ Cf. Bluck (1963), 58; Pippin (1979), 190–1.

³⁸ The definition by division of the angler was also described as a model (cf. 218D9; 221C5).

³⁹ Cf. *R.* 10. 596B12–596E11; 598B6–598D6; Bluck (1963), 58.

It is because they imitate true sentences that false sentences may induce those who hear them to confuse them with the true sentences they imitate.

I introduce some helpful conceptual tools. Every imitation imitates something. It is associated with a ‘cognate deception’ which it aims to induce people to fall for, i.e. the false belief whereby one takes the imitation to be what it imitates (e.g. taking an imitation of Theaetetus to be Theaetetus, or taking an imitation of an apple to be an apple).⁴⁰ There are two kinds of imitations with two corresponding kinds of cognate deception. (1) ‘Singular imitations’, e.g. a portrait of Theaetetus. With a singular imitation, the answer to the question ‘What does it imitate?’ is a proper noun (e.g. ‘Theaetetus’). In this case, the cognate deception is a misidentification (e.g. one misidentifies a waxen statue of Theaetetus with Theaetetus). (2) ‘General imitations’, e.g. a waxen apple. With a general imitation, the answer to the question ‘What does it imitate?’ is a common noun-phrase (e.g. ‘An apple’). In this case, the cognate deception is a misdescription (e.g. one misdescribes a waxen apple as an apple).

When false sentences are regarded as imitating true sentences, a general imitation is in play: what I do when I utter a false sentence that imitates true sentences and thereby induce you to confuse my false sentence with a true one is analogous to what I do when I produce a waxen apple and induce you to believe that it is an apple (it resembles this more than my producing a waxen Theaetetus and induce you to believe that it is Theaetetus). If I utter a false sentence and you believe me, your error does not amount to misidentifying my false sentence with a specific true sentence, but to misdescribing my false sentence as true.

The concept of ‘propositional falsehood’ (whereby what may properly be called false is a sentence or a belief or a proposition) is here linked with that of ‘ontological falsehood’ (whereby anything may be properly called a false so-and-so if it is deceptively so-and-so). A false sentence deceives people into regarding it as a true sentence, it is a false true sentence.⁴¹

Images, likenesses, apparitions. After bringing up the concept of imitation, the Visitor and Theaetetus draw some distinctions (235B8–236D4). The sophist’s art is an imitative art: it produces imitations or images (‘imitation’, *μίμημα*, and ‘image’, *εἶδωλον*, are used interchangeably in this context).⁴² There are two types of images: a likeness (*εἰκόν*) is like (*εἶσικε*)

⁴⁰ Cf. Szaif (1998), 401–2, who emphasizes that an imitation’s cognate deception is at a psychological level whereby it can coexist with knowledge that the imitation *is not* what it imitates.

⁴¹ Some modern philosophers attempt to reduce ontological falsehood to propositional falsehood: cf. A. R. White (1970), 5.

⁴² Cf. Bondeson (1972), 1. ‘Εἶδωλον’ occurs for the first time at 234C5, within the description of the sophist’s skill. At 234B6, the corresponding point of the description of plastic imitation, *μίμημα*

its model; an apparition (φάντασμα) appears (φαίνεται) to be like its model,⁴³ but is unlike it.⁴⁴ In plastic images, i.e. sculptures, likenesses are like their models in that they faithfully reproduce their proportions and colours (ancient sculptures were coloured)⁴⁵ whereas apparitions are unlike their models in that they distort their proportions and colours, but appear to be like their models by appearing to be faithful to them (this happens especially with monumental sculptures that are supposed to be viewed from below). Accordingly, there are two kinds of imitative art: one produces likenesses, the other apparitions (235C9–236C8).⁴⁶

The distinction between likenesses and apparitions concerns how they attempt to induce their cognate deceptions, i.e. to instil the false belief whereby one takes an imitation to be what it imitates. With a likeness, the imitator attempts to induce the cognate deception by creating an imitation that actually has some characteristics of what it imitates. With an apparition, the imitator tries to induce the cognate deception by bringing it about that the imitation appear to have some characteristics of what it imitates. In this case, a further false belief is instilled in the deception's victim, i.e. the belief that the imitation has certain characteristics which it in fact lacks. In the case of a likeness, the false belief that the imitation is what it imitates is formed on the basis of a *true* belief that it has such-and-such characteristics; in the case of an apparition, that false belief is formed on the basis of a further *false* belief that it has such-and-such characteristics. So, all imitations (likenesses as well as apparitions) are intertwined with deception. But apparitions are linked to deception twice over because they attempt to achieve their deception by means of a further deception.

Whoever produces false sentences that imitate true ones tries to deceive his or her hearers into believing that the false sentences produced are true. In some cases, the deception is achieved by producing false sentences that share some characteristics with the imitated true ones: this is a production of likenesses (like statues that deceive their viewers by faithfully reproducing the proportions and colours of what they imitate). In other cases, the deception is obtained through false sentences that merely seem to have certain characteristics of the imitated true sentences but do not actually have them: this is a production of apparitions (like statues that deceive

occurs. 'εἰδωλοποιική' and 'μιμητική' are also used interchangeably: cf. 235B8–9; 235C3; 235D1–2; 236C6–7; 265B1–2; Kamlah (1963), 28.

⁴³ I translate 'φάντασμα' by 'apparition'. I reserve 'appearance' for 'φαντασία'.

⁴⁴ In one passage (240A4–240B12) Plato seems to use 'image' ('εἰδωλον', 240A5, 240A7) and 'likeness' ('εἰκων', 240B11, 240B12) as synonyms (cf. Robinson (2001), 445). He is probably careless.

⁴⁵ Cf. *R.* 4. 420C4–420D5.

⁴⁶ Plato perhaps has in mind Polycleitus as a creator of likenesses, Phidias and Lysippus as creators of apparitions: cf. Villela-Petit (1991), 74–84.

their viewers by seeming to have the proportions and colors of what they imitate while they actually distort them).⁴⁷

The difficulties faced by the inquirers. At this point, the Visitor and Theaetetus interrupt their account because they are in trouble. They face two difficulties. The first concerns whether the sophist should be subsumed under the art that produces likenesses or that which produces apparitions (236C9–10, cf. 235D2–3 and 264C7–9). The second difficulty relates to the fact that the kind where the sophist has taken refuge is puzzling (ἄπορον) (236D1–4).

The two difficulties are probably linked. The two inquirers want to subsume the sophist under the art that produces apparitions (this is indicated by the fact that later they will have no qualms about categorizing him in this way).⁴⁸ The reason why they hesitate to subsume the sophist under the art that produces apparitions is that this art is puzzling because of its particularly intimate connection with falsehood. The sophist has at least two links to falsehood. The first link is given by the fact that he produces false sentences. The second link to falsehood is due to the circumstance that his false sentences imitate true ones and therefore tend to deceive their hearers into believing that they are true sentences: the sophist therefore induces the false belief that certain sentences are true, while in fact they are false. The tie between sophist and falsehood becomes treble if the sophist produces apparitions. For, in this case, the sophist's false sentences deceive their hearers into believing that they are true by merely seeming to have certain characteristics which they lack: they thereby induce a further false belief. The sophist will however declare that it is impossible to say or believe falsehoods and that he is therefore not to be defined in the proposed way. In particular, since imitations aim by their very nature at deceiving their viewers or hearers (because they try to instil the belief that they are what they imitate), if the sophist were right that it is impossible to believe falsehoods then one could doubt the legitimacy of classifying him as a practitioner of an art that produces imitations of whatever sort (cf. 264C10–264D3). Moreover, apparitions have an especially intimate connection with deception (because they endeavour to generate a deception through a further deception): if the sophist were right that it is impossible to believe falsehoods then one would have particularly good reasons to

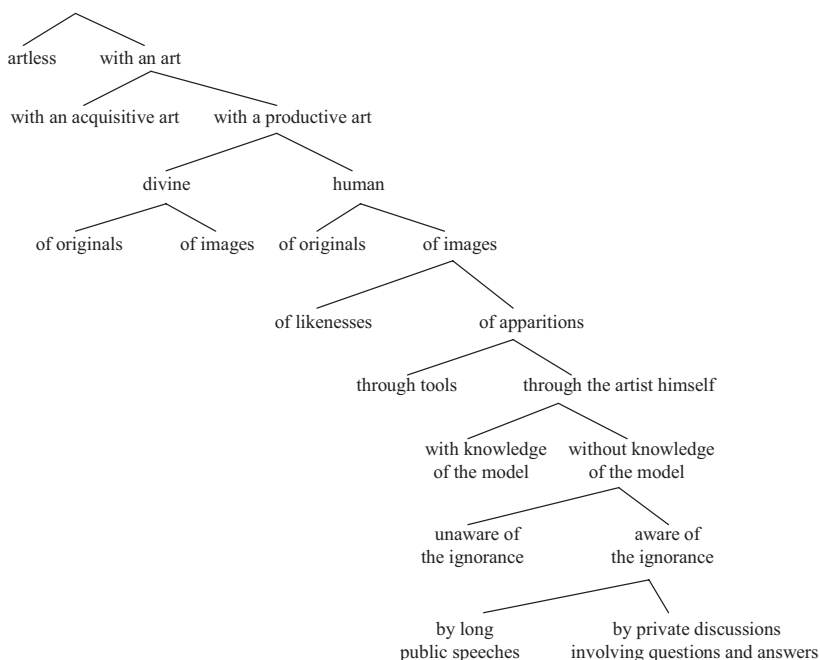
⁴⁷ Some commentators maintain that in the case of verbal images, likenesses and apparitions are (respectively) true and false sentences and that Plato is therefore committed to the view that sentences are verbal pictures representing reality: cf. Gulley (1962), 149; Bluck (1963), 59; Tilghman (1969), 160. This is a mistake (cf. Szaif (1998), 402; Brown (2010), 161): in the case of verbal images, both likenesses and apparitions are false sentences (cf. 260C6–10), which in different ways try to deceive their hearers into regarding them as true.

⁴⁸ Cf. 239C9–239D1; 260D8–9; 266D9–267A1; 268C8–268D5; Bluck (1963), 60; Palmer (1999), 124.

refrain from classifying him as a practitioner of an art that produces apparitions. Indeed, if the sophist were right then there would even be reasons to doubt that the art of producing imitations can be divided into those of producing likenesses and apparitions (cf. 266D9–266E3).

The two difficulties faced by the inquirers are connected with apparitions and falsehood. The beginning of the central ‘digression’ (236D5–264B10) on not-being, being, and falsehood has been reached.

The final division and definition of the sophist is illustrated by the following diagram:



This division is carried out in the second part of the dialogue’s frame (264B11–268C4). Its summing up leads to the final definition of the sophist (268C5–268D5). Some graphic description of the method of division like the above was probably already used in the Academy: for Aristotle (*PA* I.2, 642^b12) mentions ‘drawn divisions’ and Plato himself (*Sph.* 264E1–2, cf. *Phdr.* 265E4–266B1) speaks of taking always the division’s right-hand branch.

Puzzles about not-being

At the end of the debate leading into the final division and definition of the sophist, the Visitor mentions problems about appearing without being and saying what is not true. He thus introduces a discussion about the impossibility of saying what is not, a paradox concerning images, and a version of the falsehood paradox (236D5–242B5).

This part of the dialogue may be divided into five portions: (1) an introduction to the difficulties that bedevil this area of thought (236D5–237B7); (2) three arguments to the effect that it is impossible to say what is not (237B7–239C8); (3) an argument to the effect that the concept of image implies a contradiction (239C9–240C6); (4) an argument to the effect that it is impossible to believe or say what is false (240C7–241B4); (5) a summary of the difficulties encountered and a sketch of the moves that will enable one to overcome them (241B4–242B5). Section 2.1 deals with (1) and (2), Section 2.2 with (3), Sections 2.3 and 2.4 with (4).

2.1 WHAT IS NOT IS UNSAYABLE

The introduction. The difficulties about falsehood and appearing are introduced by the following passage:

- VIS. ὄντως, ὦ μακάριε, ἐσμὲν ἐν παντάπασιν χαλεπῇ
 σκέψει. τὸ γὰρ φαίνεσθαι τοῦτο καὶ τὸ δοκεῖν, εἶναι δὲ μή,
 καὶ τὸ λέγειν μὲν ἄττα, ἀληθῆ δὲ μή, πάντα ταῦτά ἐστι
 μεστὰ ἀπορίας αἰεὶ ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν χρόνῳ καὶ νῦν. ὅπως γὰρ
 εἰπόντα χρητὴ ψευδῆ λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν <φάναι> ὄντως εἶναι,
 καὶ τοῦτο φθεγξάμενον ἐναντιολογίᾳ μὴ συνέχεσθαι,
 παντάπασιν, ὦ Θεαίτητε, χαλεπόν. 237AI
- THET. Τί δῆ;
 VIS. Τετόλμηκεν ὁ λόγος οὔτως ὑποθέσθαι τὸ μὴ ὄν
 εἶναι· ψεῦδος γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ἄλλως ἐγίγνετο ὄν. Παρμενίδης

δὲ ὁ μέγας, ὦ παῖ, παισὶν ἡμῖν οὔσιν ἀρχόμενός τε καὶ διὰ
τέλους τοῦτο ἀπεμαρτύρατο, πεζῇ τε ὥδε ἐκάστοτε λέγων
καὶ μετὰ μέτρων –

Οὐ γὰρ μή ποτε τοῦτο δαμῆ, φησὶν, εἶναι μὴ ἔοντα
ἀλλὰ σὺ τῆσδ' ἀφ' ὁδοῦ διζήμενος εἶργε νόημα.

παρ' ἐκείνου τε οὖν μαρτυρεῖται, καὶ μάλιστα γε δὴ
πάντων ὁ λόγος αὐτὸς ἂν δηλώσειε μέτρια βρασανισθεῖς.

VIS. We are really faced, my dear friend, with an extremely difficult
inquiry. For this appearing and seeming, but not being, and saying
things, but not true ones, all of this has always been in the past
and still now is full of difficulty. For, Theaetetus, it is extremely
difficult to see by speaking in what way one should affirm that
saying or believing falsehoods really exists, and not to be caught in
a contradiction by uttering this.

ΤΗΤ. Why?

VIS. This account dared to assume that what is not is: for in no other
way would falsehood have become a being. But, my boy, when we
ourselves were boys, the great Parmenides from beginning to end
testified this, constantly saying so both in prose¹ and in verse. He
says:

. . . never shall this be proved, that things which are not are,
but you, in your inquiry, hold back your thought from this
way.²

So we have his testimony; and the account itself can reveal this more
than anything else by being properly examined.

I reproduced and translated David Robinson's text, which adds 'φάναι'
at 236E4.³ The text of the manuscripts can be translated without this
addition. One translation of it is:

For, Theaetetus, it is extremely difficult to see how it is appropriate that someone
who claims that saying or believing falsehoods really exists, in uttering just this
should avoid being caught in a contradiction.⁴

Here 'ὅπως' modifies 'χρή', which governs the whole complex infinitive
construction 'εἰπόντα . . . ψευδῆ λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν ὄντως εἶναι,
καὶ τοῦτο φθεγξάμενον ἐναντιολογία μὴ συνεχέσθαι'. The subject is
the phrase 'εἰπόντα . . . ψευδῆ λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν ὄντως εἶναι', with
'εἰπόντα' governing the subordinate infinitive construction 'ψευδῆ λέγειν

¹ Probably an allusion to lectures held by Parmenides (cf. Arangio-Ruiz (1951), 126).

² DK 28 B 7, 1–2, cf. 258D2–3.

³ Robinson (1999), 147 tentatively credits Heindorf with this emendation. I could find no passage in Heindorf justifying this attribution.

⁴ Cf. Heindorf (1810), 346; Stallbaum (1840), 129; Wagner (1856), 69; Apelt (1897), 113.

ἢ δοξάζειν ὄντως εἶναι’ (with ‘ψευδῆ λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν’ subject, ‘ὄντως εἶναι’ predicate); the predicate is ‘ἐναντιολογίᾳ μὴ συνέχεσθαι’; and the phrase ‘καὶ τοῦτο φθεγγόμενον’ is in apposition to the subject (with ‘καί’ meaning ‘just’).⁵

Another translation of the manuscripts’ text is:

For, Theaetetus, it is extremely difficult to see by speaking in what way one should say or believe that falsehoods really exist, and not be caught in a contradiction by uttering this.⁶

Here ‘ὅπως’ modifies ‘εἰπόντα’ and ‘χρή’ governs two infinitive constructions: ‘ψευδῆ λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν ὄντως εἶναι’ and ‘τοῦτο φθεγγόμενον ἐναντιολογίᾳ μὴ συνέχεσθαι’. In the first of these, ‘λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν’ takes ‘ψευδῆ . . . ὄντως εἶναι’ as its object.⁷

In all translations, the words ‘to see’ (after ‘it is extremely difficult’, ‘παντάπασιν . . . χαλεπὸν’ at 237A1) are supplied from the context.⁸ The contorted syntax probably reflects the difficulty of the topic.

Interpretations of the introduction. Most commentators think that 236D9–237B2 contains a precise version of the falsehood paradox. Here are the main interpretations.

- (1) The *ontological* interpretation: ‘Suppose that falsehood is; then what is not is; but this is a contradiction; so, falsehood is not’. This argument involves two uses of ‘to be’: veridical (whereby ‘to be’ is roughly equivalent to ‘to be true’) and existential (whereby ‘to be’ is roughly equivalent to ‘to exist’). The argument is therefore fallacious.⁹
- (2) The *semantical-gnoseological* interpretation: ‘Falsehood involves “saying or thinking what is not”; but it is impossible to “say or think what is not”; therefore one cannot have anything to do with falsehood’. Since the semantical-gnoseological interpretation takes different forms with different commentators, it is more properly

⁵ Cf. LSJ *s.v.* ‘καί’ B 6. Madvig (1871), 380 regards the ‘καί’ between ‘εἶναι’ and ‘τοῦτο’ as unacceptable. He therefore deletes it as having crept into the text from the second syllable of ‘εἶναι’. He is followed by Schanz (1887), 32.

⁶ Cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 81; Fraccaroli (1934), 146; Cornford (1935), 200; Arangio-Ruiz (1951), 126; Frede (1996b), 144.

⁷ In view of the unnaturalness of regarding ‘ψευδῆ . . . ὄντως εἶναι’ as the object of ‘λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν’, Szaif (1998), 395 suggests to delete ‘ἢ δοξάζειν’ as a gloss that entered the text.

⁸ Heindorf (1810), 346 suggests ‘διιδεῖν’ (cf. *Phd.* 62B5–6) or ‘εἰπεῖν’ (cf. *Sph.* 217B1–2) and draws parallels with *Thr.* 158C2–3 and *Ar. V.* 1279. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 81 suggests ‘γνώσκειν’ or ‘λέγειν’.

⁹ Cf. Cornford (1935), 200; Ross (1951), 114–15; Bluck (1963), 60–1; Bondeson (1972), 1; Guthrie (1962–81), v 135; Szaif (1998), 395–6.

described as a family of interpretations. Two main branches of this family may be distinguished.

- (2.1) The *indefinability* interpretation: ‘To define falsehood, one must speak of what is not; but it is impossible to speak of what is not; so it is impossible to define falsehood’. The paradox denies the possibility of defining falsehood.
- (2.2) The *inexistence* interpretation takes the paradox to deny the existence of falsehood. Two main versions of this interpretation may be distinguished.
 - (2.2.1) The interpretation of *propositions*: ‘Every sentence expresses some proposition; but a false sentence expresses what is not; so, a false sentence expresses no proposition; therefore no sentence is false’. This paradox involves two uses of ‘to be’: veridical and existential. Frege expounds a paradox that resembles this one, but does not depend on an ambiguity of ‘to be’: Frege considers the possibility that the being of a proposition depends on its truth, in which case a false sentence would express no proposition.¹⁰
 - (2.2.2) The interpretation of the *collapse of truth conditions on meaning conditions*: ‘If a sentence is meaningful then there is a portion of reality corresponding to it; the portion of reality corresponding to a sentence makes it true; so, if a sentence is meaningful then it is true’.¹¹ Three versions of this interpretation have been, or might be, suggested: they differ according to the ‘category’ to which the truth-entailing portion of reality required by meaningfulness belongs.
 - (2.2.2.1) The portion of reality is a fact (a subsistent state of affairs). For example, for ‘Theaetetus is flying’ to be meaningful, the fact that Theaetetus is flying must be a portion of reality. But this guarantees the truth of ‘Theaetetus is flying’.¹² This version recalls a puzzle studied by Russell.¹³
 - (2.2.2.2) The portion of reality is a trope. Tropes are instances of kinds individuated by their bearers: items like Theaetetus’ sitting and Theaetetus’ flight.¹⁴ For ‘Theaetetus is flying’ to be meaningful, the trope of Theaetetus’ flight must be a portion of reality. But this guarantees the truth of ‘Theaetetus is flying’.¹⁵

¹⁰ Cf. Frege (1918–19b), 144. On propositions cf. below, text to n. 106 of Ch. 6.

¹¹ Cf. Kostman (1973), 193.

¹² Cf. Hackforth (1945a), 57; Gullely (1962), 156; Tilghman (1969), 156–7; von Weizsäcker (1973), 232–3; Przełęcki (1981), 124.

¹³ Cf. Russell (1910b), 150–1; Russell (1912), 72. ¹⁴ Cf. *Phd.* 102D7–8; 102E6–7.

¹⁵ Cf. Owen (1971), 244–5.

- (2.2.2.3) The portion of reality is a ‘predicative complex’ made up of the sentence’s referent and the kind attributed to it by the sentence. For ‘Theaetetus is flying’ to be meaningful, flying-Theaetetus must be a portion of reality. But this guarantees the truth of ‘Theaetetus is flying’.¹⁶

It is hard to choose among these interpretations: equipollent arguments support different exegeses. Since the passage is so vague as to admit radically different exegeses, it is perhaps not supposed to be understood in a precise way: it does not contain a version of the paradox, but only a generic introduction to it, in which some relevant points are briefly touched upon. The impression that the passage under consideration is a preliminary summary is confirmed by the fact that at 236E1–2 Plato mentions the difficulties of ‘appearing and seeming, but not being, and saying things, but not true ones’. These two difficulties will be explained later, at 239C9–240C6 and 240C7–241B4.

Three serious arguments, not three sophisms. After their introductory remarks, the Visitor and Theaetetus go through three arguments to the effect that it is impossible to say what is not (237B7–239C8). These three arguments remain unchallenged throughout the *Sophist*: Plato seems to regard them as unassailable.¹⁷ I shall therefore treat Plato’s three arguments about the impossibility of saying what is not as pieces of serious philosophy, not as sophisms.

If, as it seems, Plato believes that what is not cannot be said, then he subscribes to Parmenides’ claim that ‘you could not know what is not – for that is impossible – nor express it’ (DK 28 B 2, 7–8). In this respect the *Sophist* stands by Parmenides’ positions.¹⁸

The first argument about the impossibility of saying what is not (237B7–237E7) is as follows:

| | |
|--|-------|
| VIS. Καί μοι λέγε· τὸ μηδαμῶς | 237B7 |
| ὄν τολμῶμέν που φθέγγεσθαι; | |
| THI. Πῶς γάρ οὔ; | |
| VIS. Μὴ τοίνυν ἔριδος ἔνεκα μηδὲ παιδιᾶς, ἀλλ’ εἰ | B10 |
| σπουδῇ δέοι συννοήσαντά τινα ἀποκρίνασθαι τῶν | 237C1 |
| ἀκροατῶν ποῖ χρῆ τοῦνομ’ ἐπιφέρειν τοῦτο, τὸ μὴ ὄν, τί | |

¹⁶ This third version is mentioned by Owen (1971), 245. ¹⁷ Cf. Thomas (2008), 642, 657.

¹⁸ Cf. DK 28 B 3, 1; B 6, 1; Cherniss (1932), 122–3; Furth (1968), 119; Ferejohn (1989), 267; O’Brien (1991b), 328–30; Rudebusch (1991), 530; Palmer (1999), 128, 137; Sillitti (1999), 54.

- δοκοῦμεν ἄν; εἰς τί καὶ ἐπὶ ποῖον αὐτόν τε καταχρήσασθαι
καὶ τῷ πυνθανομένῳ δεικνύναι;
- ΤΗΤ. Χαλεπὸν ἦρου καὶ σχεδὸν εἰπεῖν οἷω γε ἐμοὶ
παντάπασιν ἄπορον. C5
- VIS. Ἄλλ' οὖν τοῦτό γε δῆλον, ὅτι τῶν ὄντων ἐπὶ τι¹⁹ τὸ
μὴ ὄν οὐκ οἰστέον.
- ΤΗΤ. Πῶς γὰρ ἄν;
- VIS. Οὐκοῦν ἐπεὶπερ οὐκ ἐπὶ τὸ ὄν, οὐδ' ἐπὶ τὸ τί φέρων
ὀρθῶς ἄν τις φέροι. C10
- ΤΗΤ. Πῶς δῆ;
- VIS. Καὶ τοῦτο ἡμῖν που φανερόν, ὡς καὶ τὸ τί τοῦτο
ῤῆμα ἐπ' ὄντι λέγομεν ἐκάστοτε· μόνον γὰρ αὐτὸ λέγειν,
ὡσπερ γυμνὸν καὶ ἀπηρημωμένον ἀπὸ τῶν ὄντων
ἀπάντων, ἀδύνατον· ἦ γάρ;
- ΤΗΤ. Ἀδύνατον. D5
- VIS. Ἄρα τῆδε σκοπῶν σύμφης, ὡς ἀνάγκη τὸν τί
λέγοντα ἔν γέ τι λέγειν;
- ΤΗΤ. Οὕτως.
- VIS. Ἐνὸς γὰρ δὴ τό γε τί φήσεις σημεῖον εἶναι, τὸ δὲ
τινὲ δυοῖν, τὸ δὲ τινὲς πολλῶν. D10
- ΤΗΤ. Πῶς γὰρ οὐ;
- VIS. Τὸν δὲ δὴ μὴ τί λέγοντα ἀναγκαιότατον, ὡς ἔοικε,
παντάπασι μηδὲν λέγειν. 237E1
- ΤΗΤ. Ἀναγκαιότατον μὲν οὖν.
- VIS. Ἄρ' οὖν οὐδὲ τοῦτο συγχωρητέον, τὸ τὸν τοιοῦτον
λέγειν μὲν, λέγειν μέντοι μηδὲν, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ λέγειν φατέον,
ὅς γ' ἂν ἐπιχειρῆ μὴ ὄν φθέγγεσθαι; E5
- ΤΗΤ. Τέλος γοῦν ἂν ἀπορίας ὁ λόγος ἔχοι. E7
- VIS. And tell me: do we somehow dare to express what in no way is? 237B
- ΤΗΤ. Why shouldn't we?
- VIS. So if, neither for the sake of contention nor of play, but seriously
and thoughtfully, one of the hearers were to answer the question
whither this name, 'not being', should be applied,²⁰ what would
we think? What, and what sort of thing, should he apply it to, and
show to the questioner? 237C
- ΤΗΤ. You asked something difficult and, one might almost say,²¹ com-
pletely impracticable for someone like me.

¹⁹ The word 'τι', absent from the main MSS, occurs in Par. 1808. Editors accept it as an emendation. Some commentators read 'τῶν ὄντων ἐπι' with anastrophe of 'ἐπί': cf. Cordero (1986–7), 283; Aubenque (1991), 372; Cordero (1993), 233; Fronterotta (2007), 31. This sits uneasily with the fact that 'ἐπι' is construed with the accusative both shortly before (237C3) and shortly after (237C10) the passage under consideration.

²⁰ Cf. 250D7–8. ²¹ Cf. LSJ *s.v.* 'σχεδόν' IV 1.

- VIS. But this is at least clear, that ‘not being’ should not be applied to one of the beings.
- THT. How could it?
- VIS. So, since it cannot be applied to being, by applying it to ‘something’ one would again fail to apply it correctly.
- THT. How so?
- VIS. This is also²² somehow clear to us, that we always utter this expression, ‘something’, in connection with a being: for it is impossible to utter it on its own, as if naked and isolated from all beings. Is that not so? 237D
- THT. Impossible.
- VIS. Are you agreeing because you view the matter this way, that it is necessary that whoever says ‘something’ say ‘at least one something’?
- THT. Yes.
- VIS. For you will say that ‘something’ is a sign of one thing, ‘two things’ of two, and ‘things’ of many.
- THT. Of course.
- VIS. But, it seems, it is surely most necessary that whoever does not say something say absolutely nothing. 237E
- THT. Most necessary.
- VIS. This, then, should also not be conceded, that such a person speaks, but says nothing. One should instead say that whoever tries to express what is not does not even speak.
- THT. The puzzlement generated by the argument would at least reach its completion.²³

Two issues of translation must be discussed.

Issues of translation: (i) *The use of ‘φθέγγεσθαι’.* The Greek verb ‘φθέγγεσθαι’ has several uses. I focus on three. (1) The verb can take as its object linguistic expressions referred to by noun-phrases in the accusative (cf. *Prt.* 342E7; *R.* 5. 463E2; *Sph.* 244A6). When used in this way, it is naturally rendered by ‘to utter’. (2) The verb can take as its object two items, one of which is (in most cases) a conceptual content while the other is a linguistic expression, both referred to by noun-phrases in the accusative (cf. *Sph.* 257D11–12; *Phlb.* 25C5–6). When used in this way, the verb is naturally rendered by ‘to express . . . by –’. (3) The verb can also take as its object a propositional content introduced either by a declarative sentence (cf. *Lg.* 2. 662B7) or by some other device, like a pronoun in the accusative

²² Cf. 237C7.

²³ A pun is intended: the puzzlement reaches its completion both by terminating and by attaining its culmination.

(cf. *Cra.* 394C8–9; *R.* 8. 568A11; *Plt.* 307A5; *Lg.* 2. 662C5; 10. 901A8). When used in this way, the verb is naturally rendered by ‘to express’ or ‘to say’. In connection with this third use the verb is employed in sentences like ‘τἀληθῆ φθέγγεσθαι’ (‘to say the truth’) (cf. *Phlb.* 49B8).²⁴

The verb ‘φθέγγεσθαι’ occurs twice in the passage under scrutiny: at the beginning Theaetetus candidly accepts that ‘we somehow dare to φθέγγεσθαι what in no way is’ (237B7–8); at the end the Visitor tells of the dire fate of ‘whoever tries to φθέγγεσθαι what is not’ (237E6). Which use of ‘φθέγγεσθαι’ is in play? Some interpreters²⁵ opt for the first: in their view, Theaetetus at the beginning concedes that we dare to utter the phrase ‘what in no way is’ and at the end he learns of what befalls whoever tries to utter the phrase ‘what is not’. This solution is unlikely, for three reasons. First, it requires the argument’s conclusion to be that whoever tries to utter the phrase ‘what is not’ fails to accomplish an act of saying. But the earlier steps of the argument cannot be easily seen to provide support for this claim. Things go back into place if the argument’s conclusion is taken to be that whoever tries to express what is not fails to accomplish an act of saying (whereby ‘φθέγγεσθαι’ is understood according to the third of the last paragraph’s uses). Secondly, the second argument about the impossibility of saying what is not (238A1–238C12) addresses the issue of the possibility of ‘φθέγγεσθαι through the mouth’ and ‘grasp in thought’ what is not (238B6–7) and reaches the conclusion that ‘one cannot correctly φθέγγεσθαι nor say nor think of what is not in its own right’ (238C8–9). I shall argue that the second argument about the impossibility of saying what is not is concerned not with the expression ‘what is not’, but with what is not.²⁶ Thirdly, according to the solution under scrutiny, the argument begins by considering someone uttering ‘what in no way is’ and ends by speaking about what happens to someone uttering ‘what is not’, which is a different linguistic expression. If the idea that the argument concentrates on utterances is taken seriously, there is something inelegant in allowing a change of linguistic expression between the argument’s beginning and end. These reflections lead me to prefer the third of the last paragraph’s uses

²⁴ At *Cra.* 430A1–2 ‘ἀληθῆ φθέγγεσθαι’ and ‘ψευδῆ φθέγγεσθαι’ are used differently: they mean something like ‘to utter sounds in a way that amounts to speaking truly’ and ‘... falsely’.

²⁵ Cf. MacKay (1868), 111; Jowett (1892), iv 365; Fowler (1921), 339; Fraccaroli (1934), 147; Cornford (1935), 203; Warrington (1961), 182; Zadro (1971), 217; Matthews (1972), 222; Bondeson (1973), 19; Cambiano (1981), 433; Benardete (1984), 28; Roggerone (1990), 93; Mazzarelli (1991), 282; Rudebusch (1991), 530; Vitali (1992), 67; N. P. White (1993), 26; Bianchini (1997), 92; Ambuel (2007), 205; Fronterotta (2007), 309; Centrone (2008), 99. The quotation marks in Robinson’s edition also presuppose that ‘φθέγγεσθαι’ here mean ‘to utter’.

²⁶ Cf. below, subsection to n. 45.

of ‘φθέγγεσθαι’. Accordingly, I translate the verb’s relevant occurrences with ‘to express’,²⁷ and I take it that ‘φθέγγεσθαι what in no way is’ and ‘φθέγγεσθαι what is not’ mean ‘to express what as a matter of fact is not’.

Issues of translation: (ii) *The sentence at 237D6–7.* The interrogative sentence ‘ἄρα τῆδε σκοπῶν σύμφης ὥς . . . ;’ (237D6–7) allows two construals. On the first, the declarative sentence introduced by ‘ὥς’ is governed by ‘σύμφης’. The translation is: ‘In viewing the matter this way, do you agree that . . . ?’²⁸ On the second construal, the declarative sentence is governed by ‘τῆδε’.²⁹ The translation is: ‘Are you agreeing because you view the matter this way, that . . . ?’³⁰

The linguistic evidence favours the second construal. For: (1) there are no sure parallels in Plato for ‘σύμφημι’ followed by a declarative sentence introduced by ‘ὥς’ or ‘ὅτι’;³¹ (2) I found no occurrence in Plato of ‘φημι’ construed with a declarative sentence introduced by ‘ὥς’ (although there are examples with ‘ὅτι’: *Grg.* 487D5–7; *R.* 3. 387D5–6); (3) the formula ‘τῆδε σκοπῶν’ always looks forward (cf. *Grg.* 497D9; *Phd.* 73B4; *R.* I. 351A7; *Sph.* 254C2; *Tht.* 163A7; *Ti.* 89E3; *Virt.* 378C6).³²

The progression of the first argument. Here is a step-by-step reconstruction of the first argument about the impossibility of saying what is not.

The first step (237B7–9) states the initial assumption: we express what in no way is.

The second step (237B10–237C9) claims that the expression ‘not being’ cannot be applied to any being. Claiming this is analogous to claiming that ‘not man’ cannot be applied to any man. It is an instance of the general principle that a negative general term³³ consisting of ‘not’ followed by a

²⁷ Cf. Apelt (1914), 66; Diès (1925), 336; Martini (1931), 254; Taylor (1961), 125; Meinhardt (1990), 85; Giardini (1997), 559; Duerlinger (2005), 103.

²⁸ Cf. Ficino (1484), 350; MacKay (1868), 112; Jowett (1892), iv 365; Diès (1925), 337; Martini (1931), 254; Fraccaroli (1934), 148; Arangio-Ruiz (1951), 128; Gentile and Plebe (1965), 50; Taylor (1961), 126; Zadro (1971), 217; Cambiano (1981), 434; Meinhardt (1990), 87; Roggerone (1990), 94; Vitali (1992), 67; Cordero (1993), 125; Bianchini (1997), 92; Duerlinger (2005), 103; Ambuel (2007), 206; Fronterotta (2007), 312.

²⁹ Cf. Heindorf (1810), 349; Apelt (1897), 116.

³⁰ Cf. Apelt (1914), 67; Fowler (1921), 341; Cornford (1935), 204; Warrington (1961), 182; Matthews (1972), 223; Mazzarelli (1991), 282; N. P. White (1993), 26; Brann *et al.* (1996), 41; Centrone (2008), 99.

³¹ Cf. Owen (1971), 226. *Phlb.* 28E7–29A1 might provide such a parallel, but syntax and reading are uncertain. The earliest example I have found of ‘σύμφημι’ with a declarative sentence introduced by ‘ὥς’ is Aristid. *Or.* I. 132, 4 J. (second century AD).

³² This paragraph is indebted to discussions with Robert Parker and David Robinson.

³³ Let me fix some terminology. *Predicables* are expressions which can be predicated of (one or more) things and are true or false of (one or more) things. Examples of predicables are: ‘runs’, ‘does not

general term cannot be applied to anything falling under the general term following ‘not’.

The third step (237C10–11) claims that the expression ‘not being’ cannot be applied to the expression ‘something’ (the article ‘τὸ’ in ‘τὸ τι’ at 237C10 must function as a quotation device:³⁴ it would be strange to say that the expression ‘not being’ cannot be applied to any something). What Plato means is probably that the expression ‘not being’ cannot be applied to any item with respect to which the expression ‘something’ can be used. Theaetetus is bewildered: he asks ‘How so?’ (237C12).

The fourth step (237D1–5) claims that the expression ‘something’ can only be used with respect to beings. This justifies the third step’s claim that the expression ‘not being’ cannot be applied to any item with respect to which the expression ‘something’ can be used: for, if ‘not being’ could be applied to any item with respect to which the expression ‘something’ can be used, then, since (as the fourth step indicates) the expression ‘something’ can only be used with respect to beings, it would follow that ‘not being’ could be applied to a being, contrary to what is claimed in the second step.

The claim, made in the fourth step, that the expression ‘something’ can only be used with respect to beings, reflects certain facts of the Greek language, and in particular of Plato’s Greek. ‘To be something’ (ἔιναι τι) may be used to make existential claims,³⁵ and instances of ‘to call φ “something”’ or ‘to call something “φ”’³⁶ may be employed as equivalents of the corresponding instances of ‘to accept φ as existent’.³⁷ Plato might

run’, ‘is beautiful’, ‘is not beautiful’, ‘is taller than Socrates’, ‘is not taller than Socrates’, ‘is flying’, ‘is not flying’, ‘is a man’, ‘is not a man’, ‘beautiful’, ‘not beautiful’, ‘taller than Socrates’, ‘not taller than Socrates’, ‘flying’, ‘not flying’, ‘man’, ‘not man’. There are two main types of predicables: *predicate-expressions*, which are obtained from declarative sentences by subtracting their subject-expressions (my first ten examples are predicate-expressions), and *general terms*, which include common noun-phrases, adjectival phrases, and whatever predicables form predicate-expressions by being added as complements to ‘is’ (my last eight examples are general terms). In English some general terms (e.g. ‘man’) form predicate-expressions by being added as complements to ‘is’ only with the further addition of an indefinite article (‘is man’ is not a predicate-expression, ‘is a man’ is). In Greek no article is needed. Proper nouns (e.g. ‘Socrates’) and definite descriptions (e.g. ‘the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*’) are not predicables.

³⁴ Cf. below, n. 11 of Ch. 5 and text thereto.

³⁵ Cf. 247A10; *Hp.Ma.* 287C4; *Prr.* 332C3; *Phd.* 64C2; 65D4–5; 74A12; 102B1; *R.* 9. 583C5; *Phlb.* 37A2; 37A7; Schipper (1964), 38–9; Frede (1967), 46; Kahn (1976), 46; Kahn (1981), 109, 129.

³⁶ Some of these English formulations are unidiomatic (‘anything’ would be more fitting than ‘something’). More idiomatic formulations would, however, conceal the fact that a single Greek word, ‘τι’, is behind all of them.

³⁷ Cf. 244B12; *Prr.* 332A4; 358D5; *Grg.* 454C7–8; *Phd.* 103C11; *Men.* 75E1; 76A1; 76D2; 88A7–88B1; *R.* 10. 608E6; Frede (1967), 46; Mills (1968), 150–1.

perhaps be described as stating that the particular quantifier ‘something’ has ‘existential import’.³⁸

At this stage the reconstruction of the argument becomes hard because several alternatives open up, and none is fully satisfactory. The main difficulty is that until 237D5 Plato mentions the expression ‘something’ while at 237E1 he uses it: at some point he shifts from mentioning to using ‘something’. When does the shift from mention to use occur? On my preferred reconstruction, it occurs at 237E1: before then ‘something’ is mentioned, from then onwards it is used.

The fifth step (237D6–11) makes two claims, a primary one and a subsidiary one. The primary claim is that whoever utters ‘something’ is committed to uttering ‘at least one something’. The subsidiary claim is that the word ‘something’ is a sign of one thing because it is a singular form of the pronoun, as opposed to its dual and plural. The subsidiary claim supports the primary one. The fifth step supports what precedes, namely the claim that the expression ‘something’ can only be used with respect to beings: Plato may be taken to accomplish this by indicating that uttering ‘something’ commits one to uttering ‘at least one something’, while leaving it to the reader to supply the premiss that uttering ‘at least one something’ commits one to uttering ‘something that is’.

Other Platonic passages develop arguments similar to that behind the fifth step: they start with a predicate being said of something ($\tau\iota$), progress to that predicate being said of at least one something ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \gamma\acute{\epsilon}\ \tau\iota$), and conclude with that predicate being said of something that is ($\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \tau\iota$) (cf. *Tht.* 188E4–189A14; *R.* 5. 478B6–478C2). Plato relies on the assumption that unity implies existence. This is a particular case of a more general principle which Plato seems to endorse: that all numerical attributes (i.e. attributes like unity, duality, multiplicity, etc.) imply existence.³⁹

Why should numerical attributes imply existence? Plato does not explain. Two facts about numerical attributes might be relevant. (1) Numerals, which express numerical attributes, are always connected to a (possibly understood) count-noun: the same chunk of reality may be described as ‘one book’, ‘one hundred sheets’, ‘two hundred pages’, etc. The application of a numeral therefore presupposes the existence of as many instances of the count-noun as indicated by the numeral itself: ‘one book’ presupposes the existence of one object falling under the count-noun ‘book’, ‘one hundred sheets’ presupposes the existence of one hundred objects falling under the count-noun ‘sheet’, etc. This may be plausibly taken to indicate

³⁸ Cf. Thomas (2008), 632–3. ³⁹ Cf. *Prm.* 144D5–144E3; Thomas (2008), 642–3.

that numerical attributes imply existence.⁴⁰ (2) It is impossible to count non-existent things: how many non-existent cats are there on the mat? This seems to indicate that numerical attributes, which are assigned in counting, imply existence.⁴¹

The sixth step (237E1–3) claims that whoever does not say something says nothing. This is a new independent claim: it is not a consequence of what comes before. It is an instance of the logical principle that if it is not the case that something is so-and-so then nothing is so-and-so (a similar bald assertion of another instance of this principle occurs at *Tht.* 188E6–7).

The seventh step (237E4–5) adds the intuitive assumption that whoever says nothing fails to speak, i.e. fails to accomplish an act of saying.

The eighth step (237E5–6) is the argument's conclusion: whoever expresses what is not fails to speak.

The structure of the first argument. How does the first argument reach its conclusion? Its sixth step is:

[1] Whoever does not say something says nothing.

The seventh step is:

[2] Whoever says nothing fails to accomplish an act of saying.

[1] and [2] imply:

[3] Whoever does not say something fails to accomplish an act of saying.

It is reasonable to expect that the argument's conclusion is reached on the basis of:

[4] Whoever expresses what is not does not say something.

For [4] and [3] entail:

[5] Whoever expresses what is not fails to accomplish an act of saying,

namely the argument's conclusion, stated in the eighth step. It only remains for us to obtain [4].

Claim [4] is not formulated. What the argument does state, as its third step, is that the expression 'not being' cannot be applied to any item with respect to which the expression 'something' can be used.⁴² This is intended to support the claim that there is an incompatibility between the concept

⁴⁰ Cf. Gosling (1973), 222; Thomas (2008), 657–8.

⁴¹ Cf. Ryle (1960), 445; Gale (1976), 3. ⁴² Cf. above, paragraph to n. 34.

expressed by ‘not being’ and that introduced by using ‘something’, and this in turn is supposed to support the further claim that it cannot be the case that something is a not being (in a similar vein, one could discuss the behaviour of the nouns ‘dog’ and ‘horse’ in order to establish that there is an incompatibility between the concepts expressed by ‘dog’ and ‘horse’, and conclude that no dog can be a horse). But now, if it cannot be the case that something is a not being, then it cannot be the case that someone expresses what is not and says something, whence it follows that whoever expresses what is not does not say something, as [4] claims.⁴³

The line of reasoning of the first argument about the impossibility of saying what is not may be summarized as follows. If you accomplish an act of saying, then you say something, so you say something that is. But if you say what is not, then you do not say something that is. Therefore if you say what is not then you do not accomplish an act of saying. Analogous arguments occur elsewhere in Plato’s work, sometimes with expressions other than the verb ‘to say’ (‘λέγειν’): the *Euthydemus* (284B1–284C6) contains a vaguely similar argument with ‘to say’ (‘λέγειν’); in the *Republic* (5. 478B5–478C2) there is one that is quite close and turns upon ‘to believe’ (‘δοξάζειν’); in the *Theaetetus* (188D7–189B6) there are four which are also close and involve ‘to believe’ (‘δοξάζειν’), ‘to see’ (‘ὄρᾶν’), ‘to hear’ (‘ἀκούειν’), and ‘to touch’ (‘ἅπτεσθαι’); finally, the *Parmenides* (132B8–132C2) offers a vaguely similar argument turning on the noun ‘thought’ (‘νόημα’).

The ambiguity of ‘to say something’. How compelling is the first argument about the impossibility of saying what is not?

David Wiggins contends that the argument is fallacious. In his view, the fallacy depends on the ambiguity of ‘to say something’. In a first sense, ‘You are saying something’ means that you are carrying out a speech act with some content: in this first sense, the inference from ‘You accomplish an act of saying’ to ‘You are saying something’ is valid. In a second sense, ‘You are saying something’ means that there is an entity to which your act of saying is directed: in this second sense, the inference from ‘You are saying something’ to ‘You are saying something that is’ is valid (or at least exempt

⁴³ The above reconstruction of the first argument owes much to the excellent accounts in Wiggins (1971), 268–72 and Szaif (1998), 397–8 (cf. also Bondeson (1972), 3–4 and McCabe (1994), 195–7). It differs radically from the reconstruction of Moravcsik (1962), 26, who takes Plato to argue that since ‘what is not’ applies to nothing it has no meaning (the argument would thus invalidly infer lack of meaning from emptiness of extension). My interpretation in Crivelli (1990), 26–8 was close to Moravcsik’s.

from the fault in which Wiggins is interested). The two senses differ with respect to what may or may not be inferred. If 'You are saying something' is understood in the first sense, then 'You are saying . . .' is an opaque context and is therefore not open to substitutions of coreferential expressions (similarly, the fact that 'You are saying that . . . is honest' is an opaque context blocks the inference from 'You are saying that Nixon is honest' to 'You are saying that the most corrupt president is honest' or 'You are saying that a crook is honest'). If 'You are saying something' is understood in the second sense, then 'You are saying . . .' is a transparent context and is therefore open to substitutions of coreferential expressions (similarly, the fact that 'You are saying of . . . that he is honest' is a transparent context warrants the inference from 'You are saying of Nixon that he is honest' to 'You are saying of the most corrupt president that he is honest' and 'You are saying of a crook that he is honest').⁴⁴

The ambiguity spotted by Wiggins poses a serious challenge to the first argument about the impossibility of saying what is not. In defence of the argument one may say that perhaps it does not trade on Wiggins's ambiguity. The argument is perhaps an attack on those thinkers who believe that every speech act is directed to something. Frege and mainstream modern philosophers of language are committed to such a view because they maintain that every speech act is directed to a proposition. One can also endorse the view that every speech act is directed to something for reasons different from those of mainstream modern philosophy of language: Plato himself, as I shall argue, maintains that at least certain speech acts are directed to two things, neither of which is a proposition. An interpretation along these lines restores the validity of the argument (at least with respect to Wiggins's criticism): it assumes that in the argument the sentence 'You are saying something' is understood in only one sense, the second one, so that the argument's first inference amounts to the inference from 'You accomplish an act of saying' to 'You are saying something', meaning 'Your act of saying is directed to something'. This inference is based not on an analysis of how the sentences 'You accomplish an act of saying' and 'You are saying something' are ordinarily used, but on a philosophical view about what is involved in carrying out acts of saying.

This defence has textual support. For, in a similar argument in the *Republic* (5. 478B5–478C2), Plato puts forward the inference from 'to have a belief' (ἴδοξάζειν) to 'to bring one's belief to bear on something' (ἐπί τι φέρειν τὴν δόξαν) (478B6): this appears to correspond to the way of

⁴⁴ Cf. Wiggins (1971), 271, 279–80.

understanding the inference in the *Sophist's* argument mentioned in the last paragraph.

The defence also has a cost. The first argument comes out having a restricted scope: it targets only a certain conception of speech, one which is ontologically loaded in that it postulates that every speech act is directed to something. Such a conception of speech is not mandatory. One may well avoid claiming that every speech act is directed to something. One might hold that the public content of intentional events boils down to a shared structure of the private mental or linguistic events, a shared structure that might perhaps be expressed by adverbial formulations.

The second argument about the impossibility of saying what is not (238A1–238C12) purports to prove that no expression applies to what does not exist:

- VIS. ‘Μήπω μέγ’ εἴπης; ἔτι γάρ, ὦ μακάριε, ἔστι, καὶ 238A1
ταῦτά γε τῶν ἀποριῶν ἡ μεγίστη καὶ πρώτη. περὶ γάρ
αὐτὴν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀρχὴν οὔσα τυγχάνει.
- THY. Πῶς φῆς; λέγε καὶ μηδὲν ἀποκνήσης.
- VIS. Τῶ μὲν ὄντι που προσγένοιτ’ ἂν τι τῶν ὄντων 85
ἔτερον.
- THY. Πῶς γὰρ οὔ;
- VIS. Μὴ ὄντι δέ τι τῶν ὄντων ἄρα ποτε προσγίγνεσθαι
φήσομεν δυνατὸν εἶναι;
- THY. Καὶ πῶς; 100
- VIS. Ἀριθμὸν δὴ τὸν σύμπαντα τῶν ὄντων τίθεμεν.
- THY. Εἴπερ γε καὶ ἄλλο τι θετέον ὡς ὄν. 238B1
- VIS. Μὴ τοίνυν μηδ’ ἐπιχειρῶμεν ἀριθμοῦ μήτε πληθὸς
μήτε ἐν πρὸς τὸ μὴ ὄν προσφέρειν.
- THY. Οὐκ οὖν ἂν ὀρθῶς γε, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐπιχειροῖμεν,
ὡς φησιν ὁ λόγος. 85
- VIS. Πῶς οὖν ἂν ἡ διὰ τοῦ στόματος φθέγγεται ἂν τις ἢ
καὶ τῇ διανοίᾳ τὸ παράπαν λάβοι τὰ μὴ ὄντα ἢ τὸ μὴ ὄν
χωρὶς ἀριθμοῦ;
- THY. Λέγε πῆ;
- VIS. Μὴ ὄντα μὲν ἐπειδὴν λέγωμεν, ἄρα οὐ πληθὸς 110
ἐπιχειροῦμεν ἀριθμοῦ προστιθέναι; 238C1
- THY. Τί μήν;
- VIS. Μὴ ὄν δέ, ἄρα οὐ τὸ ἐν αὐ;
- THY. Σαφέστατά γε.
- VIS. Καὶ μήν οὔτε δίκαιόν γε οὔτε ὀρθόν φαμεν ὄν ἐπι- 85
χειρεῖν μὴ ὄντι προσαρμόττειν.
- THY. Λέγεις ἀληθέστατα.

- VIS. Συννοεῖς οὖν ὡς οὔτε φθέγγασθαι δυνατόν ὀρθῶς
οὔτ' εἰπεῖν οὔτε διανοηθῆναι τὸ μὴ ὄν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό, ἀλλ'
ἔστιν ἀδιανόητόν τε καὶ ἄρρητον καὶ ἀφθεγκτον καὶ
ἄλογον; C10
- THT. Παντάπασι μὲν οὖν. C12
- VIS. 'Don't boast yet'.⁴⁵ For there is more to come, my dear friend, and
it is the greatest and the first of the puzzles. For it happens to be
about the very principle of the matter. 238A
- THT. What do you mean? Speak and do not hesitate.
- VIS. Some other being could come to be attached to what is.
- THT. How could it not?
- VIS. But shall we say that some being can come to be attached to what is
not?
- THT. How could we?⁴⁶
- VIS. We posit all of number among beings.
- THT. If anything else is to be posited as a being. 238B
- VIS. Let us then not try to apply either plurality or unity of number to
what is not.
- THT. We would not be making a correct attempt, it seems, as the argu-
ment says.
- VIS. In what way could one express through one's mouth or in any way
grasp with thought not-beings or not-being without number?
- THT. Will you say how?
- VIS. If we say 'not-beings', are we not trying to apply multiplicity of
number? 238C
- THT. Yes, certainly.
- VIS. And if we say 'not-being', are we not trying to apply unity, in turn?
- THT. Most clearly.
- VIS. And we say that it is neither right nor correct to try to apply being
to what is not.
- THT. What you are saying is most true.
- VIS. You then understand that one cannot correctly express nor say nor
think of what is not in its own right, but it is unthinkable and
unspeakable and inexpressible and unsayable?
- THT. By all means.

After some introductory remarks (238A1–4), whose purpose is to indicate the importance of the coming puzzle, the argument's first step (238A5–10) claims that 'some other being could come to be attached to what is' (238A5–6),⁴⁷ i.e. an attribute that implies existence can be assigned to what exists,

⁴⁵ Cf. *S. Fr.* 662, 1 Radt (with Stob. 5. 934, 4–5 W.-H.). ⁴⁶ Cf. *Prm.* 163E6–164A1.

⁴⁷ According to Yang (2005), 288, 'τι τῶν ὄντων ἕτερον' (238A5–6) means 'something different from the things that are' and alludes to the analysis of not-being of 257B1–258C6. Plato can, however, hardly expect his readers to understand the phrase in this way.

but it is not the case that ‘some being can come to be attached to what is not’ (238A8–9), i.e. an attribute that implies existence cannot be assigned to what does not exist. This is straightforward: it is like claiming that an attribute that implies whiteness cannot be assigned to what is not white. Plato uses the expression ‘some being’ to quantify over attributes that imply being, i.e. existence: in a similar manner one might use the expression ‘some animal’ to quantify over kinds like dog, cat, etc., i.e. kinds that imply the kind animal.

The second step (238A11–238B5) claims that numerical attributes (i.e. attributes like unity, duality, multiplicity, etc.) imply existence,⁴⁸ and therefore cannot be assigned to what does not exist. I discussed this implication earlier, in the context of the first argument about the impossibility of saying what is not.⁴⁹

The third step (238B6–238C7) states that the expressions ‘not being’ and ‘not beings’, being respectively singular and plural, involve numerical attributes and therefore cannot be used to pick out what does not exist.

The fourth step (238C8–9) states that ‘one cannot correctly express nor say nor think of what is not in its own right [τὸ μὴ ὄν αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτό]’. In other words, ‘one cannot correctly express nor say nor think of what is not’ without thereby attributing to it some further characteristics. Specifically, ‘one cannot correctly express nor say nor think of what is not’ without attributing to it either unity (by using the singular ‘not being’ or any other expression in the singular) or plurality (by using the plural ‘not beings’ or any other expression in the plural).⁵⁰

The fifth step (238C9–12) states that what is not ‘is unthinkable and unspeakable and inexpressible and unsayable’ (238C10–11). This may be regarded as the conclusion not only of the second argument about the impossibility of saying what is not, but also of the first (as is indicated by the adjective ‘inexpressible’, which echoes the first argument’s verb ‘to

⁴⁸ Cf. *Tht.* 188E8–10.

⁴⁹ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 40. Some commentators (e.g. Moravcsik (1962), 26) favour a different interpretation of the argument’s first and second step. Plato could mean that while an existent property can hold of what exists, no existent property can hold of what does not exist (as, in the words of Owen (1971), 249, ‘actual hats cannot be hung on non-existent pegs’) (cf. 247A9–247B3). Plato would then add that numbers are surely existent properties and therefore cannot hold of what does not exist.

⁵⁰ At 238C8–9 the formula ‘αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτό’ could also be taken to modify ‘τὸ μὴ ὄν’ and to signal the complete use of ‘not to be’, which is often deployed to express non-existence (cf. *Tht.* 188D9–10; 189B1–2; Thorp (1984), 89–90). But, in the context of the argument to which it belongs, the occurrence of ‘αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτό’ at 238C8–9 is more economically taken to function as an adverb that modifies the preceding string of negated verb-phrases and therefore indicates that what is not cannot be said or thought of without attributing to it further (unwanted) characteristics.

express', cf. 237B8 and 237E6). As far as the second argument is concerned, the point made is that no expression can be used to refer to what does not exist because any apt expression will be either in the singular or in the plural and will therefore involve some numerical attribute (just like 'not being' and 'not beings'). The conclusion concerns not only speech but also thought because thought is internal silent speech (cf. 263E3–264B5).

The first and the second arguments about the impossibility of saying what is not coordinate with one another because they show different ways in which it is impossible to say what is not, i.e. what does not exist. The first argument shows one way in which it is impossible to say what does not exist: what does not exist cannot be said in that it is inexpressible. In other words, no act of saying can be endowed with content by being directed to what does not exist. The second argument shows a different way in which it is impossible to say what does not exist: what does not exist cannot be said in that it cannot be referred to.

The third argument about the impossibility of saying what is not (238DI–239AI2) maintains that an intermediate step and the conclusion of the second argument are inconsistent. First (238DIO–238E4), an intermediate step of the second argument claimed that what is not participates neither in unity nor in plurality (cf. 238B2–3). This claim both denies and affirms unity about what is not (the affirmation is made implicitly because of the phrase 'what is not', which is in the singular). Secondly (238E5–239AI2), in the conclusion of the second argument what is not was said 'to be inexpressible and unspeakable and unsayable' (238E5–6, cf. 238C8–II). What is not was thereby described as being (because it was said to *be* inexpressible etc.) and as one (because the third person singular 'is' had been used in the original formulation⁵¹ and the adjectives 'inexpressible', 'unspeakable', and 'unsayable' are in the singular – in Greek, unlike English, adjectives take singular, dual, and plural forms). But being cannot be attributed to what is not, and the second argument had established that no number can be attributed to it. Even the occurrence of the singular 'it' in my very last sentence should be regarded as inconsistent (cf. 239A9–II)!

After the third argument about the impossibility of saying what is not, the Visitor declares that the examination of what is not defeats him

⁵¹ Retaining 'τοῦτο' (239A3) with the MSS, Burnet, and Diès: 'τοῦτο' picks up the 'εἶναι' of 238E8 and alludes to the singular 'ἔστιν' used at 238C10. Some commentators correct the text because they think that 'εἶναι' has nothing to do with number. Cornford (1935), 207 (followed by Robinson) reads 'τὸ τὸ': but 'τὸ' was not used at 238E5–6. Frede (1962), 132–3 suggests 'τὸ αὐτὸ': but 'αὐτὸ' at 238E6 is not mentioned but used.

(239B1–3). He invites Theaetetus to take on the examination in his place, but Theaetetus prudently declines the offer (239B3–239C3). The two inquirers acknowledge that the sophist has found an inaccessibly confusing refuge (239C4–8).

Not-being, lack of all attributes, and non-existence. In my reconstruction of the three arguments about the impossibility of saying what is not, I assumed that ‘what is not’ is ‘what does not exist’. Such an assumption clashes with a widespread interpretation, according to which, in the three arguments, ‘what is not’ is ‘what has no attributes’, ‘that which for all F is not F ’, an object completely devoid of attributes, ‘with all the being knocked out of it’.⁵²

At least three considerations support the view that in this part of the dialogue what is not is an object completely devoid of attributes.

- (1) At the beginning of the first argument Plato uses the expression ‘what in no way is’ (‘τὸ μηδὲ μὴ ὄν’, 237B7–8). Such an expression suggests that objects completely devoid of attributes are in the offing.
- (2) In the middle of the second argument (238A8–10) Plato holds that we cannot attribute something which is to what is not. This is easily understood if what is not is an object completely devoid of attributes.
- (3) The puzzle concerning images speaks of the contrary of what is true (cf. 240B5) and the puzzle concerning false sentences and false beliefs speaks of the contrary of things which are (cf. 240D6–8). Later in the dialogue Plato seems to think that the puzzles depend on the concept of the contrary of what is (cf. 257B3–4, 258E6–259A1). But the contrary of what is is naturally understood as an object completely devoid of attributes.

These considerations are not compelling. As for (1), the expression ‘what in no way is’ may be understood as a strong denial, meaning ‘what no way is’, ‘what by all means is not’.

As for (2), I already offered an interpretation of the second argument about the impossibility of saying what is not that does not assume that what is not is an object completely devoid of attributes. I claimed that when, at 238A8–10, Plato holds that we cannot attribute something which is to what is not, he means that an attribute that implies existence cannot be assigned to what does not exist. This interpretation has the advantage

⁵² Cf. Bluck (1963), 64; Frede (1967), 75; Malcolm (1967), 136–7; van Fraassen (1968–9), 488–9; Owen (1971), 235–6, 247, 266; Bondeson (1973), 13–16; Gosling (1973), 222; McDowell (1973), 200; Bondeson (1976), 8; Lewis (1976), 110; Mourelatos (1983), 59, 66–7; Malcolm (1985a), 520; Bordt (1991), 499.

of explaining why Plato says that we cannot attribute something *which is* to what is not. If the interpretation according to which what is not is an object completely devoid of attributes were correct, Plato would have no need to say that we cannot attribute something *which is* to what is not. He could simply have said that we cannot attribute anything to what is not.

As for (3), nothing guarantees that the contrary of what is should be an object completely devoid of attributes. In due course I shall explain the contrary of what is in a way that makes it not an object completely devoid of attributes, but a non-existent object.

Moreover, other considerations suggest that in the three arguments about the impossibility of saying what is not, 'what is not' is 'what does not exist'.

- (1) At the beginning of the first argument, the Visitor asks Theaetetus whether 'we somehow dare to express what in no way is [τὸ μηδαμῶς ὄν]' (237B7–8). It is unlikely that the young and philosophically unskilled Theaetetus (cf. 234C2–234E7, 237C5–6) could understand the expression 'what in no way is' in the 'loaded' sense of 'what has no attributes'. It is much more plausible that he understands the expression in the sense of 'what does not exist'.
- (2) At 264DI–2 Plato uses the expression 'in no way to be' (μηδαμῶς εἶναι) to express the non-existence of falsity.
- (3) Were the expression 'the things which in no way are' (τὰ μηδαμῶς ὄντα) to mean 'the things which have no attributes', then, parallelwise, the expression 'the things which in all ways are' (τὰ πάντως ὄντα) should mean 'the things which have all attributes'. Plato uses the expression 'the things which in all ways are' (τὰ πάντως ὄντα) at 240E5, in a context where he also uses 'to be in no way' (μηδαμῶς εἶναι, 240E5) and 'the things which in no way are' (τὰ μηδαμῶς ὄντα, 240E2). But, were the occurrence of 'the things which in all ways are' (τὰ πάντως ὄντα) at 240E5 to mean 'the things which have all attributes', then the argument to which it belongs would be nonsensical.⁵³

The considerations I have just presented induce me to believe that in the three arguments about the impossibility of saying what is not, 'what is not' is 'what does not exist'. However, there are reasons for regarding Plato as committed to the view that whatever is so-and-so exists. I shall review these reasons at a later stage.⁵⁴ At present I want only to point out a consequence of this Platonic commitment, namely that what does not exist is not in any way. In conceding this, I am not withdrawing the claim

⁵³ Cf. Heinaman (1983), 4; Brown (1986), 467; Brown (1994), 226. According to the *Cratylus* (386D3–4) Euthydemus held that 'all things always have all attributes simultaneously'.

⁵⁴ Cf. below, subsection to n. 78 of Ch. 5.

which I have just argued for, namely that in the three arguments about the impossibility of saying what is not, ‘what is not’ is ‘what does not exist’. I stand by this claim, while highlighting a consequence of it.⁵⁵

2.2 IMAGES ARE IMPOSSIBLE

Two new arguments. After going through three arguments for the impossibility of saying what is not, the Visitor and Theaetetus offer two more which the sophist could use to avoid being captured in the definitional hunt. The two new arguments hark back to the connection of the sophist’s art with those of producing images, likenesses, and apparitions (cf. 235C9–235D3 and 236C6–236D3). The first, which attempts to establish that an image cannot be defined without contradiction, is of an ontological character. The second new argument is in a more epistemological vein: it links the production of apparitions with deception and false belief, whose impossibility it then purports to establish.

The two new arguments are put in the sophist’s own mouth (cf. 239D5, 239E1, and 241A3). This is probably an indication that they contain illicit or at least dubious moves. In this respect, the two new arguments differ from the earlier three about the impossibility of saying what is not, which are instead regarded as pieces of serious philosophy.⁵⁶

The contradictory nature of images. Throughout the first new argument (239C9–240C6) the Visitor acts as a spokesman for the sophist, who plays the role of questioner.⁵⁷ Theaetetus is the answerer.

The sophist asks ‘what on earth we say an image is’ (239D3–4). Thus, he requires a definition of image. Theaetetus’ first answer is an open-ended list of types of image: ‘images in water and mirrors, and moreover those drawn and moulded and all other such things, whatever they may be’ (239D7–9). He thereby repeats the previous day’s mistake, when his reply to the question ‘What is knowledge?’ listed types of knowledge.⁵⁸ The sophist is not satisfied. He wants a genuine definition of image:

| | |
|---|-------------|
| VIS. Τὸ διὰ πάντων τούτων ἃ πολλὰ εἰπῶν ἠξίωσας ἐνὶ προσειπεῖν ὀνόματι, φθεγξάμενος εἶδωλον ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ὡς ἐν ὄν. λέγε οὖν καὶ ἀμύνου μηδὲν ὑποχωρῶν τὸν ἄνδρα. | 240A4 A5 |
| THET. Τί δῆτα, ὦ ξένη, εἶδωλον ἂν φαῖμεν εἶναι πλὴν γε τὸ πρὸς τάληθινὸν ἀφωμοιωμένον ἕτερον τοιοῦτον; | |

⁵⁵ Cf. Thomas (2008), 649. ⁵⁶ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 17. ⁵⁷ Cf. Robinson (2001), 438.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Th.* 146C7–146D3; Runciman (1962), 67; Kamlah (1963), 29; Ray (1984), 17–18.

- VIS. Ἐτερον δὲ λέγεις τοιοῦτον ἀληθινόν, ἢ ἐπὶ τίνι τὸ
 τοιοῦτον εἶπες; 240BI
 THT. Οὐδαμῶς ἀληθινόν γε, ἀλλ' εἰκὸς μὲν.
 VIS. Ἄρα τὸ ἀληθινόν ὄντως ὄν λέγων;
 THT. Οὕτως.
 VIS. Τί δέ; τὸ μὴ ἀληθινὸν ἄρ' ἐναντίον ἀληθοῦς; B5
 THT. Τί μήν;
 VIS. Οὐκ ὄντως ὄν⁵⁹ ἄρα λέγεις τὸ εἰκός, εἴπερ αὐτό γε
 μὴ ἀληθινὸν ἐρεῖς.
 THT. Ἄλλ' ἔστι γε μήν πως.
 VIS. Οὕκουν ἀληθῶς γε, φῆς. BIO
 THT. Οὐ γὰρ οὖν· πλήν γ' εἰκὸν ὄντως.
 VIS. Οὐκ ὄν ἄρα ὄντως,⁶⁰ ἔστιν ὄντως ἦν λέγομεν εἰκόνα;
 THT. Κινδυνεύει τοιαύτην τινὰ πεπλῆχθαι συμπλο- 240CI
 κὴν τὸ μὴ ὄν τῶ ὄντι, καὶ μάλα ἄτοπον. C2

 VIS. [The sophist wants you to specify] that which runs through all 240A
 these things which you call many, but which you deemed worthy to
 address with a single name, by uttering 'image' as if it were a single
 thing over all. Speak then and do not give any ground to the man.
 THT. What could we say, visitor, an image to be, except 'what is modelled
 upon the genuine thing, another thing of the same sort'?⁶¹
 VIS. 'By "another thing of the same sort" do you mean "genuine"? Or 240B
 what did you mean by "of the same sort"?'
 THT. 'In no way genuine, but similar.'
 VIS. 'By "genuine" do you mean "really being"?'
 THT. 'Yes.'
 VIS. 'And by "not genuine" do you mean "contrary to the genuine"?'
 THT. 'Yes, certainly.'
 VIS. 'You therefore call what is similar not really being, if you call it not
 genuine?'
 THT. 'But it is, somehow.'
 VIS. 'But not genuinely, you say.'
 THT. 'Surely not, except that it is really a copy.'
 VIS. 'So, what we call an image, while not really being, really is?'⁶²
 THT. Not-being seems to be woven together with being by some such 240C
 interweaving, and it is very absurd.

⁵⁹ The main MSS provide conflicting data: T has 'οὐκ ὄν', W 'οὐκ ὄντως οὐκ ὄν', and the β family 'οὐκ ὄντως οὐκόν'. I read 'οὐκ ὄντως ὄν' with Baiter (*apud* Baiter *et al.* (1839), 118), followed also by Burnet and Robinson.

⁶⁰ The main MSS have 'οὐκ ὄντως'. I read 'ὄντως' with Badham (1865), xxxiii, followed also by Burnet and Robinson.

⁶¹ Cf. *R.* 10. 597A4–5.

⁶² Taking 'ἦν λέγομεν εἰκόνα' as the grammatical subject: cf. Brann *et al.* (1996), 45. Some translators treat it as the grammatical predicate: cf. Cornford (1935), 211.

The sophist wants Theaetetus to identify a single characteristic shared by all and only the things to which ‘image’ applies. Theaetetus’ second answer is that an image is ‘what is modelled upon the genuine thing, another thing of the same sort’ (240A8). This answer highlights two traits of images. The first concerns their causal history: an image is ‘modelled upon the genuine thing’ in that it is brought into being by examining what is imitated. The second is about similarity: an image is ‘another thing of the same sort’ as what is imitated. For instance, an image of Cratylus must resemble Cratylus, an image of a cat must resemble a cat.⁶³

The phrase ‘another thing of the same sort’, contained in Theaetetus’ second answer, lends itself to an interpretation that is different from the one intended. It might be so understood as to imply that the image is another genuine thing, e.g. that an image of Cratylus is another Cratylus (cf. *Cra.* 432B1–432C6) and that an image of a cat is a cat. This ambivalence prompts the sophist to ask whether ‘by “another thing of the same sort” . . . you mean “genuine”’ (240A9). Is an image of Cratylus another genuine Cratylus? Is an image of a cat a genuine cat?

Theaetetus answers that an image is not a genuine item, but is merely like one (240B2). The sophist then gets Theaetetus to agree that ‘genuine’ means ‘really being’ (240B3–4) and that ‘not genuine’ means ‘contrary to genuine’ (240B5–6). Hence, the sophist infers, an image is not really a being (240B7–8) (this follows simply from the admissions that an image is not a genuine item and that ‘genuine’ means ‘really being’: the point about contrariety plays no role). When Theaetetus protests that an image somehow is because it really is a copy (240B9–11), the sophist deduces that ‘what we call an image, while not really being, really is’ (240B12). Theaetetus concedes that a ‘very absurd’ interweaving of being and not-being has been reached (240C1–2).

In most of its steps, and pointedly in the last one, the argument contains occurrences of the incomplete use of ‘to be’ modified by the adverb ‘really’ but with omitted complements.⁶⁴ Now, it is perfectly true that an image of Cratylus is not really Cratylus and really is a copy; and it is just as true that an image of a cat is not really a cat and really is a copy. All of this is captured by the formula of the argument’s last step: ‘What we call an image, while not really being, really is’ (240B12–13). But the absence of the complements of the verb-phrase ‘really to be’ makes it look as if the formula

⁶³ Cf. Harte (2006), 28.

⁶⁴ On the incomplete use of ‘to be’ cf. below, paragraph to n. 115 of Ch. 4.

expresses the claim that an image exists and does not exist, a contradictory claim.⁶⁵

How is the puzzle to be solved? The move Plato should make to disarm this puzzle is to indicate that it depends on an invalid inference from a conjunction of an affirmative and a negative predication with different general terms (e.g. 'An image of a cat is a copy and is not a cat') to a contradiction involving the concept of existence (e.g. 'An image of a cat exists and does not exist') (the fallacious step is eased by the fact that in the version put forward by the sophist the complements of 'to be' are omitted). Specifically, Plato should demonstrate that if something is not (a) ϕ , it does not follow that it does not exist. Once this is shown, the inference's invalidity becomes clear: the inference's negative side (from 'is not a cat' to 'does not exist') is blocked. Such a move Plato will make in his account of negation at 257B1–257C4.⁶⁶

2.3 FALSEHOOD IS IMPOSSIBLE

The impossibility of falsehood. The second new argument whereby the sophist flees capture (240C7–241B4) relates to the idea that the sophist's art produces apparitions and therefore induces false beliefs (recall that apparitions are linked to deception twice over).⁶⁷ The argument, a version of the falsehood paradox, purports to establish that it is impossible to believe or say falsehoods. Versions of the falsehood paradox appear in other dialogues.⁶⁸ Only in the *Sophist* does Plato solve one (or more) of them, although some earlier presentations already suggest an awareness of the disarming procedure.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Cf. Malcolm (1967), 137; Brown (1986), 468; Malcolm (1991), 201. According to Bluck (1963), 66, the negative side is a truncated sentence expressing a negative statement of identity (because the image is different from its original). This, however, will work at most for cases like 'An image of Cratylus is not really Cratylus', not for cases like 'An image of a cat is not really a cat'.

According to some commentators (e.g. Cornford (1935), 209–12; Kamlah (1963), 30–1), the passage 240A4–240C2 characterizes the ontological status of images as intermediate between the wholly real and the wholly unreal (the combination of being and not-being ascribed to images in *Sph.* 240B12–240C2 would echo that attributed to the object of belief in *R.* 5, 477A2–480A13). One wonders, however, whether Plato would make a sophist the mouthpiece of such a metaphysical doctrine.

⁶⁶ Cf. below, text to n. 75 of Ch. 5. ⁶⁷ Cf. above, subsection to n. 42 of Ch. 1.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Euthd.* 284B1–284C6; *Cra.* 429C6–430A5; *R.* 5, 478B6–478C2; *Thr.* 167A6–8; 187C7–200C7 (especially 188C9–189B9); Palmer (1999), 124–6. Palmer (1999), 125–7 and 257–8 examines the evidence of the falsehood paradox among historical sophists.

⁶⁹ Cf. Burnyeat (2002).

- VIS. Τί δὲ δὴ; τὴν τέχνην αὐτοῦ τίνα ἀφορίσαντες ἡμῖν
αὐτοῖς συμφωνεῖν οἶοι τε ἐσόμεθα; 240C7
- ΤΗΤ. Πῆ καὶ τὸ ποῖόν τι φοβούμενος οὕτω λέγεις;
- VIS. Ὅταν περὶ τὸ φάντασμα αὐτὸν ἀπατᾶν φῶμεν καὶ
τὴν τέχνην εἶναι τίνα ἀπατητικὴν αὐτοῦ, τότε πότερον
ψευδῆ δοξάζειν τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν φήσομεν ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκείνου
τέχνης, ἢ τί ποτ' ἐροῦμεν; 240DI
- ΤΗΤ. Τοῦτο· τί γὰρ ἂν ἄλλο εἶπαιμεν; D5
- VIS. Ψευδῆς δ' αὖ δόξα ἔσται τάναντία τοῖς οὕσι δοξάζουσα, ἢ πῶς;
- ΤΗΤ. Οὕτως· τάναντία.
- VIS. Λέγεις ἄρα τὰ μὴ ὄντα δοξάζειν τὴν ψευδῆ δόξαν;
- ΤΗΤ. Ἀνάγκη. D10
- VIS. Πότερον μὴ εἶναι τὰ μὴ ὄντα δοξάζουσιν, ἢ πως
εἶναι τὰ μηδαμῶς ὄντα; 240EI
- ΤΗΤ. Εἶναι πως τὰ μὴ ὄντα δεῖ γε, εἴπερ ψεύσεται
ποτέ τίς τι καὶ κατὰ βραχύ.
- VIS. Τί δ; οὐ καὶ μηδαμῶς εἶναι τὰ πάντως ὄντα
δοξάζεται; E5
- ΤΗΤ. Ναί.
- VIS. Καὶ τοῦτο δὴ ψεῦδος;
- ΤΗΤ. Καὶ τοῦτο.
- VIS. Καὶ λόγος οἶμαι ψευδῆς οὕτω κατὰ ταῦτά νομισθήσεται τὰ τε ὄντα λέγων μὴ εἶναι καὶ τὰ μὴ ὄντα εἶναι. E10 241AI
- ΤΗΤ. Πῶς γὰρ ἂν ἄλλως τοιοῦτος γένοιτο;
- VIS. Σχεδὸν οὐδαμῶς· ἀλλὰ ταῦτα ὁ σοφιστὴς οὐ
φήσει. ἢ τίς μηχανὴ συγχωρεῖν τίνα τῶν εὖ φρονούντων,
ὅταν ἄφθεγκτα καὶ ἄρρητα καὶ ἄλογα καὶ ἀδιανόητα
προσδιωμολογημένα ἢ τὰ <μὴ ὄντα κατὰ τὰ> πρὸ τούτων
ὁμολογηθέντα; μανθάνομεν, ὦ Θεαίτητε, ἃ λέγεις; A5⁷⁰
- ΤΗΤ. Πῶς γὰρ οὐ μανθάνομεν ὅτι τάναντία φήσει
λέγειν ἡμᾶς τοῖς νυνδῆ, ψευδῆ τολμήσαντας εἰπεῖν ὡς
ἔστιν ἐν δόξαις τε καὶ κατὰ λόγους; τῷ γὰρ μὴ ὄντι τὸ ὄν
προσάπτειν ἡμᾶς πολλάκις ἀναγκάζεσθαι, διομολογη-
σαμένους νυνδῆ τοῦτο εἶναι πάντων ἀδυνατώτατον. 241BI
- VIS. Ὅρθῶς ἀπεμνημόνευσας. B4
- VIS. What about this? By offering what definition of his [*sc.* the sophist's] art will we be able to be consistent with ourselves? 240C
- ΤΗΤ. How do you mean? What do you fear in speaking thus?
- VIS. When we say that he deceives us in connection with apparition and that his art is one of deception, shall we say that our soul believes falsehoods because of his art? Or what shall we say? 240D

⁷⁰ My numbering of this and the next two lines differs from Robinson's. My comments refer to my own numbering.

- THT. This: for what else could we say?
 VIS. And a false belief will believe the contraries of the things which are.
 Or what?
 THT. Yes, the contraries.
 VIS. Do you then say that a false belief believes the things which are not?
 THT. Necessarily.
 VIS. By believing that the things which are not are not, or that the things
 240E
 which in no way are somehow are?
 THT. It must believe that the things which are not somehow are, if anyone
 will ever somehow err even for a short time.
 VIS. And does it not also believe that the things which in all ways are are
 in no way?
 THT. Yes.
 VIS. Is this then also a falsehood?
 THT. This too.
 VIS. Then, I think, a sentence will also be regarded as false in the same
 241A
 way, by saying that the things which are are not and that the things
 which are not are.
 THT. How else could it come to be such?
 VIS. Perhaps in no way. But the sophist will deny these things. Or what
 means are there by which anyone of those who are able to reason
 well should concede them, when, in conformity with our earlier
 agreements, the things which are not have been additionally agreed
 to be inexpressible and unspeakable and unsayable and unthinkable?
 Do we understand, Theaetetus, what he says?
 THT. How do we not understand that he will claim that by daring to
 affirm that falsehoods exist in beliefs and among sentences we say
 things contrary to what was said just now? For we are obliged often
 241B
 to apply being to what is not, having agreed just now that this is
 the most impossible thing of all.⁷¹
 VIS. You remembered correctly.

The manuscripts' evidence. The text at 241A3–7 deserves some discussion. One main manuscript, W, omits 'ού' at 241A3 and 'ή' at 241A4. At 241A5–7 the main manuscripts read 'ὅταν ἀφθεγκτα καὶ ἄρρητα καὶ ἄλογα καὶ ἀδιανόητα προσδιωμολογημένα ἢ τὰ πρὸς τούτων ὁμολογηθέντα' (the only variant is in T, with 'προδιωμολογημένα' instead of 'προσδιωμολογημένα'). Modern editors variously emend these words (cf. below). Finally, at 241A7, all the main manuscripts have 'ἄ λέγεις' (T had written 'ὁ λέγεις', but corrected himself): recent editors emend this to 'ἄ λέγει' (which is present in two later manuscripts: in Venetus 186 as a correction, in Parisinus 1812 over an erasure).

⁷¹ Cf. 238A8–10; 238E8–239A2.

The text of the main manuscripts is hard to make sense of. For, it requires that in the sentence at 241A5–7 ‘τὰ πρὸ τούτων ὁμολογηθέντα’ be the grammatical subject of ‘προσδιωμολογημένα ἦ’ (or ‘προδιωμολογημένα ἦ’) with ‘ἄφθεγκτα καὶ ἄρρητα καὶ ἄλογα καὶ ἀδιανόητα’ as complement. The sentence at 241A5–7 must therefore be translated by something like ‘... when the things agreed before these have been additionally agreed to be inexpressible and unspeakable and unsayable and unthinkable’ (or ‘... earlier agreed...’, if ‘προδιωμολογημένα’ is preferred). But what was agreed to be inexpressible and unspeakable and unsayable and unthinkable was what is not (cf. 238C8–12 and 238E5–239A7). So the text of the main manuscripts seems to presuppose that ‘the things agreed before these’ are identical to ‘what is not’. However, such an identification is implausible. Heindorf attempts to justify it, by claiming that Plato wants to avoid the expression ‘what is not’ and therefore replaces it with the phrase ‘the things agreed before these’. But how could ‘the things agreed before these’ be identical to ‘what is not’? Heindorf’s answer is that the expression ‘what is not’ and variants of it occurred frequently in the discussion of the nature of images at 239C9–240C6 (cf. 240B7, 240B12, 240C2, and 240C5) and by referring back to this discussion Plato would be alluding to ‘what is not’.⁷² To be sure, the words ‘the things agreed before these’ (‘τὰ πρὸ τούτων ὁμολογηθέντα’, 241A6–7) probably allude to agreements made before the discussion of 240C7–241A2: for the ‘τούτων’ at 241A6 picks up the ‘ταῦτα’ at 241A3, which in turn refers to the propositions agreed by the Visitor and Theaetetus in the course of the discussion at 240C7–241A2 (because it is the object of ‘ὁ σοφιστῆς οὐ φήσει’ at 241A3–4). So, the words ‘the things agreed before these’ could well refer to the discussion of the nature of images, as Heindorf assumes. But it is hard to see how a reference to the discussion of the nature of images could be reasonably taken to be a reference to ‘what is not’. Moreover, it remains unclear why Plato should want to avoid the expression ‘what is not’ at 241A6: he surely did not shun it in the immediately preceding lines. So, Heindorf’s justification of the reading of the main manuscripts is far-fetched.

Can the text of the manuscripts be retained? The most plausible attempt to retain the manuscripts’ text at 241A3–7 relies on a way of understanding it which is radically different from the one that generates the last subsection’s difficulties: treat ‘ἄφθεγκτα καὶ ἄρρητα καὶ ἄλογα καὶ ἀδιανόητα προσδιωμολογημένα’ (or ‘ἄφθεγκτα... προδιωμολογημένα’) as a

⁷² Cf. Heindorf (1810), 360; Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 97.

single phrase that constitutes the grammatical subject of the sentence, take ‘ἦ’ as a copula separate from ‘προσδιωμολογημένα’ (or ‘προδιωμολογημένα’) and regard ‘τὰ πρὸ τούτων ὁμολογηθέντα’ as the complement of the copula. The resulting translation of 241A3–7 is: ‘But the sophist will deny these things. Or what means are there by which anyone of those who are able to reason well should concede them, when things which have been additionally [or: earlier] agreed to be inexpressible and unspeakable and unsayable and unthinkable [*sc.* the things which are not] are the things agreed before these [*sc.* have the attributes of being believed to be and being said to be]?’⁷³

This exegesis is open to three objections. First, the separation of ‘ἦ’ from ‘προσδιωμολογημένα’ (or ‘προδιωμολογημένα’) (241A6) is unnatural. Secondly, it is awkward to have no article in the grammatical subject and an article in the copula’s complement. Thirdly, the ‘τούτων’ in ‘τὰ πρὸ τούτων ὁμολογηθέντα’ (241A6–7) probably picks up the immediately preceding ‘ταῦτα’ (241A3), which refers to the remarks made in the preceding lines (240C7–241A2).⁷⁴ This would exclude that ‘τὰ πρὸ τούτων ὁμολογηθέντα’ refer to the attributes mentioned in the remarks of the preceding lines.

In view of these difficulties, the attempted defence to retain the text of 241A3–7 handed down by the main manuscripts fails. I think that some emendation is necessary – a view shared by all recent editors.

Earlier emendations. The text at 241A3–7 has been variously emended.

Friedrich Schleiermacher puts the question mark after ‘ὁμολογηθέντα’ (241A7) rather than ‘προδιωμολογημένα ἦ’ (241A6) and reads ‘ἃ λέγεται’ at 241A7 in place of the ‘ἃ λέγεις’ of the main manuscripts (which must be emended anyhow).⁷⁵

At 241A6 Karl Friedrich Hermann divides the ‘προσδιωμολογημένα’ of some main manuscripts into ‘πρὸς διωμολογημένα’, regarding the isolated ‘πρὸς’ as an adverb.⁷⁶ This reading may help to dispel the uneasiness which could arise from the fact that ‘προσδιωμολογέομαι’ is not attested

⁷³ The above defence of the text of the main MSS is the result of a joint effort of several Oxford classicists and philosophers (specifically David Charles, Juliane Kerkhecker, and Benjamin Morison), some of whom attended a presentation where my thoughts on this portion of text were made public.

⁷⁴ This is nothing more than a plausibility because if the reading of W is adopted then the ‘ταῦτα’ of 241A3 does not refer back to the remarks made in the preceding lines, but forward to the following question (attributed to the sophist): ‘This is what a sophist will say: “What means are there . . . ?”’.

⁷⁵ Schleiermacher put forward this emendation in the first edition of his translation (see Schleiermacher (1807), 187, 490). In the second and third editions he rejected it without giving any reason (see Schleiermacher (1824), 193–4, 502–3; Schleiermacher (1857), 130, 337).

⁷⁶ Cf. Hermann (1851), xxvi, 376; LSJ *s.v.* ‘πρός’ D.

elsewhere in the Greek literature, but contributes nothing to solving the problem outlined in the last subsection.

Johan Nicolai Madvig deletes ‘ἄφθεγκτα καὶ ἄρρητα καὶ ἄλογα καὶ ἀδιανόητα’: he thinks that these words crept into the text from an interpreter’s gloss on ‘τὰ πρὸ τούτων ὁμολογηθέντα’ based on 238C8–12.⁷⁷ Madvig’s emendation is endorsed by Schanz, Apelt, Burnet, and Robinson (all except Robinson read ‘προσδιωμολογημένα’, while Robinson chooses ‘προδιωμολογημένα’).

Auguste Diès instead retains the words expunged by Madvig and deletes ‘τὰ πρὸ τούτων ὁμολογηθέντα’ while preferring the variant ‘προδιωμολογημένα’ (according to Diès ‘τὰ πρὸ τούτων ὁμολογηθέντα’ was a gloss on ‘προδιωμολογημένα’ which at some point entered the text).⁷⁸

The emendations of Schleiermacher and Diès share a trait: they both require that the grammatical subject of ‘προδιωμολογημένα ἤ’ be retrieved from the ‘ταῦτα’ of 241A3. Since, as I pointed out earlier, the ‘ταῦτα’ of 241A3 refers to the remarks made at 240C7–241A2, both emendations require that the sentence at 241A5–7 be translated as something like ‘. . . when they [*sc.* the propositions just agreed] have earlier been agreed to be inexpressible and unspeakable and unsayable and unthinkable’. This raises a problem: earlier, at 238C8–12 (cf. 238E5–239A7), it was agreed that what is not is inexpressible and unspeakable and unsayable and unthinkable, but at no earlier point was it agreed that propositions about what is not are inexpressible and unspeakable and unsayable and unthinkable. An attempt might be made to solve this problem by assuming that the description ‘inexpressible and . . .’ is transferred from what is not to propositions about it. But this attempt is unsatisfactory, for two reasons. First, the transfer of the description ‘inexpressible and . . .’ from what is not to propositions about it requires this description to undergo a modification in meaning, a requirement which sits awkwardly with the fact that the description in question has almost the status of a technical phrase. Secondly, on one occasion later in the dialogue (260D2–3) the idea is recalled that what is not is unsayable and unthinkable, and in another passage (258E7–259A1) the idea surfaces again that what is not is unsayable. It would be strange if in our passage the description ‘inexpressible and . . .’ were applied not to what is not, but to propositions about it. The emendations of Schleiermacher and Diès should therefore be rejected.

⁷⁷ Cf. Madvig (1871), 381–2. ⁷⁸ Cf. Diès (1925), 343.

Madvig's emendation faces two objections. First, the phrase 'ἄλογα καὶ ἀδιανόητα' is probably attributed to Plato in the second century AD by the grammarian Julius Pollux (2. 120, 2–3).⁷⁹ Besides the present *Sophist* passage, the phrase occurs nowhere in the Platonic corpus. So, if the words 'ἄφθεγκτα καὶ ἄρρητα καὶ ἄλογα καὶ ἀδιανόητα' are an incorporated gloss, the corruption occurred early on. Such evidence detracts plausibility from Madvig's emendation.

Secondly, before unleashing his final attack, culminating in an account of falsehood, the Visitor recalls the sophist's difficulty:

VIS. . . ἔξαρνον δὲ γεγονέναι τὸ παράπαν 260DI
μηδ' εἶναι ψεῦδος· τὸ γὰρ μὴ ὄν οὔτε διανοεῖσθαι τίνα οὔτε
λέγειν· οὐσίας γὰρ οὐδὲν οὐδαμῆ τὸ μὴ ὄν μετέχειν. D3

VIS. [The sophist] denied altogether that falsehood even exists. For one 260D
neither says nor thinks what is not. For what is not does not partic-
ipate at all in any way in being.

The Visitor thus presents the sophist's difficulty as developing in three steps:

[α] What is not does not participate at all in any way in being.

[β] One neither says nor thinks what is not.

[γ] Falsehood does not exist.

The passage from [α] to [β] was presented in the first two arguments about the impossibility of saying what is not, namely the arguments of 237B7–237E7 and 238A1–238C12. The passage from [β] to [γ] must have been carried out in the argument presently under consideration, namely the argument of 240C7–241B4. But, if Madvig's emendation is right, then every reference to the results of the first two arguments about the impossibility of saying what is not disappears. Moreover, the words ' . . . one neither says nor thinks what is not' in the Visitor's remark at 260D2–3 correspond to the words 'unsayable and unthinkable' in the portion of text deleted by Madvig.

It is worthwhile to consider what follows if Madvig's emendation is correct. If it is, then (independently of whether at 241A7 one reads 'προσδιωμολογημένα' or 'προδιωμολογημένα') the argument reaches its conclusion only with Theaetetus' comment at 241A8–241B3, which explains

⁷⁹ I say 'probably' because the extant manuscripts of Pollux's *Onomastikon* derive from incomplete and interpolated copies. The phrase 'ἄλογα καὶ ἀδιανόητα' is also attributed to Plato by the *Lexica Segueriana* (see Bekker (1814–21), 1 385, 16–17).

how the points made by the Visitor and Theaetetus at 240D1–241A2 clash with earlier agreements. The explanation is that ‘by daring to affirm that falsehoods exist in beliefs and among sentences’ (241A9–241B1) the two inquirers ‘are obliged often to apply being to what is not’ (241B1–2). Why are they obliged to do this? Commentators make several suggestions. According to some,⁸⁰ the Visitor and Theaetetus are obliged to ‘apply being to what is not’ because they affirm that ‘falsehoods exist in beliefs and among sentences’: since falsehoods are things which are not, by affirming that ‘falsehoods exist in beliefs and among sentences’ they commit themselves to accepting that things which are not are. But, if this is how the argument goes, then all reliance on the first two arguments about the impossibility of saying what is not is lost, contrary to the indication of the Visitor’s remark at 260D2–3. Other commentators⁸¹ suggest instead that the two inquirers apply being to not-being when they describe false beliefs (sentences) as believing (saying) that the things which are not are or that the things which are are not. How does this precisely work? According to some,⁸² once they admitted that false beliefs (sentences) believe (say) that the things which are not are or that the things which are are not, the Visitor and Theaetetus are regarded as committed to granting that the things which are not are or the things which are are not. The inference would involve deductive steps from ‘being believed (said) to be’ to ‘being’ and from ‘being believed (said) not to be’ to ‘not being’. Such an inference has the double disadvantage of being both blatantly fallacious and unparalleled in Plato. Others⁸³ suggest instead that the description offered by the Visitor and Theaetetus of people holding false beliefs (uttering false sentences) lends itself to be understood as a description of people holding contradictory beliefs (uttering contradictory sentences), i.e. beliefs (sentences) whose contents could be expressed by ‘The things which are not are’ and ‘The things which are are not’. Such an understanding of the two inquirers’ description of false beliefs (sentences) would be based on a confusion between the transparent and the opaque readings of certain formulations involving ‘to believe’ (‘to say’) and would probably not be unparalleled in Plato.⁸⁴ But this interpretation also cannot be right. Not only does it leave most of the work to the reader: it also fails to fit one aspect of the sophist’s riposte. The sophist says that the Visitor and Theaetetus ‘say things contrary to what was said just now’ (241A8–9), but nowhere in what precedes was it stated that people cannot

⁸⁰ Cf. de Rijk (1986), 91–2; Movia (1991), 237.

⁸¹ Cf. Arangio-Ruiz (1951), 138; Detel (1972), 69; Keyt (1973), 291; Szaif (1998), 409–10; Notomi (1999), 189; Robinson (1999), 149–50.

⁸² Cf. Szaif (1998), 410–11. ⁸³ Cf. Crombie (1963), 506–7.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Thr.* 189D4–190E4; Crivelli (1998), 13–20.

hold contradictory beliefs (utter contradictory sentences). In any case, all reliance on the first two arguments about the impossibility of saying what is not is lost, contrary to the indication provided by the Visitor's remark at 260D2–3.

In view of these objections, Madvig's emendation should be resisted.⁸⁵

A new emendation. Both Madvig and Diès emend by deleting what they regard as surreptitiously incorporated glosses. Perhaps one should do the opposite: add rather than cut. One possibility is to read 'ὅταν ἀφθεγκτα καὶ ἄρρητα καὶ ἄλογα καὶ ἀδιανόητα προσδιωμολογημένα ἢ τὰ <μὴ ὄντα κατὰ τὰ> πρὸ τούτων ὁμολογηθέντα' and assume that 'μὴ ὄντα κατὰ τὰ' dropped out by homoeoteleuton: '... when, in conformity with our earlier agreements, the things which are not have been additionally agreed to be inexpressible and unspeakable and unsayable and unthinkable'. Alternatively, one could read 'ὅταν ἀφθεγκτα καὶ ἄρρητα καὶ ἄλογα καὶ ἀδιανόητα προσδιωμολογημένα ἢ <ἐκεῖνα κατὰ> τὰ πρὸ τούτων ὁμολογηθέντα' and assume that 'ἐκεῖνα κατὰ' went lost: '... when, in conformity with our earlier agreements, those things [*sc.* the things which are not] have been additionally agreed to be inexpressible and unspeakable and unsayable and unthinkable'. Both emendations solve the problem of the subject of the description 'inexpressible and . . .': according to both readings, the Visitor is straightforwardly saying that the things which are not are inexpressible etc. For 'κατὰ' with the accusative meaning 'in conformity with' in the *Sophist* cf. 216A1, 245C5, 256C7–8, 257E9, and 265E5. In particular, the conjectured 'κατὰ τὰ πρὸ τούτων ὁμολογηθέντα' has a near parallel in 'κατὰ τὸν ἔμπροσθεν λόγον ὁμολογηθέντα' at *Lg.* 9. 854A4 ('κατὰ' with the accusative of a phrase from the root 'ὁμολογ-' is frequent in Plato: cf. *Sph.* 216A1; *Prt.* 350E5; *Grp.* 468E2; *R.* 4. 443A6–7; *Criti.* 106B6; *Lg.* II. 920D1–2; 921C1–2). These emendations are bold, but not more so, in my view, than those proposed by Madvig and Diès. I opt for the first one because it is more explicit and more easily justifiable from a palaeographical point of view.

The argument in outline. The argument begins by stating that a false belief believes the things which are not (240D6–10). One expects it immediately to progress to the claim that it is impossible to believe the things which are not. Surprisingly, it takes a different direction: it turns out that false beliefs believe either that the things which are not are or that the things which are are not (affirmative and negative false beliefs) (240E1–9). A parallel account

⁸⁵ Madvig's emendation is rejected also by Cambiano (1981), 439, Rosen (1983), 202, Movia (1991), 237, and Yang (2005), 292.

is then offered for false sentences: false sentences say either that the things which are are not or that the things which are not are (negative and affirmative false sentences) (24OE10–24IA2). The accounts of false beliefs and false sentences are understood as involving existential claims: what has been putatively established is that false beliefs believe (false sentences say) either that the things which do not exist exist or that the things which exist do not exist. So, some false beliefs and some false sentences are about things which do not exist. This, however, clashes with the first two arguments about the impossibility of saying what is not (at 237B7–237E7 and 238A1–238C12), whose conclusion was that what does not exist ‘is unthinkable and unspeakable and inexpressible and unsayable’ (238C9–11). This conclusion of the first two arguments is now described as having been ‘additionally agreed’ according to ‘earlier agreements’ (24IA3–7), namely agreements to the effect that being should not be applied to what is not (cf. 24IB1–3).

The last part of the passage (24IA8–24IB4) reports a sophist’s comments: ‘by daring to affirm that falsehoods exist in beliefs and among sentences’ (24IA9–24IB1), the Visitor and Theaetetus are ‘obliged often to apply being to what is not’ (24IB1–2). They incur this obligation because they are committed to conceding that what does not exist can be thought and spoken about (cf. above), while the first two arguments about the impossibility of saying what is not showed that what does not exist cannot be thought or spoken about because being cannot be applied to what is not (cf. 237C7–8 and 238A8–10).

2.4 FALSE BELIEFS AND FALSE SENTENCES DESCRIBED

False beliefs described. The argument at 24OC7–24IB4 contains two descriptions of false beliefs.⁸⁶ The first is at 24OD9–10:

[δ1]⁸⁷ A false belief believes the things which are not.

Call this a ‘unipolar’ description because it links false beliefs only to the things which are not. The unipolar description of false beliefs returns later in the *Sophist*, at 26OC3–4. Other dialogues contain similar descriptions:⁸⁸ the main differences are that the verb ‘to believe’ is applied to the believer rather than to the belief and that the singular ‘what is not’ sometimes replaces the plural ‘the things which are not’.

In the *Sophist* passage presently under scrutiny, once Theaetetus has embraced the unipolar description [δ1], according to which a false belief

⁸⁶ Cf. Szaif (1998), 406; Notomi (1999), 187.

⁸⁷ The occurrences of ‘δ’ at the beginning of the codes abbreviate ‘δόξαι’, those of ‘λ’ abbreviate ‘λόγος’. The asterisk marks descriptions that do not occur in the *Sophist* passage under consideration.

⁸⁸ Cf. *Phdr.* 262B2–3; *Thr.* 167A7–8; 188D3–4; 188D8–10; 189A10–189B6.

believes the things which are not, the Visitor asks (240E1–2) what a false belief believes about the things which are not: does it believe them not to be or to be? Theaetetus answers (240E3–4) that it believes them to be (he is probably thinking that a belief believing that the things which are not are not would be not false but true). This induces the two inquirers to acknowledge (240E5–9) false beliefs of another type: those which believe that the things which are are not. Thus, [δ1] is superseded by:

[δ2] A false belief believes either that the things which are not are or that the things which are are not.⁸⁹

Call this a ‘bipolar’ description because it links false beliefs both to the things which are not and to the things which are. The bipolar description of false beliefs does not occur elsewhere in Plato. As I noted earlier, the bipolar description introduces the distinction between affirmative and negative beliefs.⁹⁰

In the *Sophist* passage under examination, Plato does not describe true beliefs. Had he done so, he would probably have offered both a unipolar and a bipolar description corresponding to those of false beliefs:

[δ3]* A true belief believes the things which are.

[δ4]* A true belief believes either that the things which are not are not or that the things which are are.

Something like [δ3] occurs elsewhere:⁹¹ the main difference is that the verb ‘to believe’ is applied to the believer rather than to the belief. Nothing like [δ4] ever appears.⁹²

False sentences described. Plato omits the unipolar description of false sentences:

[λ1]* A false sentence says the things which are not.

Something like [λ1] occurs later in the *Sophist*, at 260C3–4. Similar accounts appear elsewhere:⁹³ the main difference is that the verb ‘to say’ is applied

⁸⁹ Some occurrences of ‘to be’ in the passage 240E1–9 are accompanied by adverbs: ‘πως’ (240E1, 240E3), ‘μηδομῶς’ (240E2, 240E5), and ‘πάντως’ (240E5). I regard these adverbs as indicators of the strength with which certain claims are affirmed or denied: ‘πως’ signals hesitant affirmation (‘in a way’, cf. LSJ *s.v.* ‘πως’ 1), ‘μηδομῶς’ confident denial (‘not at all’), and ‘πάντως’ confident affirmation (‘by all means’, cf. LSJ *s.v.* ‘πάντως’ 11; *Sph.* 247A10). Were the adverbs to indicate ways in which things are (‘to be in some way’, ‘to be in no way’, ‘to be in all ways’), the passage would be putting across an unbearably complex theory (cf. above, paragraph to n. 53).

⁹⁰ Cf. Movia (1991), 237; Fronterotta (2007), 332–3. ⁹¹ Cf. *R.* 3, 413A7–8; *Tht.* 171A9; 199B8–9.

⁹² The bipolar description of true beliefs is, however, adumbrated by the two occurrences of ‘not to be’ at 240E1.

⁹³ Cf. *Euthd.* 284C2–5; 286A2–3; *Cra.* 385B10; 429D5–6.

to speakers rather than to sentences. In the present *Sophist* passage, instead of the unipolar description Plato offers a bipolar one:

[λ2] A false sentence says either that the things which are are not or that the things which are not are (cf. 240E10–241A2).

The bipolar description of false sentences does not occur elsewhere in Plato (although part of it perhaps surfaces later in the *Sophist*, at 263B7–10).⁹⁴

As in the case of beliefs, the unipolar and the bipolar descriptions of true sentences are omitted:

[λ3]* A true sentence says the things which are.

[λ4]* A true sentence says either that the things which are are or that the things which are not are not.

Descriptions similar to [λ3] occur elsewhere:⁹⁵ the main differences are that the verb ‘to say’ is applied to speakers rather than to sentences and that the singular ‘what is’ sometimes replaces the plural ‘the things which are’. Nothing like [λ4] ever appears (although one half of it probably emerges at *Sph.* 263B4–6).

Why a bipolar description after a unipolar description? Why, after offering a unipolar description of false beliefs, i.e. [δ1], does Plato introduce a bipolar description, i.e. [δ2]? The question arises because the paradoxical argument for the impossibility of false belief would already have what it needs without the bipolar description.

The most plausible answer is that the bipolar description serves the purposes not of the paradoxical argument, but of Plato’s solution of it (at 259D9–264B5). Plato’s solution is based on analysing *saying what is not* into *saying* about something *what is not* about it (the shift from *believing* to *saying* is inessential because for Plato belief has a linguistic character). A false affirmative sentence may then be described as *saying what is not* in so far as it *says* about something *what is not* about it to be. This description is unproblematic because what is not about something is what is different from everything that is about it. However, a false negative sentence cannot be easily described as *saying what is not* in so far as it *says* about something *what is not* about it to be: for, a negative sentence is naturally understood as saying something not to be about something. A bipolar description allows Plato to claim that a false negative sentence does not say what is not: rather,

⁹⁴ *Cra.* 385B7–8 might seem to contain a (partial) bipolar description of false sentences. However, on my interpretation of this passage (cf. below, n. 80 of Ch. 6), the account it offers is of a different sort.

⁹⁵ Cf. *Euthd.* 284A5–8; 284C6; *Cra.* 385B10; *R.* 3. 389C4–5; *Prm.* 161E5–162A1.

it says what is (because it says of what is that it is not). But, given that false negative sentences do not say what is not, in their case no explanation is needed: they provide no toehold for a paradoxical argument.⁹⁶

Ancient parallels. Join [λ₂] with [λ₄], transform plurals into singulars, and omit specifying what does the saying. You obtain Aristotle's celebrated definition of truth and falsehood: 'To say [τὸ λέγειν] that what is is not or that what is not is [τὸ ὄν μὴ εἶναι ἢ τὸ μὴ ὄν εἶναι] is false; to say that what is is and that what is not is not [τὸ ὄν εἶναι καὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν μὴ εἶναι] is true' (*Metaph.* Γ7, 1011^b26–7, cf. *Int.* 6, 17^a26–31).⁹⁷ The fact that Aristotle defines falsehood before truth might be a trace of the *Sophist*.⁹⁸ note that the order of cases in Aristotle's definition of falsehood (denials before affirmations) is the same as in Plato's bipolar description of false sentences at *Sph.* 240E10–241A1 (Plato's bipolar description of false beliefs adopts the reverse order: affirmations before denials, cf. 240E1–9).

A characterization of speaking truly that recalls the one in the *Sophist* passage under scrutiny appears in Xenophon's *Anabasis*: 'This man enjoyed the reputation of having been truthful [ἀληθεῦσαι] in many earlier cases of the same sort, saying the things which are as being and the things which are not as not being [τὰ ὄντα τε ὡς ὄντα καὶ τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς οὐκ ὄντα]' (4. 4, 15).⁹⁹

Definitions of truth and falsehood 'by cases'. The *Sophist* passage under consideration is the earliest extant philosophical text to offer (albeit implicitly) a definition of truth for sentences 'by cases', i.e. by specifying different truth conditions for sentences of different types. Definitions of truth of this sort are widespread in modern philosophy. The main difference between modern definitions of truth and their ancient forerunners is that while modern definitions rely on recursive techniques (whereby the *defini-entia* for complex sentences mention the truth of sentences that are among their components, or are 'simpler' in some other rigorously specified way), the ancient definitions rely on the distinction of two classes of sentences, namely affirmations and denials, and their *defini-entia* do not mention truth (or at least not the truth of sentences).

⁹⁶ Cf. below, subsections to nn. 116 and 117 of Ch. 6. As I said, a false negative sentence cannot be easily described as *saying what is not* in so far as it *says* about something *what is not* about it to be. Though not easy, such a description is nevertheless available – if negative kinds are allowed. Plato perhaps explores this solution too (cf. below, subsection to n. 119 of Ch. 6).

⁹⁷ Cf. Kamlah (1963), 19, 30; Przelęcki (1981), 124; Matthen (1983), 114; Movia (1991), 237; Cordero (1993), 239; Szaif (1998), 407; Notomi (1999), 189; Fronterotta (2007), 332.

⁹⁸ Cf. Kamlah (1963), 19.

⁹⁹ Cf. below, text to n. 81 of Ch. 6. Protagoras' man-measure doctrine ('A man is the measure of all things, of those which are that they are, of those which are not that they are not', DK 80 B 1) also recalls a bipolar characterization of truth.

A definition of truth ‘by cases’ may contribute to a correspondence theory of truth. The idea that truth amounts to correspondence with the world is notoriously vague. It can be sharpened in various ways. Disregarding the view that truth is correspondence to facts (because the concept of fact seems foreign to ancient discussions about truth), a first step towards a clarification of the idea that truth amounts to correspondence with the world is to say that a sentence is true just if it says things to be in the way in which they are. A definition of truth by cases may allow a further step towards clarification: for it can be so developed that sentences are sorted into classes according to how they say their referents to be and then the sentences of any given class are declared true just if their referents actually are in the way corresponding to that class.¹⁰⁰

Four readings of the unipolar descriptions. The unipolar descriptions of false and true beliefs and sentences (i.e. $[\delta_1]$, $[\delta_3]$, $[\lambda_1]$, and $[\lambda_3]$) allow at least four different readings. To avoid pointless complications, I concentrate on the first unipolar description, namely $[\delta_1]$, the unipolar description of false beliefs.

First, the unipolar description of false beliefs may be taken to involve the existential use of ‘to be’ and to concern objective items that correspond to the whole belief. This comes to:

$[\delta_{1.1}]$ A false belief is about things which do not exist.

Secondly, the unipolar description of false beliefs may be taken to involve the veridical use of ‘to be’ (applied to propositions):

$[\delta_{1.2}]$ A false belief is about things which are not true.

Thirdly, the unipolar description may be interpreted as involving the predicative use of ‘to be’, with the complement omitted to achieve generality:¹⁰¹

$[\delta_{1.3}]$ A false belief is about things which are not φ (s)¹⁰²

(throughout the present section, ‘ φ ’ and ‘ σ ’ are schematic letters to be replaced, respectively, with a general term and a name).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Szaif (1998), 501–3; Crivelli (2004), 129–38. According to Tarski (1944), 342–3, Aristotle’s definition of truth at *Metaph.* Γ7, 1011^b26–7 (cf. above, text to n. 97) is the classical formulation of the correspondence theory of truth.

¹⁰¹ On the predicative elliptical use of ‘to be’ cf. below, paragraph to n. 115 of Ch. 4.

¹⁰² The verb ‘δοξάζειν’ (‘to believe’) may be construed not only with a phrase expressing a proposition believed, but also with a noun-phrase in the accusative referring to something the belief is about: cf. *Tht.* 188A7–9 (with 188B3–5); 189C6; 190C6; 190D5; 190D8; 190D11; 190D12; McDowell (1973), 194.

Fourthly, the description may be taken to concern kinds and involve the converse use of 'to be', with the complement omitted for generality:

[$\delta_{1.4}$] A false belief is about kinds which are not about σ .

The converse use of 'to be' is that whereby the verb is construed with 'about'; and '(The) ϕ is about σ ' is equivalent to ' σ is (a) ϕ '. If the converse use of 'to be' is involved, 'to be about' often means the same as 'to hold of'.¹⁰³

A parallel fourfold distinction may be drawn for the other unipolar descriptions, namely those of true beliefs (i.e. [δ_3]) and of false and true sentences (i.e. [λ_1] and [λ_3]).

Four readings of the bipolar descriptions. The bipolar descriptions of false and true beliefs and sentences (i.e. [δ_2], [δ_4], [λ_2], and [λ_4]) also allow four different readings, which correspond to those of the unipolar descriptions. To avoid pointless complications, I concentrate on the first bipolar description, namely [δ_2], the bipolar description of false beliefs.

In the first place, the bipolar description of false beliefs may be taken to involve the existential use of 'to be':

[$\delta_{2.1}$] A false belief believes either that things which do not exist exist or that things which exist do not exist.

Secondly, the description may be interpreted as involving the veridical use of 'to be':

[$\delta_{2.2}$] A false belief believes either that things which are not true are true or that things which are true are not true.

Thirdly, the description may be interpreted as involving the predicative use of 'to be', with the complement omitted to achieve generality:

[$\delta_{2.3}$] A false belief believes either that things which are not $\phi(s)$ are $\phi(s)$ or that things which are $\phi(s)$ are not $\phi(s)$.

Fourthly, the description may be taken to concern kinds and involve the converse use of 'to be', with the complement left out for generality:

[$\delta_{2.4}$] A false belief believes either that kinds which are not about σ are about σ or that kinds which are about σ are not about σ .

Parallel fourfold distinctions may be drawn for the other bipolar descriptions, namely those of true beliefs (i.e. [δ_4]) and of false and true sentences (i.e. [λ_2] and [λ_4]). The fourth reading of the bipolar description of false sentences is worth spelling out:

¹⁰³ More on this below, subsection to n. 184 of Ch. 4.

[λ2.4] A false sentence says either that kinds which are not about σ are about σ or that kinds which are about σ are not about σ .

The interest of [λ2.4] lies in its closeness to the analysis of false sentences eventually endorsed by Plato (at 262E11–263D5).¹⁰⁴

Given the way in which the bipolar description of false beliefs develops from the unipolar one,¹⁰⁵ it is reasonable to assume that the same reading must be adopted for the unipolar and bipolar descriptions: for every n ($1 \leq n \leq 4$), the Visitor and Theaetetus are putting forward [$\delta 1.n$] just if they are putting forward [$\delta 2.n$].¹⁰⁶

The case for the first reading of the descriptions of false beliefs. At first glance, the correct reading of the descriptions of false beliefs is the first, which relies on the existential use of ‘to be’: the Visitor and Theaetetus first acknowledge that a false belief is about things which do not exist ([$\delta 1.1$]) and then refine their position by stating that a false belief believes either that things which do not exist exist or that things which exist do not exist ([$\delta 2.1$]). The prima facie plausibility of this exegesis is due to its introducing immediately the concept of non-existence, which must play a role in the argument since what is ‘inexpressible and unspeakable and unsayable and unthinkable’ (241A5) is what does not exist. But why should false beliefs be about things which do not exist? Two explanations are possible.

The first explanation attributes an important role to the claim that a false belief believes ‘the contraries of the things which are’ (240D6).¹⁰⁷ Once it has been conceded that a false belief is about ‘the contraries of the things which are’, namely the contraries of the things which are $\phi(s)$, it must be granted that a false belief is about things which do not exist: for, to be (a) ϕ is to exist in (a) ϕ ’s way, and to be in the contrary state of a given state is to be in the state that is as much as possible removed from and opposed to it, so the contrary of what is (a) ϕ does not exist. Thus, if a false belief is about ‘the contraries of the things which are’ (240D6), namely about the

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Cordero (1993), 239. ¹⁰⁵ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 89.

¹⁰⁶ Matthen (1983), 126 favors the reading with the existential use of ‘to be’, i.e. [$\delta 1.1$] and [$\delta 2.1$]. Szaif (1998), 405–9 and Kahn (2002), 89 adopt the reading with the veridical use of ‘to be’, i.e. [$\delta 1.2$] and [$\delta 2.2$]. Malcolm (1985b), 164 appears to favor the reading with the predicative use of ‘to be’, i.e. [$\delta 1.3$] and [$\delta 2.3$]. McDowell (1982), 132 seems to endorse the reading with the converse use of ‘to be’, i.e. [$\delta 1.4$] and [$\delta 2.4$]. In Crivelli (1990), 34–6 I adopted different readings for the unipolar and the bipolar descriptions: the reading with the veridical use of ‘to be’ for the unipolar description, i.e. [$\delta 1.2$], and the reading with the predicative use of ‘to be’ for the bipolar description, i.e. [$\delta 2.3$].

¹⁰⁷ Later (257B3–4, 258B3–4, 258E6–7) Plato regards the identification of not-being with the contrary of being as a mistake which leads people to fall for the sophist’s argument. Plato might be referring back to 240D6, the only point of the aporetic portion of the dialogue where the expression ‘contrary of being’ occurs (cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 96; Owen (1971), 231; Heinaman (1983), 2–3; Heinaman (1986), 122–3).

contraries of the things which are $\phi(s)$, then it is about things which do not exist.¹⁰⁸ But why would it be conceded that a false belief is about ‘the contraries of the things which are’ (240D6), namely about the contraries of the things which are $\phi(s)$? This is due to a confusion about the meaning of negation: it is easy to yield to the temptation of identifying the things which are not $\phi(s)$ with the contraries of the things which are $\phi(s)$.¹⁰⁹ One concedes that a false belief is about the things which are not $\phi(s)$, and one slips into granting that a false belief is about the contraries of the things which are $\phi(s)$. Needless to say, a false belief is naturally described as being about the things which are not $\phi(s)$: the belief that Theaetetus is flying is false because it is about Theaetetus who is not flying. According to this first explanation, a false belief is about what does not exist in that it *refers to* what does not exist. Beliefs of this sort were excluded by the second argument about the impossibility of saying what is not (at 238A1–238C12, the difference between saying and believing may be ignored).

The second explanation of why false beliefs should be about things that do not exist depends on a specific conception of what beliefs are about. Specifically, it assumes that every belief is directed to a single thing whose existence is a necessary and sufficient condition for the belief’s truth. In the case of a predicative belief, namely a belief which attributes a kind to its referent, the single thing to which the belief is directed and whose existence is a necessary and sufficient condition for the belief’s truth is a ‘predicative complex’ made up of the belief’s referent and the kind attributed to it by the belief. For instance, the belief that Theaetetus is sitting is directed to sitting-Theaetetus, and the belief is true just if sitting-Theaetetus exists (because sitting-Theaetetus exists just if Theaetetus is sitting); the belief that Theaetetus is flying is directed to flying-Theaetetus, and the belief is true just if flying-Theaetetus exists (because flying-Theaetetus exists just if Theaetetus is flying). It follows that every false belief is directed to something which ‘is not’ in that it does not exist. Something analogous holds for sentences: every speech act carried out by uttering a sentence is directed to a single thing whose existence is a necessary and sufficient condition for the speech act’s truth.¹¹⁰ According to this second explanation, a speech act carried out by uttering a sentence is an episode of false speech only if it is directed to what does not exist. Speech acts of this sort were excluded by the first argument about the impossibility of saying what is

¹⁰⁸ Cf. below, subsection to n. 72 of Ch. 5.

¹⁰⁹ On this tempting identification cf. below, text to n. 69 of Ch. 5.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Owen (1971), 245; Matthen (1983), 126. Denyer (1991), 146 attributes a role not to ‘predicative complexes’ (like flying-Theaetetus) but to tropes (like Theaetetus’ flight) (on tropes cf. above, text to n. 14). This paragraph is indebted to discussions with Stephen Menn.

not (at 237B7–237E7): for that argument showed that no speech act can be directed to what does not exist.

It now becomes clear why Plato substantiated the sophist's argument with two different arguments about the impossibility of saying what is not: the two arguments are needed to support different versions of the falsehood paradox.

The case for the second, third, and fourth readings of the descriptions of false beliefs. Suppose the second reading is right: the argument relies on [δ 1.2] and [δ 2.2], which involve the veridical use of 'to be'. Then at the argument's start the claim is made that a false belief is about things which are not true. This initial claim is then replaced by one to the effect that a false belief believes either that things which are not true are true or that things which are true are not true. At this point a slip occurs whereby existence and non-existence are introduced. The slip might occur either by a confusion between the veridical and the existential use of 'to be',¹¹¹ or on the basis of the tacit and mistaken assumption that if something is not true then it does not exist.

Suppose the third reading is right: the argument relies on [δ 1.3] and [δ 2.3], which involve the predicative use of 'to be' with omitted complements. Then at the argument's start the claim is made that a false belief is about things which are not ϕ (s), which is then replaced by one to the effect that a false belief believes either that things which are not ϕ (s) are ϕ (s) or that things which are ϕ (s) are not ϕ (s). At this point a slip occurs whereby existence and non-existence are introduced. Again, the slip might occur either by a confusion between the predicative and the existential uses of 'to be' (facilitated by the omission of the verb's complements), or on the tacit and mistaken assumption that if something is not (a) ϕ then it does not exist.

Suppose the fourth reading is right: the argument relies on [δ 1.4] and [δ 2.4], which involve the converse use of 'to be' with omitted complements. Then at the start the claim is made that a false belief is about kinds which are not about σ . This is superseded by the claim that a false belief believes either that kinds which are not about σ are about σ or that kinds which are about σ are not about σ . At this point a slip occurs whereby existence and non-existence are introduced. Again, the slip might occur either by a confusion between the converse and the existential uses of 'to be' (facilitated by the omission of the verb's complements), or on the tacit and mistaken assumption that if something is not about σ then it does not exist.

¹¹¹ Cf. Kahn (2002), 89.

The role of 'the contraries of the things which are' (240D6–7). Consider how the unipolar description of false beliefs is introduced: the Visitor and Theaetetus agree that a false belief believes 'the contraries of the things which are' (240D6–7) and infer that it 'believes the things which are not' (240D9). How should these remarks on contrariety and not-being be understood?

Begin by considering the first reading. If it is right, the Visitor and Theaetetus are putting forward [$\delta 1.1$] and [$\delta 2.1$]. Then false beliefs are about things which do not exist because they are about things contrary to what exists. The two inquirers might be appealing to a loose concept of contrariety or incompatibility between what exists and what is falsely believed: what is falsely believed does not exist because it clashes with what exists. But they could also be attributing an important role to 'the contraries of the things which are' (240D6–7) for the introduction of the concept of non-existence (earlier¹¹² I sketched how the argument could go).

Consider then the second reading. If it is right, the Visitor and Theaetetus are putting forward [$\delta 1.2$] and [$\delta 2.2$]. Then false beliefs are about things which are not true because they are about things contrary to what is true. The two inquirers might be appealing to a loose concept of contrariety or incompatibility between what is true and what is falsely believed: what is falsely believed is not true because it clashes with what is true.

Look at the third reading. If it is right, the Visitor and Theaetetus endorse [$\delta 1.3$] and [$\delta 2.3$]. Then false beliefs are about things which are not ϕ (s) because they are about things contrary to what is (a) ϕ . Consider, for instance, Jim's false belief that the Taj Mahal is black. This belief is about the Taj Mahal, which, being white, is contrary to what is black and therefore is not black.

Finally, consider the fourth reading. Suppose the fourth reading of the descriptions of false beliefs is right: the Visitor and Theaetetus are putting forward [$\delta 1.4$] and [$\delta 2.4$]. Then false beliefs are about things which are not about σ because they are about things contrary to what is about σ . Consider again Jim's false belief that the Taj Mahal is black. This belief concerns blackness, a kind which is not about the Taj Mahal because it is contrary to whiteness, a kind which is about the Taj Mahal.

A common trait of the second, third, and fourth readings of the descriptions of false beliefs is that the fallacious step whereby non-existence is introduced occurs after the descriptions themselves have been offered. The accounts of false belief given in [$\delta 1$] and [$\delta 2$] are correct and available for later use in the constructive part of the dialogue. Accordingly, the concept

¹¹² Cf. above, paragraph to n. 107.

of ‘the contraries of the things which are’ (240D6) is not put to use to introduce non-existence.

Assessment of the four readings. Which, if any, of the four readings of the descriptions of false beliefs is intended by Plato? This question relies on a mistaken presupposition. No reading need be chosen to the exclusion of the others: a good sophistical argument conceals its fallaciousness under more than one disguise, leaving to the naïve thinker the pick of the trap to fall into. All four readings are allowed because they all lead to the controversial result that some false beliefs are about what does not exist.

Different versions of a paradox call for different solutions. This applies also to the case of the falsehood paradox, of which four different versions have emerged. Solutions must be offered for all versions: otherwise the sophist could always avail himself of the retort ‘Oh, but that is not what I meant!’

In the last three versions (corresponding to the last three readings of the descriptions of false beliefs), a move which Plato could reasonably make to block the fallacious inference is to specify that if something is not (a) ϕ (which may be taken to cover the cases of something not being true and not being about σ , by replacing ‘ ϕ ’ with ‘true’ and ‘about σ ’), it does not follow that it does not exist. Such a move, I shall argue, Plato will make in his account of negation at 257B1–257C4.¹¹³

To sort out the first version of the falsehood paradox (corresponding to the first reading of the descriptions of false beliefs), Plato must make two moves. First, he must clarify that negation does not mean contrariety. This he will do in his account of negation at 257B1–257C4.¹¹⁴ This first move will take care of the first possible motivation for holding that false beliefs are about things which do not exist.¹¹⁵ Secondly, Plato must reject the view that every belief is directed to a single thing whose existence is a necessary and sufficient condition for the belief’s truth. This he will do in his account of sentences, false sentences, and false beliefs at 259D9–264B5: he will claim that the act of saying is directed not to a single thing but to two (the shift from believing to saying is inessential).¹¹⁶ This second move will see to the second possible motivation for holding that false beliefs are about things which do not exist.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Cf. below, subsection to n. 72 of Ch. 5. ¹¹⁴ Cf. below, text to n. 72 of Ch. 5.

¹¹⁵ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 107. ¹¹⁶ Cf. below, subsection to n. 104 of Ch. 6.

¹¹⁷ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 110.

CHAPTER 3

Puzzles about being

After raising difficulties regarding not-being, the Visitor and Theaetetus become involved with puzzles about being. This is rather surprising because one might have expected the obscurity to be confined to the obviously problematic area of not-being. The puzzles about being come in two families.

The present chapter's first section addresses the first family of puzzles (243D6–245E5), which concern the number of beings. Both pluralists, who believe there to be two or more entities, and monists, who maintain that only one thing is, are criticized. The second family of puzzles about being (245E6–249D8), tackled in this chapter's second section, concerns the characteristics shared by all and only beings. A debate is set up between two factions. One party includes thinkers who claim that only bodies are, members of the other hold instead that only changeless forms are. An attempt to reach a compromise acceptable to both parties leads to the result that both change and stability are beings. But then (249D9–250D4) a further difficulty arises which seems to depend on a confusion between sentences used to speak about the kind being itself. This last difficulty is dealt with in the chapter's third section.

3.1 HOW MANY BEINGS ARE THERE?

The introduction to the discussion about being (242B6–243D5). Not-being turned out to be a source of puzzlement. Will being, of which we think we have a clear grasp, also baffle us? We might be in the situation typical of the interlocutors of the 'Socratic dialogues', where Socrates' questions lead people to realize that they lack a clear grasp of what they believed they mastered.

The Visitor distinguishes theories that 'specify just how many beings there are' (242C5–6) from theories that state 'what beings are like' (242C5–6). He also describes this distinction (245E6–246A2) as between those who

‘make precise reckonings about being and not-being’ and those who ‘speak otherwise’.¹

Ontological theories of both types are connected with the issue of determining what being is. As counting the fish in a net where dolphins have been caught requires getting clear about what it is to be a fish, so counting beings requires getting clear about what being is. And establishing what beings are like is obviously a reasonable starting point in the search for what being is.

Criticisms of the theories that specify how many beings there are (243D6–245E5). Theories that specify how many beings there are are discussed first (243D6–245E5). The examination begins with (1) a criticism of the pluralists (243D6–244B5). This is followed by (2) a criticism of the monists (244B6–245DI1): two arguments are developed, one (244B9–244D13) dealing with the concept of naming, the other (244DI4–245DI1) with the concept of wholeness. The discussion is capped with (3) a short conclusion (245DI2–245E5).

The criticisms of earlier ontological views that say how many beings there are have a common approach: they raise the question of what is signified by the word ‘being’ and examine how the answers which these theorists could offer fit with their explicit views.² For the first time in the history of Greek philosophy, the question of the signification of the word ‘being’ takes centre stage.³

The argument against the pluralists. The position of the pluralists is examined by means of an imaginary interrogation of them:

| | | |
|------|--|-------|
| VIS. | Φέρε, ὅποσοι θερμόν | 243D8 |
| | καὶ ψυχρόν ἢ τινε δύο τοιούτω τὰ πάντ' εἶναι φατε, τί ποτε | |
| | ἄρα τοῦτ' ἐπ' ἀμφοῖν φθέγγεσθε, λέγοντες ἄμφω καὶ | 243E1 |
| | ἐκάτερον εἶναι; τί τὸ εἶναι τοῦτο ὑπολάβωμεν ὑμῶν; | |
| | πότερον τρίτον παρὰ τὰ δύο ἐκεῖνα, καὶ τρία τὸ πᾶν ἀλλὰ | |
| | μὴ δύο ἔτι καθ' ὑμᾶς τιθῶμεν; οὐ γάρ που τοῖν γε δυοῖν | |
| | καλοῦντες θάτερον ὄν ἀμφοτέρα ὁμοίως εἶναι λέγετε· | E5 |
| | σχεδὸν γὰρ ἂν ἀμφοτέρως ἓν, ἀλλ' οὐ δύο εἴτην. | |
| ΤΗΤ. | Ἀληθῆ λέγεις. | |
| VIS. | Ἀλλ' ἄρά γε τὰ ἄμφω βούλεσθε καλεῖν ὄν; | |
| ΤΗΤ. | Ἴσως. | |
| VIS. | Ἀλλ', ὦ φίλοι, φήσομεν, κἂν οὕτω τὰ δύο | 244A1 |
| | λέγοιτ' ἂν σαφέστατα ἓν. | |
| ΤΗΤ. | Ὀρθότατα εἴρηκας. | A3 |

¹ Cf. Bondeson (1976), 1; Frede (1996a), 186; Carchia (1997), 74; Harte (2002), 100.

² Cf. Cornford (1935), 218. ³ Cf. Kamlah (1963), 32–4.

VIS. 'Listen, you who say that all things are hot and cold, or two things of this sort. What on earth is this thing you are expressing about both, when you say that both of them and each are? What shall we take this being of yours to be? Is it a third thing besides those two, and should we assume that in your view the totality of things is three and not two? For if you call being one of the two, you certainly do not say that they both are in the same way: for in both ways they would surely be one, not two.'⁴

THT. True.

VIS. 'Do you then want to call both being?'

THT. Perhaps.

VIS. 'But,' we will say, 'friends, in this way too the two things would most clearly be called one.'

THT. Absolutely correct.

The view that 'all things are hot and cold, or two things of this sort' (243D8–9) amounts to the view that there are exactly two beings, namely the hot and the cold (this is merely an example: the hot and the cold could be replaced with other contraries, cf. 242D3–4).⁵ According to the view considered, 'both of them [*sc.* the hot and the cold] and each are' (243E1–2). But what is this being that is attributed to the hot and the cold? Three alternatives are put forward and then discarded.

- (1) (243E3–4) Being is different from both the hot and the cold. This alternative is rejected because, if it were true, there would be not two but three beings.
- (2) (243E4–7) Being is identical to one of the hot and the cold. This alternative is discarded because 'if you call being one of the two, you certainly do not say that they both are in the same way: for in both ways they [*sc.* the hot and the cold] would surely be one, not two' (243E4–6).
- (3) (243E8–244A3) Being is identical to both the hot and the cold. This alternative is rejected because it implies that the two are one.

The pluralists' theory and its refutation raise many problems. I shall address them in an order that eases their solution (because the solutions to the earlier problems provide a hint for those to the later ones).

On what grounds is the second alternative rejected? One problem raised by the pluralists' theory and its refutation concerns a part of the refutation:

⁴ I take the dual 'εἴτην' to be predicative, the grammatical subject being an understood 'τὸ δὺο' supplied from the previous sentence (cf. Fowler (1921), 363; N. P. White (1993), 34). Alternatively, 'εἴτην' could be existential: '... in both ways there would surely be one thing, not two' (cf. Cornford (1935), 219; Taylor (1961), 138). My preferred translation matches the Visitor's later remark: '... in this way too the two things would most clearly be called one' (244A1–2).

⁵ Cf. Wedin (1980–81), 268.

on what grounds is alternative (2), the view that being is identical to one of the hot and the cold, rejected? Two solutions have been suggested.

According to the first, if being were identical to the hot then the cold would not participate in being (because if it did then it would participate in its own contrary, which is impossible), so that the sum total of beings would be not two, but one. For this reason, being is not identical to the hot. For a similar reason being is not identical to the cold. Hence being is identical neither to the hot nor to the cold.⁶

According to the second solution, if being were identical to the hot, then, since being holds of the hot in precisely the same way or ways as of the cold, it would follow that the hot holds of the hot in precisely the same way or ways as of the cold. Since the hot holds of the hot in that it is identical to it, it would follow that the hot holds also of the cold in that it is identical to it, so that the hot and the cold would be not two but one. Being is therefore not identical to the hot. For a similar reason being is not identical to the cold. Hence being is identical neither to the hot nor to the cold.⁷

One linguistic point gives the edge to the second solution. In the text, alternative (2) is rejected because it entails that ‘in both ways [*sc.* both if the hot is called being and if the cold is called being]⁸ they [*sc.* the hot and the cold] would surely be one, not two’ (243E6). The second solution does derive the result that the hot and the cold are one, i.e. reciprocally identical. The first solution does not derive this result: what it does derive is that the sum total of beings is one, not two, because either the cold is not (if being is identical to the hot) or the hot is not (if being is identical to the cold). Neither state of affairs can be naturally described as one where the hot and the cold are one.⁹

The second solution adopts a robust reading of the expression ‘in the same way’ (ὁμοίως, 243E5): this expression is given a pivotal role in the sentence formulating the thesis that being holds of the hot in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of the cold. Note that a weaker reading of ‘in the same way’ (ὁμοίως) is also possible: the expression might be taken to be nothing more than a strengthening of the immediately

⁶ Cf. Cornford (1935), 220; Taylor (1961), 38–9; Bluck (1963), 70–1; Seligman (1974), 23; Bordt (1991), 501; Clarke (1994), 56; Frede (1996a), 190; Miller (2004), 341–2; Duerlinger (2005), 44.

⁷ Cf. Moravcsik (1962), 29; Malcolm (1967), 132; Wedin (1980–1), 272–3; Fronterotta (2007), 347. The variant of this exegesis mentioned by Centrone (2008), 127 is less satisfactory.

⁸ Cf. Bonitz (1860), 295–6; Wedin (1980–1), 271–2.

⁹ The first solution would be defensible if the translation mentioned in n. 4 above were adopted: cf. Taylor (1961), 138.

preceding ‘both’ (‘ἀμφοτέρω’, 243E5). This weaker reading must be discarded if, as I believe, the second solution is right.

Later in the *Sophist*, at 249E6–250A7, Plato announces that he will criticize his final attempted characterization of being, according to which being embraces both change and stability, in the same way as he criticized the pluralists’ position earlier. This requires that the interpretation of the criticism of the pluralists chime with that of the criticism of the final characterization of being. The criticism of the final characterization of being, in turn, is close to a later argument, at 255A4–255B7, put forward by Plato to show that both identity and difference are different from both change and stability. The upshot is that an overall interpretation is called for whereby the criticism of the pluralists resembles both the criticism of the final characterization of being and the argument that identity and difference are different from both change and stability. My focus will be on the last member of this trio, the argument that both identity and difference are different from both change and stability. My interpretation of it will fit well with the second solution to the problem addressed in the present subsection.¹⁰

What are the hot and the cold in the pluralists’ theory? Another problem raised by the pluralists’ theory and its refutation concerns the theory’s protagonists, namely the hot and the cold: what are they? They could be masses of basic hot stuff and basic cold stuff;¹¹ alternatively, they could be the kind heat and the kind coldness.¹²

The first solution is historically more plausible. The second solution, however, fits in better within the context of the dialogue. For, as I pointed out in the last subsection, in a later passage of the *Sophist* (249E6–250A7) Plato draws an analogy between a criticism of a characterization of being according to which being embraces both change and stability, on the one hand, and his earlier criticism of the pluralists’ theory, on the other. Since in this later passage change and stability are kinds, the hot and the cold in the pluralists’ theory are also probably kinds.

¹⁰ Cf. below, subsection to n. 76; subsection to n. 47 of Ch. 4 and the subsections that follow it (in particular, subsections to nn. 87 and 93). Some commentators believe that the argument adumbrates the distinction between statements of identity and predication: cf. Malcolm (1983), 118–19; Brown (1986), 469–70; Roberts (1986), 231.

¹¹ Cf. Frede (1996a), 186–7.

¹² Cf. Cornford (1935), 219; Crombie (1963), 390; Miller (2004), 341. Plato moves freely between an abstract noun, i.e. an instance of ‘fness’, and a phrase consisting of an article and the corresponding adjective, i.e. the matching instance of ‘the φ’. For instance, already in the *Euthyphro* he uses ‘ἀνοσιότης’ (5D4) alongside ‘τὸ ἀνόσιον’ (5D2, 5D7), and ‘δσιότης’ (13B4, 13C6, 14C5) alongside ‘τὸ δσιον’ (5D2, 5D7, 14C5).

On what grounds can the pluralists deny that things of everyday experience are? By saying that ‘all things are hot and cold’ (243D8–9), the pluralists do not mean that all things of everyday experience enjoy the attributes of being hot and being cold. Rather, they are endorsing the controversial thesis that there are exactly two beings, namely the hot and the cold. Supposing that the solution to the last subsection’s problem is correct, namely that in the pluralists’ theory the hot and the cold are the kinds heat and coldness, it follows that the thesis put forward by the pluralists is that the kinds hotness and coldness are the only two things that are. This commits the pluralists to denying that the things of everyday experience are (because they are of course distinct from the kinds hotness and coldness). What are the pluralists’ grounds for making so counter-intuitive a denial?

One solution is that the pluralists are using ‘to be’ in a strong way, meaning something like ‘to be real’. On this usage, the verb would be applicable only to the most fundamental items in the ontology.¹³ Another solution is that the pluralists are under the spell of Parmenides in that they do not count as being anything that comes into or goes out of being. The things of everyday experience come into and go out of being when hotness and coldness are combined or separated in certain proportions (cf. 243B4–6). Only hotness and coldness are beings because they never come into or go out of being.¹⁴

Whichever solution is correct (and perhaps they come much to the same), there is one important consequence. Plato’s criticism relies on the assumption that being, the item signified by ‘to be’, counts as a being: for if it did not then the pluralists could accept that being is distinct from both hotness and coldness while clinging to their tenet that these are the only two beings. But, since the things of everyday experience do not count as beings, to rank as a being is no trivial feat. The assumption that being counts as a being could, however, be supported by indicating that being is a kind and therefore belongs to the same ontological category as hotness and coldness, which admittedly are beings.

The first argument against the monists. After the pluralists, the monists are also interrogated about what being is:

¹³ Cf. Cornford (1935), 216–20; Crombie (1963), 390; Malcolm (1967), 133. Wedin (1980–1), 269–70 criticizes the view that in the pluralists’ theory ‘to be’ amounts to ‘to be real’, but does not address the problem of how the theory can deny being to things of everyday experience.

¹⁴ Cf. Frede (1996a), 187–9.

vis. Τί δέ; παρὰ τῶν ἐν τὸ πᾶν λεγόντων ἄρ' οὐ
 πειστέον εἰς δύναμιν τί ποτε λέγουσι τὸ ὄν;
 τητ. Πῶς γὰρ οὐ; 244B6
B8

vis. Now, shouldn't we as far as possible¹⁵ find out from those who say 244B
 that the totality of things is one what they call being?
 τητ. Why not?

Two arguments are developed to criticize monism. The first (244B9–
 244D13) concerns naming:

vis. Τόδε τοίνυν ἀποκρινέσθων. ἐν πού φατε μόνον 244B9
 εἶναι; φαμέν γάρ, φήσουσιν. ἢ γάρ;
B10

τητ. Ναί.

vis. Τί δέ; ὄν καλεῖτέ τι;

τητ. Ναί.

vis. Πότερον ὅπερ ἐν, ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῷ προσχρώμενοι 244C1
 δυοῖν ὀνόμασιν, ἢ πῶς;

τητ. Τίς οὖν αὐτοῖς ἢ μετὰ τοῦτ', ὧ ξένε, ἀπόκρισις;

vis. Δῆλον, ὧ Θεαίτητε, ὅτι τῷ ταύτην τὴν ὑπόθεσιν
 ὑποθεμένῳ πρὸς τὸ νῦν ἐρωτηθὲν καὶ πρὸς ἄλλο δὲ ὅτιοῦν C5
 οὐ πάντων ῥῆστον ἀποκρίνασθαι.

τητ. Πῶς;

vis. Τό τε δύο ὀνόματα ὁμολογεῖν εἶναι μηδὲν θέμενον
 πλὴν ἐν καταγέλαστόν που –

τητ. Πῶς δ' οὐ; C10

vis. Καὶ τὸ παράπαν γε ἀποδέχεσθαί του λέγοντος ὡς
 ἔστιν ὄνομά τι, λόγον οὐκ ἂν ἔχον. 244D1

τητ. Πῆ;

vis. Τιθεῖς τε τοῦνομα τοῦ πράγματος ἕτερον δύο λέγει
 πού τινε.

τητ. Ναί. D5

vis. Καὶ μὴν ἂν ταυτόν γε αὐτῷ τιθῆ τοῦνομα, ἢ μηδε-
 νὸς ὄνομα ἀναγκασθήσεται λέγειν, εἰ δέ τινος αὐτὸ φήσει,
 συμβήσεται τὸ ὄνομα ὀνόματος ὄνομα μόνον, ἄλλου δὲ
 οὐδενὸς ὄν –

τητ. Οὕτως. D10

vis. Καὶ τὸ ἐν γε ἑνὸς ἐν ὄν μόνον καὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐ
 τὸ ἐν ὄν.¹⁶

τητ. Ἀνάγκη. D13

¹⁵ 'As far as possible' given that they are not present (cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 109).

¹⁶ I follow the text printed by Robinson, which is close to that of B, W, and Simplicius' E. Several emendations have been suggested.

- VIS. Let them answer this question, then: ‘You somehow say that only one is?’ – ‘We surely say that’, they will say, won’t they? 244B
- THT. Yes.
- VIS. ‘And do you call something “being”?’¹⁷
- THT. Yes.
- VIS. ‘Is it the very thing you call “one”, by using two names for the same thing, or what?’ 244C
- THT. What is their answer to this, visitor?
- VIS. Clearly, Theaetetus, it is not the easiest thing in the world for one who has hypothesized this hypothesis to answer the present question, or any other.
- THT. How so?
- VIS. To agree that there are¹⁸ two names after positing that there is nothing but one thing is most ridiculous –
- THT. Right.
- VIS. And even to accept someone’s statement that there is a name is unreasonable.¹⁹ 244D
- THT. How so?
- VIS. By positing the name as different from the object, one somehow speaks of two things.
- THT. Yes.
- VIS. And if one posits the name as identical to it, one will be obliged to say either that it is a name of nothing, or, if one says that it is of something, the name will result to be a name of a name only and of nothing else –
- THT. Yes.
- VIS. And the one will result²⁰ to be one of one only by being also in turn the one of the name.
- THT. Necessarily.

The monists say: ‘Only one is’ (244B9–11). They also acknowledge that there is something for which they use the expression ‘being’ (244B12–13). This raises the question (244C1–2) whether what they use the expression ‘being’ for is the same as that for which they use the expression ‘one’, so that ‘being’ and ‘one’ are two names of the same thing. This question cannot be easily answered by the monists (244C4–7).

To begin with, the monists cannot give what might seem the most straightforward reply, namely that ‘being’ and ‘one’ are indeed two names

¹⁷ Cf. above, n. 37 of Ch. 2 and text thereto.

¹⁸ Taking the ‘εἶναι’ at 244C8 as existential: Bordt (1991), 504 regards it as expressing identity.

¹⁹ Taking ‘ἔχον’ as the complement of an understood ‘εἶη’: cf. 258B11 for ‘ἔχον’ complementing an (explicit) form of ‘εἶναι’. Different ways of construing ‘λόγον οὐκ ἂν ἔχον’ are discussed by Bluck (1963), 72.

²⁰ ‘Will result’ renders a ‘συμβήσεται’ understood from 244D8.

of the same thing. This option is unavailable to them because by admitting that there are two names they would be contradicting their own admission of no more than one thing (244C8–10).

But matters are even worse because the very concept of a name turns out to be problematic for the monists (244C11–244D13). There are two alternatives. The first (244D3–5) is that the name belong to an object distinct from itself: in this case there would be at least two things, i.e. the name and its object, contrary to the monists' basic tenet. The second alternative (244D6–13) is that the name be identical to its object.

The second alternative branches out into two subordinate ones. The first (244D6–7) is that the name be a name of nothing. This is not followed up. It is probably regarded as unacceptable because it contradicts the alternative to which it is subordinate: if the name is a name of nothing, then it has no object, so that one cannot even say that the name is identical to its object.

The second subordinate possibility (244D7–13) is that the name be of something, and therefore of itself. Then 'the name will result to be a name of a name only' (244D8–9), so that 'the one will result to be one of one only' (244D11). The conclusion is obtained from the premiss by a straight substitution of 'one' for 'name' (nothing in Greek corresponds to the indefinite article 'a'). The justification of this inference by substitution is probably given by the second half of the sentence, which states that the one is 'also in turn the one of the name' (244D11–12). The point conveyed is that the one is identical to the name (perhaps it is to be inferred from the claims that the one is the object named by the name and that the name is identical to the object it names): this warrants the substitution of 'one' for 'name' in the inference. The conclusion that 'the one' is 'one of one only' (244D11) is nonsensical. Such nonsensicality probably constitutes the refutation's last step.²¹ Reduction to solecism, i.e. compelling the opponent in a debate to use some barbarous mode of expression, is explicitly recognized by Aristotle (*SE* 3, 165^b20–1) as a way of defeating him.

The second argument against the monists involves the concepts of whole and part. I forgo the historical question of how faithfully Plato reports Parmenides' views.

The argument (244D14–245D11) may be divided into three steps. The first (244D14–245A4) is an introduction to some key-concepts:

²¹ Cf. Anscombe (1966), 409.

- VIS. Τί δέ; τὸ ὅλον ἕτερον τοῦ ὄντος ἑνὸς ἢ ταῦτόν
 φήσουσι τούτῳ; 244D14
 D15
 THT. Πῶς γὰρ οὐ φήσουσί τε καὶ φασίν; 244E1
 VIS. Εἰ τοίνυν ὅλον ἐστίν, ὥσπερ καὶ Παρμενίδης λέγει,
 πάντοθεν εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκῳ,
 μεσσόθεν ἰσοπαλὲς πάντῃ· τὸ γὰρ οὔτε τι μείζον
 οὔτε τι βαιότερον πελέναι χρεῶν ἐστί τῆ ἢ τῆ, E5
 τοιοῦτόν γε ὄν τὸ ὄν μέσον τε καὶ ἔσχατα ἔχει, ταῦτα δὲ
 ἔχον πᾶσα ἀνάγκη μέρη ἔχειν· ἢ πῶς;
 THT. Οὕτως.
 VIS. Ἀλλὰ μὴν τό γε μεμερισμένον πάθος μὲν τοῦ ἑνὸς 245A1
 ἔχειν ἐπὶ τοῖς μέρεσι πᾶσιν οὐδὲν ἀποκωλύει, καὶ ταύτη δὴ
 πᾶν τε ὄν καὶ ὅλον ἓν εἶναι.
 THT. Τί δ' οὐ; A4
 VIS. And will they say that the whole is different from the one that is? 244D
 Or that it is identical to this? 244E
 THT. How will they not say it? Indeed, they do say it.
 VIS. If then it is a whole, as Parmenides also says,
 . . . in every way like the mass of a well-rounded sphere, opposing
 equal resistance from the middle in all directions: for it is not
 appropriate that it be larger or weaker here than here, . . .²²
 being, since it is of this sort, has a middle and extremities, and by
 having these it is most necessary that it have parts, must it not?
 THT. Yes.
 VIS. But nothing prevents what is divided into parts from having the 245A
 characteristic of unity with respect to all the parts, and from being
 in this way one, since it is both all and whole.
 THT. Why not?

When he attributes to Parmenides the position that being is 'divided into parts' but 'having the characteristic of unity with respect to all the parts' (245A1–2), Plato is reporting an answer to the question of what being is (cf. 244B7). The position therefore amounts to the view that to be (being)²³ is to enjoy unity by being unified despite possessing multiple parts. In other words, to be is to be in a condition somewhat like that of an animal's body, which is unified and is a single body despite possessing many limbs.²⁴

²² DK 28 B 8, 43–5.

²³ On the connection between the use of abstract nouns and infinitives, in English as well as Plato's Greek, cf. Vlastos (1981b), 76–7.

²⁴ Cf. *Prm.* 129C4–129D2; Bluck (1963), 83–4. Some commentators (e.g. Moravcsik (1962), 31; Seligman (1974), 27) maintain that for Plato being enjoys unity not by being unified, but by possessing multiple

In the argument's second step (245A5–245B3), Plato claims that Parmenides is committed to the view that to be (being) is different from being one (unity):

- VIS. Τὸ δὲ πεπονηθὸς ταῦτα ἄρ' οὐκ ἀδύνατον αὐτό γε τὸ
ἓν αὐτὸ εἶναι; 245A5
 THY. Πῶς;
 VIS. Ἀμερὲς δῆπου δεῖ παντελῶς τό γε ἀληθῶς ἓν κατὰ
τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον εἰρησθαι.
 THY. Δεῖ γὰρ οὔν. A10
 VIS. Τὸ δέ γε τοιοῦτον ἐκ πολλῶν μερῶν ὄν οὐ
συμφωνήσει τῷ λόγῳ. 245B1
 THY. Μανθάνω. B3
 VIS. But isn't it impossible for what has these characteristics itself to be 245A
 the one itself?
 THY. How so?
 VIS. What is truly one, according to its correct definition,²⁵ must be
 called completely partless.
 THY. It surely must.
 VIS. But what is such [*sc.* as we described], since it consists of many parts, 245B
 will not fit the definition.
 THY. I see.

The thesis that being is different from unity is based on two ancillary claims. The first is that 'what is truly one, according to its correct definition, must be called completely partless' (245A8–9). The phrase 'what is truly one' (245A8) suggests that the focus is on the most genuine way of being one, to be distinguished from other less genuine ways. The availability of ways of being one that are different from the most genuine is confirmed by the qualifier 'somehow' ('πῶς', 245B8) used later to describe the condition of a unified whole consisting of parts. If this is right, then the first claim is that the most genuine way of being one amounts, by definition, to being simple or 'completely partless' (245A8). Other less genuine ways of being one may amount to something other than being simple. The second ancillary claim is that the concept of being, as described by Parmenides, i.e. as a whole that 'consists of many parts, will not fit the definition' (245B1–2). The argument is compressed. The details are as follows: if being were unity, then there would be a way of being that would be identical to being one in the most genuine way, i.e. to being simple or 'completely partless' (245A8); but, given

parts each of which is one. This interpretation, however, saddles Plato with an unsound argument: possession of multiple parts each of which is one does not guarantee unity (cf. Wedin (1980–1), 283).

²⁵ For 'λόγος' meaning 'definition' cf. *Lg.* 10. 895D1–896A5; *Ep.* 7. 342B6–342C1.

Parmenides' view that to be is to be a whole that 'consists of many parts' (245B1), there is no such way of being; hence, if Parmenides' view is correct, being is different from unity.

The argument's third step (245B4–245D11) completes the *reductio*. It opens with a dilemma (245B4–6):

VIS. Πότερον δὴ πάθος ἔχον τὸ ὄν τοῦ ἐνὸς οὕτως ἓν τε 245B4
 ἔσται καὶ ὅλον, ἢ παντάπασι μὴ λέγωμεν ὅλον εἶναι τὸ ὄν; B5
 ΤΗΤ. Χαλεπὴν προβέβληκας αἴρεσιν. B6

VIS. Will being be one and a whole by having the attribute of unity, or 245B
 should we in all ways deny that being is a whole?

ΤΗΤ. You are offering a difficult choice.

The rest of the argument is concerned with showing that both horns lead to disaster. The first horn is the view initially attributed to Parmenides, that to be is to be a whole composed of parts that enjoy the characteristic of being one. The second horn, according to which 'we in all ways deny that being is a whole' (245B6), is the denial of Parmenides' position, i.e. the denial of the view that to be is to be a whole composed of parts that enjoy the characteristic of being one.

The first horn is dealt with first:

VIS. Ἀληθέστατα μέντοι λέγεις. πεπονηθὸς τε γὰρ τὸ ὄν 245B7
 ἓν εἶναι πῶς οὐ ταύτων ὄν τῶ ἐνὶ φανεῖται, καὶ πλέονα δὴ
 τὰ πάντα ἐνὸς ἔσται.

ΤΗΤ. Ναί. B10

VIS. You are speaking truly indeed. For, by being characterized by being 245B
 somehow one, being will appear to be not identical to the one, and
 all things will be more than one.

ΤΗΤ. Yes.

The first horn relies on the result established in the argument's second step (245A5–245B3): if to be were to be a whole that is 'somehow one' (245B8), it would follow that being is different from unity. There would then be at least two things, and they would not be unified in a single whole. The monist cannot accept this consequence (though he could perhaps accept that there are at least two things unified in a single whole).

The dilemma's second horn (245C1–245D11), according to which it is not the case that to be is to be a whole with many unified parts, is addressed by means of a subordinate dilemma. The first horn of the subordinate dilemma (245C1–10) assumes that the attribute of wholeness exists:

- VIS. Καὶ μὴν ἕάν γε τὸ ὄν ἦ μὴ ὅλον διὰ τὸ πεπονθέναι
τὸ ὑπ' ἐκείνου πάθος, ἦ δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ ὅλον, ἐνδεὲς τὸ ὄν
ἑαυτοῦ συμβαίνει. 245C1
- ΤΗΤ. Πάνυ γε.
- VIS. Καὶ κατὰ τοῦτον δὴ τὸν λόγον ἑαυτοῦ στερόμενον 05
οὐκ ὄν ἔσται τὸ ὄν.
- ΤΗΤ. Οὕτως.
- VIS. Καὶ ἐνός γε αὖ πλείω τὰ πάντα γίγνεται, τοῦ τε
ὄντος καὶ τοῦ ὅλου χωρὶς ἰδίας ἑκατέρου φύσιν εἰληφότος.
- ΤΗΤ. Ναί. C10
- VIS. And if it is not the case that being is a whole by being characterized 245C
by the characteristic of that [*sc.* the one],²⁶ and the whole itself is,²⁷
being results lacking itself.
- ΤΗΤ. Sure.
- VIS. Therefore, according to this account, being, since it is deprived of
itself, will be a not-being.
- ΤΗΤ. That is so.
- VIS. And all things become more than one because being and the whole
each possess their peculiar nature separately.
- ΤΗΤ. Yes.

The first horn of the subordinate dilemma presents the monist with two unpalatable consequences. The first (245C1–7) is that since being is not a whole, ‘being results lacking itself’ (245C2–3), so that ‘being, since it is deprived of itself, will be a not-being’ (245C5–6).²⁸ No explanation is provided of why the hypothesis that being is not a whole should entail that being lacks itself. Several explanations have been offered by commentators: according to some, Plato means that being will lack being because it lacks the attribute of wholeness, which is a being;²⁹ according to others, he means that being will lack itself because it is not something whole, i.e.

²⁶ I take ‘ὑπ' ἐκείνου πάθος’ (245C2) to stand for ‘πάθος . . . τοῦ ἐνός’ (245B4, 245A1) (cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 114; Cornford (1935), 225; Arangio-Ruiz (1951), 152; Bluck (1963), 74–5, 84; Wedin (1980–1), 289–90; Ambuel (2007), 216). Some commentators take it to stand for ‘πάθος τοῦ ὅλου’ (cf. Moravcsik (1962), 33; Bondeson (1976), 4; Miller (2004), 346). I regard the ‘μή’ at 245C1 as governing the whole clause ‘ἦ . . . ὅλον διὰ τὸ πεπονθέναι τὸ ὑπ' ἐκείνου πάθος’ (245C1–2). For a different account of this ‘μή’, cf. Bluck (1963), 84.

²⁷ I take ‘αὐτὸ τὸ ὄλον’ as the grammatical subject of ‘ἦ’, as required by 245C11 and 245D5–6. Some commentators (e.g. Miller (2004), 346) take the grammatical subject of ‘ἦ’ to be ‘τὸ ὄν’ (245C1) and regard ‘αὐτὸ τὸ ὄλον’ as complement.

²⁸ I take ‘οὐκ’ (245C6) to govern ‘ὄν’ (245C6) (cf. Arangio-Ruiz (1951), 152). Cornford (1935), 225 takes it instead to govern ‘ἔσται’ (245C6): there will be a being (i.e. the attribute of wholeness) which being is not.

²⁹ Cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 114; Cornford (1935), 225; Ambuel (2005), 211.

complete.³⁰ These explanations are both unsatisfactory because they saddle Plato with a poor argument in that they treat the claim that being is not a whole as the claim that being does not instantiate wholeness, on a par with the claim that this pudding is not whole because a slice of it has been eaten. But this is not the way in which the claim that being is not a whole should be understood at the present stage of the argument. At the present stage, the claim that being is not a whole must amount to the claim that it is not the case that to be is to be a whole. The most plausible guess as to how this hypothesis will yield the conclusion that being is deprived of itself is that the argument is still governed by the Parmenidean view that to be is to be a whole. Then to assume that it is not the case that to be is to be a whole is tantamount to depriving being of its very nature, and therefore to make it into a not-being (here ‘to be (a) not-φ’ is used to say about something that being (a) φ does not constitute its nature).

The first horn of the subordinate dilemma has another consequence that a monist cannot accept: that ‘all things become more than one’ (245C8). This follows immediately from the result that ‘being and the whole each possess their peculiar nature separately’ (245C8–9), which in turn follows from the second horn of the third step’s main dilemma (that to be is something different from being a whole) combined with the first horn of the subordinate dilemma (that wholeness exists, and therefore has a nature).³¹

The second horn of the subordinate dilemma (245CII–245DII) assumes that the attribute of wholeness does not exist:

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| VIS. Μὴ ὄντος δέ γε τὸ παράπαν τοῦ ὅλου, ταῦτά τε ταῦτα ὑπάρχει τῷ ὄντι, καὶ πρὸς τῷ μὴ εἶναι μὴδ’ ἄν γενέσθαι ποτὲ ὄν. | 245CII 245DI |
| ΤΗΤ. Τί δῆ; | |
| VIS. Τὸ γενόμενον ἀεὶ γέγονεν ὅλον· ὥστε οὔτε οὐσίαν οὔτε γένεσιν ὡς οὔσαν δεῖ προσαγορεύειν τὸ ὅλον ἐν τοῖς οὔσι μὴ τιθέντα. | D5 |
| ΤΗΤ. Παντάπασιν ἔοικε ταῦθ’ οὕτως ἔχειν. | |
| VIS. Καὶ μὴν οὐδ’ ὀποσονοῦν τι δεῖ τὸ μὴ ὅλον εἶναι· ποσόν τι γὰρ ὄν, ὀπόσον ἄν ἦ, τοσοῦτον ὅλον ἀναγκαῖον αὐτὸ εἶναι. | D10 |
| ΤΗΤ. Κομιδῆ γε. | DII |

³⁰ Cf. Bluck (1963), 85–6; Harte (2002), 103. Yet a different explanation is offered by Wedin (1980–1), 290–1, but it suffers the same criticism as the other two (cf. below). Parmenides himself (DK 28 B 8, 32–3) asserted that being is not incomplete and lacks nothing.

³¹ For kinds, to be is to have a nature: cf. 258B9–258C4; below, subsection to n. 125 of Ch. 5.

VIS. And if the whole is not in any way, these same characteristics hold of being, and, on top of not-being, not even ever becoming a being. 245C 245D

THT. Why?

VIS. What becomes always becomes as a whole: so whoever does not place the whole among beings must not address either being or becoming as being.

THT. By all means, this is how things are.

VIS. And what is not a whole must not even be of a certain quantity: for, by being of a certain quantity, however much it is, it is necessary for it to be such as a whole.

THT. Absolutely.

In this case, the Visitor says (245CII–245DI), the same characteristics will hold of being as on the first horn: in other words, being will be deprived of its own nature and will therefore be a not-being. The second consequence of the first horn of the subordinate dilemma, that ‘all things become more than one’ (245C8), does not follow on the second horn because wholeness, on the second horn, is not among the things which are, so does not have a nature to get distinguished from being. This second consequence is not covered by the sentence ‘These same characteristics hold of being’ (245CII–245DI): for, strictly speaking, this consequence was not a ‘characteristic that holds of being’.³²

However, the second horn of the subordinate dilemma entails additional absurdities (245DI–II). Since the attribute of wholeness does not exist, nothing will enjoy it (for only existent attributes can be enjoyed, cf. 247A5–247B3), so that nothing will be a whole. So, on top of its being the case that being is a not-being, the second horn of the subordinate dilemma also implies (245DI–7) that being will never become being because whatever becomes does so as a whole. The situation envisaged is that of being undergoing a process of becoming whereby its nature becomes that of being, i.e. that of being a whole: a very abstract situation that is hard to get a grip on anyhow. Moreover (245D8–II) whatever is not a whole will not be of any definite quantity: for whatever is of a definite quantity is so as a whole, so nothing will be of any definite quantity. This consequence is probably supposed to be both absurd in its own right and incompatible with a view to which Parmenides is committed: at the beginning of the refutation (244E3–5), lines of his poem had been quoted where the one being was compared with a ‘well-rounded sphere, opposing equal resistance from the middle in all directions’.

³² Cf. Bluck (1963), 75, 87–8.

3.2 WHAT ARE BEINGS LIKE?

The examination of theories that state what beings are like (245E6–250D4) divides as follows: (1) a transition from the discussion of theories that state how many beings there are to that of theories that state what beings are like (245E6–246A3); (2) a description of a ‘battle of the gods and the giants’ (246A4–246C8); (3) the questioning of the giants (246C9–248A3); (4) the questioning of the gods (248A4–248E6); (5) a new characterization of being (248E7–249D8); (6) a criticism of the new characterization of being (249D9–250D4).

Giants vs gods. A battle between certain ‘giants’ and certain ‘gods’, or ‘friends of the forms’, is portrayed. The giants hold that ‘only what can be touched and offers resistance is’ (246A11–246B1), and they maintain this by ‘defining body and being as identical’ (246B1).³³ The friends of the forms insist that only certain intelligible forms are: they contrast being (what is always in the same way) with becoming (what becomes different at different times) and they claim that we communicate with being by the soul through reasoning whereas we communicate with becoming by the body through perception.

Who are the friends of the forms? Some commentators think that they expound Plato’s own ‘theory of forms’, either an earlier version of it which Plato is now rejecting³⁴ or its mature development which Plato is nevertheless presenting with a detached style.³⁵ There is indeed a striking resemblance, even in terminology, between the position of the friends of the forms and the ‘theory of forms’ of the *Republic* and the *Timaeus*.³⁶ It will, however, emerge that there could be one important difference between the position of the friends of the forms and the ‘theory of forms’.³⁷ Other commentators instead hold that the friends of the forms are members of the Academy who defended views close to but subtly different from Plato’s,³⁸ yet others that they are fictional characters invented by Plato as a distortion of his own views.³⁹ Others again associate them with some other philosophical school, e.g. the Megarians⁴⁰ or some Italian Pythagoreans.⁴¹ At the beginning of the dialogue philosophers were compared with gods in disguise:⁴² the analogy between the friends of the forms and gods is perhaps meant to suggest that they are genuine philosophers.

³³ Cf. Bordt (1991), 513; Brown (1998), 186.

³⁴ Cf. Grote (1875), II 458; Cornford (1935), 247; Ross (1951), 107; Eslick (1955), 43; Frank (1985), 9; McPherran (1986), 244.

³⁵ Cf. Kamlah (1963), 35–6. ³⁶ Cf. below, n. 74 and text thereto. ³⁷ Cf. below, text to n. 51.

³⁸ Cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* lxxv; Isnardi Parente (1999), 74–5; Gerson (2006), 291–2.

³⁹ Cf. Ueberweg and Praechter (1926), 297–8. ⁴⁰ Cf. Apelt (1891a), 89.

⁴¹ Cf. Burnet (1914), 279–80; Ebert (1998), 91–8. ⁴² Cf. above, n. 4 of Ch. 1 and text thereto.

The cross-examination of the giants. The Visitor and Theaetetus question both parties in order to bring them to an agreement. They manage to convince (a softened version of) the giants to admit that certain incorporeal entities exist. Theaetetus acts as a spokesman for the giants, who admit (246E2–247C8) that (1) there are mortal animals, (2) they are ensouled bodies, (3) souls exist, (4) some souls are just and others unjust and some souls are wise and others unwise, (5) just and wise souls are such by the possession and presence of justice and wisdom whereas unjust and unwise souls are such in virtue of the contrary qualities, (6) what is capable of coming to be in something and going away from it exists, (7) justice and wisdom and their contraries therefore exist although they are incorporeal whereas the soul, which also exists, is a body.

Now that they have granted that both bodies and incorporeal entities exist, the giants are asked (247C9–247D4) what the being is which is shared by so vastly different things. The Visitor and Theaetetus agree (247D4–248A3) that they will probably accept the following modal characterization of being: to be is to have either the power of affecting something or that of being affected by something.⁴³

What is it for something to affect something? Some commentators favour a weak account: for x to affect y is for x to be a property enjoyed by y .⁴⁴ This interpretation is implausible because it makes the giants' acceptance of the modal characterization of being into a wholesale abandonment of their approach. A more robust account of what it is for something to affect something is needed. One plausible candidate is: for x to affect y is for x to exert a quasi-causal power on y whereby y is made to be in a certain way.⁴⁵ On this account, such incorporeal items as justice, wisdom, and the remaining virtues will count as beings according to the modal characterization of being: for justice causes people to act in ways in which they would not in its absence, and similarly with wisdom and the other virtues,⁴⁶ so that justice, wisdom, and the other virtues may be described as having the power of affecting things in that they have the quasi-causal power of making them be in certain ways. One wonders whether the forms of Plato's 'theory of forms' would also count as beings on the modal characterization of being: forms perhaps have the power to affect things in that they have the quasi-causal power of making them be in certain ways.⁴⁷

⁴³ Cf. Arist. *Top.* 5.9, 139^a4–5; 6.7, 146^a22–3.

⁴⁴ Cf. Moravcsik (1962), 37; Bondeson (1976), 5. Plato does use 'to be affected by' ('παύσσειν') to say of an object that it enjoys a property: cf. *Sph.* 245A5. Künnle (2004), 309 takes a line that is close, perhaps identical, to Moravcsik's.

⁴⁵ Cf. Brown (1998), 199. ⁴⁶ Cf. *Prt.* 332A4–332C3; *Men.* 72C6–72D1. ⁴⁷ Cf. *Phd.* 100C9–100E7.

The cross-examination of the gods. Having convinced the giants to accept it, the Visitor tries the modal characterization of being out on the friends of the forms (248A4–248E6). Since they maintain that we communicate with becoming by the body through perception and with being by the soul through reasoning (248A10–248B1), the friends of the forms are asked what this communication is which we have with both becoming and being (248B2–3). Specifically, they are asked whether this communication is a case of affecting or of being affected that is based on some power and comes to be from things that reciprocally converge (248B3–6).⁴⁸ The friends of the forms are thereby invited to endorse the modal characterization of being on the basis of their epistemological view that we cognitively communicate with things.⁴⁹

The friends of the forms react (248B6–248C9) by rejecting the modal characterization of being. They realize that the modal characterization of being would make the things of the world of becoming into beings because the things of the world of becoming have both the power of affecting something and that of being affected by something (248C7–8). This is perhaps for them already a sufficient reason for rejecting the modal characterization of being: they do not want the things of the world of becoming to rank as beings.⁵⁰ But their stronger reason for rejecting the modal characterization of being is that in their view beings, namely kinds, have neither the power of affecting something nor that of being affected by something (248C8–9). If the forms of Plato's 'theory of forms' have the power to affect things in that they have the quasi-causal power of making things be in certain ways,⁵¹ then the forms of the friends of the forms are not those of Plato's 'theory of forms'.

Theaetetus asks whether this position of the friends of the forms is reasonable (248C10). More probing takes place. The friends of the forms 'concede that the soul knows and being is known' (248D1–2). They are offered four alternatives (248D4–7): either (1) to know is to affect and to be known is to be affected, or (2) both to know and to be known are both to affect and to be affected, or (3) to know is to be affected and to be known is to affect, or (4) both to know and to be known are neither to affect nor to be affected.⁵² They opt for (4) because they think that other choices would lead them to contradict their earlier claims (248D8–9). Further explication is offered of the friends of the forms' reasoning (248D10–248E6). The explication is an examination of the implications of

⁴⁸ Cf. Pester (1971), 34–5. ⁴⁹ Cf. Politis (2006), 158, 159. ⁵⁰ Cf. Künne (2004), 310–11.

⁵¹ Cf. Künne (2004), 311; above, n. 47 and text thereto. ⁵² Cf. Pester (1971), 37–8, 47.

alternative (1): were it the case that to know is to affect and to be known is to be affected, then, since it is known, being would be affected, and therefore change, in so far as it is known. But this cannot happen to what is stable (and, of course, the friends of the forms regard being as stable, cf. 248AII–I2).⁵³ Alternatives (2) and (3) remain undiscussed.

So, the friends of the forms acknowledge that being can be known by the soul but deny that it thereby undergoes a change. They hold that being has neither the power of affecting something nor that of being affected by something. Hence they reject the modal characterization of being. After its rejection by the friends of the forms, the modal characterization of being disappears from the dialogue.⁵⁴ Does Plato himself adopt the position he attributes to the friends of the forms? If he does, then his view is that the modal characterization of being is to be abandoned and kinds have neither the power of affecting something nor that of being affected by something (kinds can be known but to know something is not to affect it).⁵⁵ However, Plato could tacitly pursue a different strategy whereby he retains the modal characterization of being and is therefore committed to accepting that kinds have either the power of affecting something or that of being affected by something. In fact, he could adopt at least three such alternative strategies. The first is to claim that by knowing the kinds the soul (does not affect them but) is affected by them, so that the soul changes whereas the kinds remain changeless. It is assumed that if x is affected by y then x changes but it does not follow that y changes.⁵⁶ The second alternative strategy is to accept that by being known the kinds are affected by the soul but to deny that kinds are thereby changed. In this case, it is assumed that if x is affected by something it does not follow that x changes.⁵⁷ The third alternative strategy is to accept that by being known kinds are affected by the soul and therefore change. This strategy can be implemented in two ways. The first is to credit Plato with the view that by being known kinds undergo an intrinsic and genuine change.⁵⁸ One will thereby assume that Plato's 'theory of forms' is radically modified. The second way of implementing the third alternative strategy is to hold that according to

⁵³ Lines 248D10–248E6 expound the friends of the forms' reasoning leading them to reject alternative (1). Some commentators interpret these lines as an attack on the position of the friends of the forms pushing them to concede that being changes in so far as it is known: cf. Jowett (1892), IV 380; Eslick (1955), 46; Moravcsik (1962), 39–40; Kamlah (1963), 37; Bondeson (1976), 6; MacKenzie (1986), 143–4; McPherran (1986), 244–5; McCabe (1994), 204.

⁵⁴ *Pace* Malcolm (1983), 120–1, there is no evidence that the friends of the forms accept or are committed to the modal characterization of being.

⁵⁵ Cf. Ross (1951), 110.

⁵⁶ Cf. Cornford (1935), 240; Ross (1951), 111; Brown (1998), 199–201. ⁵⁷ Cf. Vlastos (1970), 309–17.

⁵⁸ Cf. Teloh (1981), 194–5; Brunschwig (1988), 122; Gerson (2006), 296–302.

Plato kinds by being known undergo (not an intrinsic and genuine change but) only an extrinsic and ‘mere Cambridge’ change, which does not bar them from remaining intrinsically and genuinely changeless.⁵⁹ This second way of implementing the strategy perhaps involves no modification of the ‘theory of forms’.⁶⁰

Whatever the merits of these alternative strategies, clearly the friends of the forms do not take them up: as I said, they adamantly reject the modal characterization of being, which henceforth disappears from the dialogue. So, the attempt to reconcile the friends of the forms and the giants by means of the modal characterization of being runs into the sand.

*The final characterization of being: change and stability both are.*⁶¹ In order to break the deadlock, a fresh start is made with an independent argument aimed at providing a new characterization of being (248E7–249D8).

| | |
|--|-------|
| VIS. Τί δὲ πρὸς Διός; ὡς ἀληθῶς κίνησιν καὶ ζωὴν καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ φρόνησιν ἢ ῥαδίως πεισθησόμεθα τῷ παντελῶς | 248E7 |
| ὄντι μὴ παρῆναι, μηδὲ ζῆν αὐτὸ μηδὲ φρονεῖν, ἀλλὰ σεμνὸν καὶ ἄγιον, νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον, ἀκίνητον ἑστὸς εἶναι; | 249AI |
| ΤΗΤ. Δεινὸν μεντᾶν, ὧ ξένη, λόγον συγχωροῖμεν. | |
| VIS. Ἀλλὰ νοῦν μὲν ἔχειν, ζωὴν δὲ μὴ φῶμεν; | |
| ΤΗΤ. Καὶ πῶς; | A5 |
| VIS. Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἀμφότερα ἐνόντ’ αὐτῷ λέγομεν, οὐ μὴν ἐν ψυχῇ γε φήσομεν αὐτὸ ἔχειν αὐτά; | |
| ΤΗΤ. Καὶ τίν’ ἂν ἕτερον ἔχοι τρόπον; | |
| VIS. Ἀλλὰ δῆτα νοῦν μὲν καὶ ζωὴν καὶ ψυχὴν ἔχον, ἀκίνητον μέντοι τὸ παράπαν ἔμψυχον ὄν ἑστάναι; | A10 |
| ΤΗΤ. Πάντα ἔμοιγε ἄλογα ταῦτ’ εἶναι φαίνεται. | 249BI |
| VIS. Καὶ τὸ κινούμενον δὴ καὶ κίνησιν συγχωρητέον ὡς ὄντα. | |
| ΤΗΤ. Πῶς δ’ οὔ; | |
| VIS. Συμβαίνει δ’ οὔν, ὧ Θεαίτητε, ἀκινήτων τε ὄντων <πάντων> νοῦν μηδενὶ περὶ μηδενὸς εἶναι μηδαμοῦ. | B5 |
| ΤΗΤ. Κομιδῆ μὲν οὔν. | |

⁵⁹ ‘Mere Cambridge’ change is that spurious change which for instance Socrates undergoes by being at one time taller and at a later time smaller than Theaetetus, the situation being one where Socrates suffers no decrease in size whereas Theaetetus grows. ‘Mere Cambridge’ change is discussed in *Tht.* 154BI–155C10.

⁶⁰ Cf. Moravcsik (1962), 39–40; Runciman (1962), 81; Owen (1966), 338–9; Reeve (1985), 53–4, 60–1; McPherran (1986), 244–50; Künnle (2004), 316–20; Thomas (2008), 644.

⁶¹ I translate ‘κίνησις’ and ‘στάσις’ by ‘change’ and ‘stability’ (similarly with the corresponding verbs). Translators often render ‘κίνησις’ and ‘στάσις’ by ‘motion’ and ‘rest’. The advantage of ‘change’ and ‘stability’ is that they cover not only locomotion and stillness, but also every kind of alteration and lack thereof (cf. *Tht.* 181C1–181D7).

- VIS. Καὶ μὴν ἐὰν αὖ φερόμενα καὶ κινούμενα πάντ'
 εἶναι συγχωρῶμεν, καὶ τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ ταῦτόν τοῦτο ἐκ
 τῶν ὄντων ἐξαιρήσομεν. B10
- THY. Πῶς;
- VIS. Τὸ κατὰ ταῦτά καὶ ὡσαύτως καὶ περὶ τὸ αὐτὸ
 δοκεῖ σοι χωρὶς στάσεως γενέσθαι ποτ' ἄν; 249C1
- THY. Οὐδαμῶς.
- VIS. Τί δ'; ἀνευ τούτων νοῦν καθορᾶς ὄντα ἢ γενόμενον
 ἄν καὶ ὄπουοῦν;
- THY. Ἥκιστα. C5
- VIS. Καὶ μὴν πρὸς γε τοῦτον παντὶ λόγῳ μαχετέον, ὅς
 ἄν ἐπιστήμην ἢ φρόνησιν ἢ νοῦν ἀφανίζων ἰσχυρίζεται
 περὶ τίνος ὀπηοῦν.
- THY. Σφόδρα γε.
- VIS. Τῷ δὴ φιλοσόφῳ καὶ ταῦτα μάλιστα τιμῶντι
 πᾶσα, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀνάγκη διὰ ταῦτα μήτε τῶν ἐν ἢ καὶ τὰ
 πολλὰ εἶδη λεγόντων τὸ πᾶν ἐστηκὸς ἀποδέχεσθαι, τῶν τε C10
249D1
 αὖ πανταχῇ τὸ ὄν κινούντων μηδὲ τὸ παράπαν ἀκούειν,
 ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν τῶν παιδῶν εὐχὴν, ὅσα ἀκίνητα καὶ κεκινη-
 μένα, τὸ ὄν τε καὶ τὸ πᾶν συναμφοτέρα λέγειν.
- THY. Ἀληθέστατα. D5
- VIS. Τί οὔν; ἄρ' οὐκ ἐπιεικῶς ἤδη φαινόμεθα περι-
 ειληφέναι τῷ λόγῳ τὸ ὄν;
- THY. Πάνυ μὲν οὔν. D8
- VIS. But, for heaven's sake, shall we be easily persuaded that change and 248E
 life and soul and intelligence are truly not present in what is in the 249A
 most complete way? That it neither lives nor thinks, but, solemn
 and holy, it stands changeless, without having any understanding?
 THY. We would then be admitting a frightening account, visitor.
 VIS. Should we say that it has understanding but does not have life?
 THY. How on earth?
 VIS. Once we say that both these things are in it, shall we deny that it
 has them in a soul?
 THY. In what other way could it have them?
 VIS. Shall we then say that it has understanding and life and soul and
 yet, although ensouled, it stands completely changeless?
 THY. All these things seem completely unreasonable to me. 249B
 VIS. Hence both what changes and change must be acknowledged as
 beings.
 THY. Of course.
 VIS. So, Theaetetus, it turns out that if all things are changeless then there
 is nothing anywhere that has any understanding about anything.
 THY. Exactly.
 VIS. However, if we admit that all things are moving and changing, with
 this account too we shall take this very thing away from beings.

THT. How so?

VIS. Does it seem to you that being in the same manner and in the same way and about the same could at all⁶² come to be without stability? 249C

THT. Not at all.

VIS. Well then, without these do you see understanding existing or coming to be anywhere?

THT. Not in the least.

VIS. And we must fight with every argument against anyone who in any way attempts to abolish knowledge or intelligence or understanding about anything.

THT. Definitely.

VIS. For these reasons the philosopher, the person who values these things the most, must, as it seems, absolutely not agree with those who say that the stable totality of things is one or the many kinds,⁶³ nor listen at all to those who change being in all ways, but, as with the prayer of children, say that being and the totality of things are both together, all changeless things and all changing things.⁶⁴ 249D

THT. Most true.

VIS. Well now, have we not done a fine job of encompassing being by an account?

THT. Absolutely.

The argument of 248E7–249D8, addressed mainly to the friends of the forms, relies on the principle that whatever is required for intelligence or understanding or knowledge must be admitted to be: for, the friends of the forms do concede that being is known by the soul (cf. 248CII–248D3); and philosophers, who are ‘lovers of wisdom’, venerate understanding and knowledge and will therefore fight against whoever banishes either (cf. 249C6–II). The argument has two strands.

The first strand (248E7–249B7) concerns change. Understanding belongs to the domain of what is in the most complete way (248E8–249AI).⁶⁵ But understanding requires life, which requires soul, which in turn requires change. Therefore not only understanding but also life, soul, and change belong to the domain of what is in the most complete way. ‘Hence both what changes and change must be acknowledged as beings’ (249B2–3).⁶⁶

⁶² I understand ‘ποτ’ at 249CI as having intensive force in the question (cf. LSJ *s.v.* ‘πότε’ III 3).

⁶³ I construe ‘ἀποδέχεσθαι’ with the preceding ‘τῶν . . . λεγόντων’ (cf. LSJ *s.v.* ‘ἀποδέχομαι’ 4 c).

⁶⁴ On the translation of ‘ἄσα ἀκίνητα καὶ κεκινημένα’ by ‘all changeless things and all changing things’ cf. Keyt (1969), 6 (against the translation ‘all things that are unchanged and changed’, offered by Owen (1966), 339).

⁶⁵ On the phrase ‘παντελῶς ὄν’, see Politis (2006), 160–3.

⁶⁶ I take it that at 248E7–249B7 Plato establishes that change and all changing things are by arguing that souls and therefore some changing things belong to the domain of what is in the most complete

The argument's second strand (249B8–249C5) concerns stability. The Visitor asks: 'Does it seem to you that being in the same manner and in the same way and about the same could at all come to be without stability?' (249B12–249C1). Theaetetus answers in the negative. But, if nothing satisfied the condition of 'being in the same manner and in the same way and about the same', then there would be no understanding (249C3–5). Therefore there must be stable things.

Finally (249C6–249D8) the two strands of the argument are combined in its conclusion, which amounts to a characterization of being: 'being and the totality of things are both together, all changeless things and all changing things' (249D3–4).

Although he does not say so in so many words, Plato surely maintains that there are stable things: otherwise the conclusion that being comprises 'both things together, all changeless things and all changing things' (249D3–4) would not need the support of the strand of the argument concerning stability and would be misleadingly expressed (I take it that 'stable' and 'changeless' are synonyms in the present context and that they both mean 'completely immune from all change in all respects'). This, in turn, suggests that kinds are stable. For, what if not kinds could be stable in Plato's ontology? Moreover, the strand of the argument concerning stability relies on the premiss that understanding requires things that are 'in the same manner and in the same way and about the same' (249B12); and such things are probably kinds (cf. 252A7–8 and 246B7–8 with 248A11–12). So, the changelessness side of the conclusion that being comprises 'both things together, all changeless things and all changing things' (249D3–4) probably presupposes that kinds are stable. Again, the friends of the forms are described as 'those who say that the stable totality of things is [...] the many kinds' (249C11–249D1). This again suggests that kinds are stable. I therefore take it that in the *Sophist* Plato is committed to the view that all kinds are stable.⁶⁷

way (cf. Cornford (1935), 244–7; Ross (1951), 108–11). At least two other interpretations have been offered of 248E7–249B7. Some commentators (e.g. Moravcsik (1962), 39–40) believe that at 248E7–249B7 Plato provides support for one of the premisses of the argument at 248D10–248E6, which they take to be an attack on the position of the friends of the forms pushing them to concede that being changes in so far as it is known (see above, n. 53). Specifically, the premiss for which these commentators think that support is provided is that to know is to affect and to be known is to be affected. This interpretation is convincingly criticized by Keyt (1969), 4–5. According to other commentators, in the passage in question Plato establishes that change and changing things are by asserting either that kinds themselves change in so far as they are living beings endowed with understanding (perhaps intellects) (cf. Apelt (1891a), 78–9) or that the system of all kinds is a living being endowed with understanding (cf. de Vogel (1953), 65–7).

⁶⁷ Cf. *Phd.* 78D3–9; Keyt (1969), 6, 9. This result tells against crediting Plato with the third of the alternative strategies outlined in the paragraph to n. 54 above. I should mention that the text tolerates

The Visitor and Theaetetus agree (249c3–5) that if nothing were to satisfy the condition of ‘being in the same manner and in the same way and about the same’ then there would be no understanding. The necessary condition on understanding which they agree on is a recurrent theme in Plato: the claim that understanding requires things that are ‘in the same manner and in the same way and about the same’ appears both in dialogues regarded as earlier than the *Sophist*⁶⁸ and in dialogues considered later.⁶⁹ I cannot properly address the difficult question of what Plato is committing himself to by saying that if nothing were to satisfy the condition of ‘being in the same manner and in the same way and about the same’ then there would be no understanding. Briefly, my answer is that according to Plato it is impossible to understand what it is to be (a) ϕ unless being (a) ϕ amounts to the same at all times and in all circumstances and contexts (here and in the rest of this paragraph ‘ ϕ ’ is a schematic letter to be substituted with any general term).⁷⁰ For instance, unless (contrary to what Meno says at *Men.* 71E1–72A5) being a virtue amounts to the same for men, women, children, the elderly, free men, and slaves, it is impossible to understand what a virtue is. The requirement that something satisfy the condition of ‘being in the same manner and in the same way and about the same’ is simply the requirement that the attribute of being (a) ϕ have a nature that is invariant with respect to times, circumstances, and contexts, that there be a single and definite answer to the question ‘What is it to be (a) ϕ ?’ Such invariance requires the attribute itself to be completely unchanging (the only ‘changes’ it can undergo, like being instantiated by different things at different times or coming to be known by thinkers who were previously ignorant of it, do not count as genuine changes).⁷¹

How is the universal conclusion reached that *all* changing things are? After all, what was established by the strand of the argument concerning change is merely that *some* changing things are. The most plausible

an alternative exegesis, according to which for Plato some but not all kinds are stable. Plato’s position would then be that kinds are ‘in the same manner and in the same way and about the same’ in that each of them permanently and invariably enjoys the attribute it is associated with: stability is permanently and invariably stable, but change permanently and invariably changes. Adopting this alternative exegesis would trigger a radically different account of all the central section of the *Sophist*. I resist this interpretation because it saddles Plato with too crude a form of self-predication. What could he say, for instance, about the kind mortality?

⁶⁸ Cf. *Cra.* 439c7–440a5; 440b4–440c1; *Phd.* 78d1–79a11; *R.* 5. 479a1–3; 479e7–8; 6. 484b3–5.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Plt.* 269d5–6; *Ti.* 27d5–28a4; 38a3–6; 48e4–49a1; 51e6–52a4; *Phlb.* 58a2–3; 59a11–59b6; 59c2–6; 61e1–3.

⁷⁰ On general terms cf. above, n. 33 of Ch. 2. Recall that the indefinite article is needed in some English sentences but not in Greek.

⁷¹ Cf. Bostock (1986), 208. Although largeness is not large (in the ordinary sense), if being large were the nature of largeness at one time and were not its nature at another then largeness would change (in the ordinary sense).

justification for the universal conclusion is that the obstacles which could have prevented one from asserting it have been removed. For, the claim that all changing things are is *prima facie* plausible; the only ground for the friends of the forms' rejection of it in favour of the contrary claim that no changing things are is that all changing things change and change disqualifies them from being; once it has been acknowledged that some changing things are, this ground vanishes; the *prima facie* plausible claim that all changing things are may then be averred. A parallel justification can be given for the claim that all stable things are, which the friends of the forms would probably have accepted anyhow.⁷²

By the end of the discussion with the giants and the friends of the forms, both parties have made concessions whereby their original ontology is expanded: the giants have acknowledged that some incorporeal items are, while the friends of the forms have granted that changing things also are. To this extent, an agreement between the two parties has been reached.⁷³

One of the claims made by Plato in this part of the dialogue seems inconsistent with the metaphysical picture he draws elsewhere. In several other works Plato appears to endorse a position that is close to that of the friends of the forms in that he sets the domain of forms in contrast with that of perceptible particulars and he characterizes the former as the realm of being and the latter as that of becoming.⁷⁴ At the present point of the *Sophist's* argument Plato instead seems to claim that all changing things are beings.⁷⁵ Whether this inconsistency may be described as an evolution in Plato's metaphysics depends, at least in part, on issues of relative chronology of his works – issues I prefer to keep clear of.

3.3 THE REFUTATION OF THE FINAL CHARACTERIZATION OF BEING

An argument in three steps. The arduously achieved characterization of being also comes under fire (249D9–250D4). The Visitor remarks (249E6–250A6)

⁷² Cf. Brown (1998), 204.

⁷³ Cf. Brown (1998), 202–3; Politis (2006), 155–8 (who examines how far the symmetry between the concessions made by the two parties goes).

⁷⁴ Cf. *R.* 6. 509B2–509C2; 7. 518C8–518D1; 525C5–6; 526E6–7; 534A2–4; *Ti.* 27D5–28A4; Pester (1971), 44.

⁷⁵ Cf. Owen (1966), 339; Seligman (1974), 37; Teloh (1981), 195; Brown (1998), 204. Several commentators deny that the position presented in the *Sophist* is incompatible with the metaphysics of other dialogues. Some (e.g. Cornford (1935), 246–7; Ross (1951), 110; Guthrie (1962–81), v 145; Frank (1985), 15–18; Silverman (2002), 155, 343) think that in the *Sophist* being comprises kinds and souls (which change) but not bodies: but such an interpretation sits uneasily with 249D3–4 and 250B8–9 (cf. Politis (2006), 173–4). The position of the *Phaedo*, where Plato speaks of 'two kinds of beings [δύο εἶδη τῶν ὀντων], the visible and the invisible' (79A6–7), is closer to the one presented in the *Sophist*.

that it may be criticized by questions similar to those addressed to the pluralists earlier (at 243D6–244B5). The following exchange then occurs:

- VIS. Εἶεν δὴ, κίνησιν καὶ στάσιν ἄρ' οὐκ ἐναντιώτατα
λέγεις ἀλλήλοις; 250A8
- THY. Πῶς γὰρ οὐ; A10
- VIS. Καὶ μὴν εἶναι γε ὁμοίως φῆς ἀμφότερα αὐτὰ καὶ
ἐκάτερον;
- THY. Φημί γὰρ οὖν. 250B1
- VIS. Ἄρα κι νεῖσθαι λέγων ἀμφότερα καὶ ἐκάτερον,
ὅταν εἶναι συγχωρηῆς;
- THY. Οὐδαμῶς.
- VIS. Ἄλλ' ἐστάναι σημαίνεις λέγων αὐτὰ ἀμφότερα
εἶναι; B5
- THY. Καὶ πῶς;
- VIS. Τρίτον ἄρα τι παρὰ ταῦτα τὸ ὄν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ τιθεῖς,
ὡς ὑπ' ἐκείνου τὴν τε στάσιν καὶ τὴν κίνησιν περιεχομένην,
συλλαβῶν καὶ ἀπιδῶν αὐτῶν πρὸς τὴν τῆς οὐσίας κοινω-
νίαν, οὕτως εἶναι προσεῖπες ἀμφότερα; B10
- THY. Κινδυνεύομεν ὡς ἀληθῶς τρίτον ἀπομαντεύε-
σθαι τι τὸ ὄν, ὅταν κίνησιν καὶ στάσιν εἶναι λέγωμεν. 250C1
- VIS. Οὐκ ἄρα κινήσεις καὶ στάσεις ἐστὶ συναμφότερον τὸ
ὄν ἀλλ' ἕτερον δὴ τι τούτων.
- THY. Ἔοικεν. C5
- VIS. Κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν ἄρα τὸ ὄν οὔτε ἔστηκεν οὔτε
κινεῖται.
- THY. Σχεδόν.
- VIS. Ποῖ δὴ χρὴ τὴν διάνοιαν εἶτι τρέπειν τὸν βουλό-
μενον ἐναργῆς τι περὶ αὐτοῦ παρ' ἑαυτῷ βεβαιώσασθαι; C10
- THY. Ποῖ γάρ;
- VIS. Οἶμαι μὲν οὐδαμῶσε εἶτι ῥάδιον. εἰ γάρ τι μὴ
κινεῖται, πῶς οὐχ ἔστηκεν; ἢ τὸ μηδαμῶς ἐστὸς πῶς οὐκ
αὖ κινεῖται; τὸ δὲ ὄν ἡμῖν νῦν ἐκτὸς τούτων ἀμφοτέρων
ἀναπέφανται. ἢ δυνατὸν οὖν τοῦτο; 250D1
- THY. Πάντων μὲν οὖν ἀδυνατώτατον. D4
- VIS. Now, wouldn't you say that change and stability are most contrary
to one another? 250A
- THY. Certainly.
- VIS. And do you say that both of them and each are in the same way?
- THY. I do. 250B
- VIS. Do you say that both of them and each change, when you concede
that they are?
- THY. In no way.
- VIS. Do you mean that they are stable, when you say that they both are?
- THY. How on earth?

- VIS. So, by positing in your soul being as a third thing alongside these, as if stability and change were contained by it, by taking them together, and by looking at their communion with being, in this way you addressed both as being?
- THT. It looks as if we truly have a sort of omen of being as some third thing, when we say that change and stability are. 250C
- VIS. Therefore being is not both change and stability together, but surely something different from these.
- THT. So it seems.
- VIS. Therefore, by its own nature, being neither is stable nor changes.
- THT. Probably.
- VIS. Now, where should one turn one's mind if one wanted to establish for oneself something clear about it?
- THT. Yes, where?
- VIS. I think there is no easy port of call. For, if something does not change, how is it not stable? Or how does that which is in no way stable not change? But being has now appeared to us outside both of these. Is this possible? 250D
- THT. It is the greatest of impossibilities.

This exchange embodies an argument that may be divided into three steps.

First step (250A8–250C5): Change and stability are ‘most contrary to one another’ (250A8–9). Suppose that being were identical to change. Since ‘both of them [*sc.* change and stability] and each are in the same way’ (250A11–12), i.e. being holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability, it would follow that change holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability (cf. 250B2–3). Since this is not the case, being is not identical to change. Analogously, suppose that being were identical to stability. Since being holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability, it would follow that stability holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability (cf. 250B5–6). Since this is not the case, being is not identical to stability. Therefore being is different from both change and stability.

Second step (250C6–8): ‘By its own nature, being neither is stable nor changes’ (250C6–7).

Third step (250C9–250D4): Being is ‘outside both of these [*sc.* change and stability]’ (250D2), which is ‘the greatest of impossibilities’ (250D4).

The argument's first step is complicated. I shall illustrate it later, in the context of the reconstruction of an analogous argument concerning identity, difference, change, and stability (at 255A4–255B7).⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Cf. below, subsection to n. 47 of Ch. 4 and the subsections that follow it (in particular, the paragraph to n. 90).

The fallacy in the refutation. The result of the argument's first step is that 'being is not both change and stability together, but surely something different from these' (250C3–4).⁷⁷ This is true. The result of the third step is that being is 'outside of both of these [*sc.* stability and change]' (250D2), i.e. that being instantiates neither stability nor change. This is false. Where do things go wrong? There are two reasonable solutions.

According to the first, a fallacy occurs between the argument's first step, whose result is that 'being is not both change and stability together, but surely something different from these' (250C3–4), and the second step, which states that 'by its own nature, being neither is stable nor changes' (250C6–7). The likeliest diagnosis is that statements of identity and predication are confused. Specifically, the sentence 'Being is not both change and stability together, but surely something different from these' (250C3–4) is understood in two ways: as a negative statement of identity, which is validly supported by the inference in the argument's first step (250A8–250C5), and as a negative statement of ordinary predication, which is unwarranted. Once this sentence is understood as a negative statement of ordinary predication, the result of the second step is reached, which is formulated by the sentence: 'By its own nature, being neither is stable nor changes' (250C6–7). This sentence is a negative statement of ordinary predication. The initial adverbial phrase 'by its own nature' (250C6) indicates that the result stated by the sentence it modifies has been reached by reflecting on the nature of being and comparing it with those of change and stability. The third step simply repeats the result reached by the second.⁷⁸

According to the second solution, no fallacy occurs between the argument's first and second step. The result of the first step is that 'being is not both change and stability together, but surely something different from these' (250C3–4). The result of the second step is expressed by the sentence: 'By its own nature, being neither is stable nor changes' (250C6–7). This sentence cannot be a negative statement of ordinary predication expressing the claim that by its own nature being instantiates neither stability nor change: otherwise the inference from the first to the second step would be fallacious, contrary to hypothesis. The most reasonable way of avoiding a fallacy at this stage is to assume that the adverbial phrase 'by its own

⁷⁷ According to Stough (1990), 356, the result reached by the first step is supposed to contradict the characterization of being endorsed earlier by the Visitor and Theaetetus ('being and the totality of things are both together, all changeless things and all changing things', 249D3–4). But, since the argument does not end with the first step but goes on, it is unlikely for such a contradiction to be intended (the argument would otherwise have stopped here).

⁷⁸ Cf. Lacey (1959), 47, 49–50; Owen (1971), 257, 261.

nature' (250C6) means something like 'as far as its nature is concerned' and introduces a special way of being, or not being, so-and-so. The special way in which the kind being neither is stable nor changes is that whereby neither stability nor change constitutes the nature of the kind being. Then the second step follows validly from the first. For, the first step's result is that 'being is not both change and stability together, but surely something different from these' (250C3–4). In other words, the first step's result is that the kind being is different from both the kind stability and the kind change. From this it follows that neither stability nor change constitutes the nature of the kind being: otherwise either the kind stability or the kind change would be identical to the kind being.⁷⁹ Since no fallacy occurs between the first and the second step, the trouble occurs between the second step and the third, whose result is the false claim that the kind being is 'outside of both of these [*sc.* change and stability]' (250D2), i.e. that the kind being instantiates neither stability nor change. It looks as if between the second and the third step the inquirers slip into a way of understanding the sentence 'By its own nature, being neither is stable nor changes' (250C6–7) whereby the claim it makes entails that being instantiates neither stability nor change. This fallacious slip is probably due to a misunderstanding of the import of the adverbial phrase 'by its own nature'. One may easily think that within the sentence 'By its own nature, being neither is stable nor changes' (250C6–7), the adverbial phrase 'by its own nature' (250C6) indicates a special way in which the kind being instantiates neither stability nor change. If this is how the sentence is understood, then what it says does entail that the kind being instantiates neither stability nor change. But the contribution of the adverbial phrase 'by its own nature' (250C6) within the sentence 'By its own nature, being neither is stable nor changes' (250C6–7) is different: it indicates (not a special way in which the kind being instantiates neither stability nor change, but) a special way in which the kind being neither is stable nor changes: that whereby neither stability nor change constitutes the nature of the kind being.⁸⁰

There are two reasons for rejecting the first solution and one for endorsing the second. First, suppose the first solution were right. Then the sentence 'Being is not both change and stability together, but surely something different from these' (250C3–4) would be understood in two ways: as a negative statement of identity and as a negative statement of ordinary predication. But the sentence's last part, '... but surely something

⁷⁹ Cf. below, paragraph to n. 71 of Ch. 4.

⁸⁰ Cf. Cornford (1935), 250; Frede (1967), 67–8; Seligman (1974), 41–2; Ray (1984), 36; Movia (1991), 272–3; Frede (1992), 399–400.

different from these' (250C4), makes its reading as a negative statement of ordinary predication unnatural. Had Plato's intention been to find a formulation that can be understood both as a negative statement of identity and as a negative statement of ordinary predication, he would have avoided words such as those that constitute the last part of the sentence he actually employs. Secondly, the first solution's account of the occurrence of the adverbial phrase 'by its own nature' (250C6) at the beginning of the argument's second step is contrived. Were the first solution right, Plato's argument would have been more effective without this adverbial phrase. Thirdly, later in the *Sophist* (at 255E4–6) an adverbial phrase constructed around the noun 'nature' ('φύσις') appears to be used to indicate a special way of being so-and-so (as befits the second solution),⁸¹ not a special ground on which the conclusion that something is so-and-so is reached (as required by the first solution). I therefore choose the second solution.⁸²

I have three comments. First, given that the kind being neither is stable nor changes in the special way indicated by the adverbial phrase 'by its own nature' (250C6), it is not excluded that the kind being be either stable or changing by instantiating either stability or change (this agrees with the invalidity of the inference from the second step of the argument to the third). Specifically, given that the kind being neither is stable nor changes in the special way indicated by the adverbial phrase 'by its own nature' (250C6), it is not excluded that the kind being be stable by instantiating stability (Plato is probably committed to acknowledging that being is stable by instantiating stability because he regards being as a kind⁸³ and he probably holds that all kinds are stable).⁸⁴

Secondly, the slip from the first step's true claim, that 'being is not both change and stability together, but surely something different from these' (250C3–4), to the third step's false claim, that being is 'outside of both of these [*sc.* change and stability]' (250D2), is carefully orchestrated. Its author is surely aware of what is happening. Plato is conscious of the invalidity.⁸⁵

Thirdly, granted that the criticism of the final characterization of being turns on a confusion between the ordinary way of being so-and-so and a special one signalled by the adverbial phrase 'by its own nature', the

⁸¹ Cf. below, paragraph to n. 82 of Ch. 4.

⁸² Later I shall discuss the special way of being so-and-so signalled by adverbial phrases constructed around the noun 'nature': cf. below, subsection to n. 66 of Ch. 4.

⁸³ Cf. 254D4–5; 259A4–6. ⁸⁴ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 67.

⁸⁵ Cf. Bluck (1963), 151; Frede (1967), 67–8; Frede (1992), 399–400.

expectation is generated that in the constructive section of the dialogue, which is about to begin, these two ways of being so-and-so will be distinguished.

The conclusion of the discussion about being (250D5–251A4). The Visitor and Theaetetus agree that being is at least as hard to account for as not-being (250D5–250E4, cf. 243B3–243C6). The Visitor, however, expresses the hope that their inquiry may progress towards a joint clarification of both being and not-being, whereby they are understood to the same extent. Even if they cannot attain a full understanding of either, the two inquirers may still try to push their account through⁸⁶ between being and not-being, steering between them as between Scylla and Charybdis. In fact, just as the negative ‘not to be’ will remain unanalysed and as problematic as ever in so far as it is used to deny existence, so also the affirmative ‘to be’ will remain unanalysed in so far as it is used to attribute existence.

⁸⁶ Retaining ‘διωσόμεθα’ (251A3) with the main MSS (cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 136).

The communion of kinds

So far the core part of the *Sophist* has accumulated puzzles and difficulties. At 251A5 Plato signals that the turning point has been reached: henceforth he will endeavour to offer solutions. The present chapter follows the first steps of Plato's attempted solutions. It comprises seven sections.

Section 4.1 deals with the puzzles of the late-learners. Surprisingly enough, the constructive part of the *Sophist* opens with further difficulties. The late-learners believe that a name can be truly applied to a thing only if it fully expresses that thing's essence. They therefore forbid us to apply many names to the same perceptible particular (by saying something like 'This is a man and is good') and permit only sentences that fully describe the essence of a kind (e.g. 'Man is a man' and 'Goodness is good'). Section 4.2 is about the reply to the late-learners, which is based on an argument to the effect that some different kinds combine with one another while others do not. Dialectic is described as the science that studies which kinds combine with one another and the plan is sketched of carrying out a sample study of the combination of kinds. The Visitor and Theaetetus concentrate on three kinds: being, change, and stability. The remark that each of them is identical to itself and different from the other two prompts the question whether identity and difference are two further kinds. Sections 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 are about the arguments which establish that identity and difference are indeed two further kinds. These arguments are extremely compressed and have sparked exegetical debates. Section 4.6 focuses on the portion of the dialogue where the Visitor and Theaetetus return to the project of examining the combination of kinds: no longer of three, as they originally planned, but of five, since it has become clear that identity and difference are two more kinds over and above being, change, and stability. This leads to an examination of four pairs of sentences concerning change. Some of these pairs of sentences (e.g. 'Change is not identical'–'Change is identical') seem inconsistent. They are not, however, genuinely

inconsistent because in uttering them ‘we are not speaking likewise’. Section 4.7 deals with the passage where the Visitor and Theaetetus cash in an important result of their discussion: since the kind being itself is different from all other kinds, it can be described as ‘not being’ in certain ways.

4.1 THE LATE-LEARNERS

The late-learners. The constructive part of the *Sophist* begins with more puzzles. They are attributed to people described in rather derogatory terms:

- VIS. Λέγωμεν δὴ καθ’ ὄντινά ποτε τρόπον πολλοῖς
ὄνόμασι ταῦτόν τοῦτο ἑκάστοτε προσαγορεύομεν. 251A5
- THE. Οἷον δὴ τί; παράδειγμα εἰπέ.
- VIS. Λέγομεν ἄνθρωπον δῆπου πόλλ’ ἄττα ἐπονομάζοντες, τὰ τε χρώματα ἐπιφέροντες αὐτῷ καὶ τὰ σχήματα καὶ μεγέθη καὶ κακίας καὶ ἀρετάς, ἐν οἷς πᾶσι καὶ ἑτέροις
μυριοῖς οὐ μόνον ἄνθρωπον αὐτόν εἶναι φαμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ
ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἕτερα ἀπειρα, καὶ τᾶλλα δὴ κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν
λόγον οὕτως ἐν ἑκάστον ὑποθέμενοι πάλιν αὐτὸ πολλὰ καὶ
πολλοῖς ὄνόμασι λέγομεν. A10
251B1
- THE. Ἀληθῆ λέγεις. B5
- VIS. Ὅθεν γε οἶμαι τοῖς τε νέοις καὶ τῶν γερόντων τοῖς ὀψιμαθέσι θοίνην παρεσκευάκαμεν· εὐθύς γὰρ ἀντιλαβέσθαι παντὶ πρόχειρον ὡς ἀδύνατον τὰ τε πολλὰ ἐν καὶ τὸ ἐν πολλὰ εἶναι, καὶ δῆπου χαίρουσιν οὐκ ἔῶντες ἀγαθὸν λέγειν ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἀγαθὸν ἀγαθόν, τὸν δὲ ἄνθρωπον ἄνθρωπον.¹ ἐντυγχάνεις γάρ, ὦ Θεαίτητε, ὡς ἐγῶμαι, πολλάκις τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐσπουδακόσιν, ἐνίοτε πρεσβυτέροις ἀνθρώποις, καὶ ὑπὸ πενίας τῆς περὶ φρόνησιν κτήσεως τὰ τοιαῦτα τεθαυμακόσι, καὶ δὴ τι καὶ πάσσοφον οἰομένοις τοῦτο αὐτὸ ἀνηρηκέναι. 251C1
C5
- THE. Πάνυ μὲν οὔν. C7
- VIS. Let us say in what way on each occasion we address this very same thing by many names. 251A
- THE. What thing? Give an example.

¹ The main MSS have ‘τὸ μὲν ἀγαθὸν ἀγαθόν, τὸ δὲ ἄνθρωπον ἄνθρωπον’ (B has ‘τοδὲ’). Were one to adopt this reading, ‘τὸ μὲν’ and ‘τὸ δὲ’ should be treated as contrast-phrases (cf. LSJ s.v. ‘ὄ, ἦ, τό’ A viii 4). Simplicius (*in Ph.* 100, 11–12) reports ‘τὸν μὲν ἀγαθὸν ἀγαθόν, τὸν δὲ ἄνθρωπον ἄνθρωπον’. Most eds. print ‘τὸ μὲν ἀγαθὸν ἀγαθόν, τὸν δὲ ἄνθρωπον ἄνθρωπον’, the reading I also follow.

VIS. We speak of a man by naming him many things, applying colours and shapes and sizes and vices and virtues to him. In all these cases and thousands of others, not only do we say he is a man, but also good and indefinitely many other things. And similarly, on the same account, with other things: thus, having assumed that each is one, we again call it many and with many names. 251B

THT. True.

VIS. We thereby prepared a banquet for the young and the old who are late to learn. For it is easy for anyone immediately to retort that it is impossible that the many be one and the one many. They doubtless enjoy not allowing us to call a man good, but the good good and the man a man. I think, Theaetetus, you have often encountered people who take such things seriously. Sometimes they are elderly men who because of poverty of understanding are amazed at such things, thinking that what they have discovered is the greatest wisdom. 251C

THT. Sure.²

Who are the so-called 'late-learners'? Many commentators regard Antisthenes as one of them.³ Others think of Euthydemus and his brother Dionysodorus. For in the *Euthydemus* Socrates says: 'They were pretty well advanced in years when they made a start on this wisdom I want to get – I mean the eristic sort' (272B9–10). Moreover, some traps set by Euthydemus and Dionysodorus recall the difficulties raised by the late-learners.⁴ Some late sources lead other interpreters to identify the late-learners with some Megarians.⁵ Perhaps the late-learners themselves are Euthydemus and Dionysodorus whereas the young who share their views are Megarians.⁶

The late-learners' difficulties. The late-learners raise two difficulties. The first concerns what happens when 'we address this very same thing by many names' (251A5–6), e.g. when 'we speak of a man by naming him many things, applying colours and shapes and sizes and vices and virtues to him' (251A8–10). According to the late-learners, by doing so we commit ourselves to an impossibility. Specifically:

[α] If the same thing can be called by many names then the many will be one and the one many.

[β] Neither is the one many nor are the many one.

[γ] Therefore the same thing cannot be called by many names.

² Cf. *Phlb.* 14C11–14E4 with Panagiotou (1981), 168–70.

³ Cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 137, 138; Ueberweg and Praechter (1926), 295; Cornford (1935), 254; Adorno (1961), 161.

⁴ Cf. *Euthd.* 300E1–301A7; Taylor (1961), 54; Ray (1984), 120; Centrone (2008), 163.

⁵ Cf. *Plu. Col.* 22, 1119D; *Simp. in Ph.* 120, 12–20; Guthrie (1962–81), III 217–18; Isnardi Parente (1999), 73.

⁶ Cf. Stallbaum (1840), 178; Brancacci (1999), 386–96; Esposti Ongaro (2008), 251.

The examples given presuppose that names include common nouns like 'man' and adjectives like 'good'.⁷ Moreover, the thing called by many names is probably not a kind but a perceptible particular: this is indicated by the demonstrative 'this' ('τοῦτο', 251A6) at the beginning of the passage, by the adverb 'on each occasion' ('ἐκᾶστοτε', 251A6) (it suggests ordinary speech acts), and by the fact that to the man in question we apply 'colours and shapes and sizes and vices and virtues' (251A9–10) (we do this not to the kind but to perceptible particulars).⁸ The first difficulty therefore concerns at least perceptible particulars (although not necessarily only perceptible particulars).

The second difficulty raised by the late-learners relates to the application of a single name to a single thing. The late-learners 'enjoy not allowing us to call a man good, but the good good and the man a man' (251B9–251C2). This second difficulty resurfaces later, when the late-learners are described as those 'who in no way allow us to address one thing through the communion with a different condition' (252B9–10).⁹

There is something baffling about the position of the late-learners. What is their motivation for regimenting how we speak? Specifically, why should it be the case that if the same thing can be called by many names then the many will be one and the one many? Why are we forbidden to call a man good but allowed to call the good good and the man a man?

Interpretations of the late-learners' difficulties: (1) Identity and predication. Three main interpretations of late-learners' views are available. The first brings the late-learners' difficulties back to a confusion between statements of identity and predication.¹⁰

When one calls a thing by many names, one often uses a sentence consisting of a name which signifies that thing followed by 'is' and then by the many names by which the thing is called (joined by 'and' or some other connective device). For instance, when one calls Socrates by the two names 'small' and 'good', one often uses the sentence 'Socrates is small and good'.¹¹

In some cases, a sentence consisting of a name followed by 'is' and then by a name posits that the thing signified by the initial name is identical to that signified by the final name. For instance, the sentence 'Tully is Cicero'

⁷ Cf. 251B1–2; Oehler (1962), 57; below, text to n. 4 of Ch. 6.

⁸ Cf. *Phlb.* 14C11–14D3; Frede (1967), 61; Mann (2000), 173. ⁹ Cf. below, n. 21.

¹⁰ Cf. Grote (1875), II 445; Apelt (1897), 159; Lacey (1959), 47; Bordt (1991), 522–3 (Bordt maintains that the statements allowed by the late-learners are definitions, which he regards as statements of identity of a special sort); Esposti Ongaro (2008), 249.

¹¹ A different reconstruction of the linguistic formulation whereby a single thing is called by many names may be found in Frede (1967), 62.

posits that what ‘Tully’ signifies is identical to what ‘Cicero’ signifies. A similar account holds for sentences consisting of a name followed by ‘is’ and then by many names (joined by ‘and’ or some other connective device): in some cases a sentence of this type posits that the thing signified by the initial name is identical to each of those signified by the names following ‘is’. For instance the sentence ‘Venus is Hesperus and Phosphorus’ posits that the thing signified by ‘Venus’ is identical both with the thing signified by ‘Hesperus’ and with that signified by ‘Phosphorus’.

The late-learners believe that every sentence consisting of a name followed by ‘is’ and then by many names (joined by ‘and’ or some other connective device) posits that the thing signified by the initial name is identical to each of the things signified by the names following ‘is’. So, since ‘Socrates’, ‘small’, and ‘good’ are names, the sentence ‘Socrates is small and good’ posits that Socrates (the thing signified by the name ‘Socrates’) is identical to both smallness (the thing signified by the name ‘small’) and goodness (the thing signified by the name ‘good’). Since smallness and goodness are many, the sentence ‘Socrates is small and good’ implies that Socrates is many. Since Socrates is one, whoever speaks in this way makes the many one and the one many.

The late-learners’ conception of sentences motivates also their second difficulty. The reason why they ‘enjoy not allowing us to call a man good’ (251B9–251C1) is that to call a man good one would employ some sentence like ‘Socrates is good’: since ‘Socrates’ and ‘good’ are names (signifying the perceptible particular Socrates and the kind goodness, respectively), the sentence would posit that Socrates is identical to goodness. Since Socrates is not identical to goodness, the late-learners forbid us to call a man good. No such problem arises by calling the kind goodness good and the kind man a man.

Interpretations of the late-learners’ difficulties: (2) The speech act of naming. According to the second interpretation, the late-learners’ reasons for imposing restrictions on how we speak relate to speech acts.¹² In particular, the second interpretation takes the late-learners to endorse two theses about speech acts: first, if a speaker applies a name to an object then a speech act of naming occurs where that name is involved and that object is named; secondly, in every speech act of naming exactly one object is named. Now suppose a speaker applies the names ‘small’ and ‘good’ to Socrates. The first

¹² Cf. Moravcsik (1962), 57–9; Waletzki (1979), 251; Bostock (1984), 99–100; Stough (1990), 359–60; Moravcsik (1992), 205–6; Szaif (1998), 415–6; Malcolm (2006b), 278; Fronterotta (2007), 396.

thesis entails that a speech act of naming occurs where the name 'small' is involved and Socrates is named. Let then s be such a speech act. The second thesis entails that exactly one object is named in s . Since s is a speech act of naming where the name 'small' is involved, the kind smallness is named in s (this is a further assumption, independent of the two general theses about speech acts but autonomously plausible). Since exactly one object is named in s , and since Socrates is named in s and the kind smallness is named in s , it follows that Socrates is identical to the kind smallness. For parallel reasons, Socrates is identical to the kind goodness. Since the kinds smallness and goodness are many, and since Socrates is identical to both, it follows that Socrates is many things. But Socrates is a single thing, so whoever speaks in this way makes the many one and the one many.

A similar mechanism explains the late-learners' second difficulty. They 'enjoy not allowing us to call a man good' (251B9–251C1). Suppose a speaker applies the name 'good' to a man. The first thesis entails that a speech act of naming occurs where the name 'good' is involved and the man is named. Let then s be such a speech act. The second thesis entails that exactly one object is named in s . Since s is a speech act of naming where the name 'good' is involved, the kind goodness is named in s (this is a further assumption). Since exactly one object is named in s , and since a man is named in s and goodness is also named in s , it follows that the man is identical to goodness. This is of course not the case. No such problem arises by calling goodness good and the kind man a man.

Interpretations of the late-learners' difficulties: (3) Essentialist predication. According to the third interpretation, the late-learners' reasons for regimenting how we speak concern predication.¹³ The late-learners believe that a name can be truly applied to a thing only if it fully expresses the thing's essence. If one applies many names, e.g. 'man' and 'good', to the same thing, the application is true only if both 'man' and 'good' fully express the essence of the thing they are applied to. For this to be the case, the thing to which the two names are applied must be two things: one whose essence is to be a man, and therefore necessarily continues to exist only so long as it is a man, and one whose essence is to be good, and therefore necessarily continues to exist only so long as it is good (the duality becomes apparent if the man ceases to be good because then one thing continues

¹³ Cf. Frede (1967), 61–7; Ray (1984), 43–4; Frede (1992), 400; Mann (2000), 172–80. The version of the third interpretation presented in the main text above is somewhat different from those offered by some of the commentators mentioned in this footnote (the main difference is mentioned below, n. 17). However, it preserves their distinctive intuition.

to exist whereas the other is destroyed). So, the late-learners forbid us to apply many names to the same thing because by doing so we would make the one many.

For a similar reason the late-learners do not allow us to apply the name 'good' to a particular man (in a sentence like 'This man is good' or 'Socrates is good'): such an application would not be a true full description of the particular man's essence. The late-learners only allow us to apply the name 'good' to the kind goodness and the name 'man' to the kind man (in sentences like 'Goodness is good' and 'Man is a man'): for, according to the late-learners, only kinds have natures that can be fully described by means of predicative sentences.¹⁴ Thus the late-learners 'enjoy not allowing us to call a man good, but the good good and the man a man' (251B9–251C2).

Evaluation of the interpretations. Consider again the formulation of the late-learners' second difficulty: 'They doubtless enjoy not allowing us to call a man good, but the good good and the man a man' (251B9–251C2). The beginning of the example, which concerns what the late-learners forbid, is about the application of the name 'good' to a particular man.¹⁵ The last part of the example concerns what the late-learners allow. Here the phrases 'the good' and 'the man' probably introduce something new, namely the kinds goodness and man.¹⁶ For, the presence of a neuter article in front of an adjective may indicate that a kind is referred to (cf. *Euthd.* 301A1). Moreover, the acceptance by the late-learners of kinds, e.g. goodness and man, should not cause surprise: after all, even the giants acknowledged justice, wisdom, and their contraries (cf. 247A5–247B5), and Socrates' interlocutors in many dialogues readily accept kinds.¹⁷

It is hard to decide between the three interpretations. I opt for the third. For it presupposes that to refute the late-learners Plato should draw a distinction between predications whereby the predicate-expression is taken to provide a full description of the nature or essence of the item signified by the subject-expression, on the one hand, and predications whereby what is said is simply that the item signified by the subject-expression instantiates the kind signified by the predicate-expression, on the other. In the last chapter, I argued¹⁸ that the refutation of the last attempted

¹⁴ Cf. below, n. 70 and text thereto. ¹⁵ Cf. above, text to n. 8. ¹⁶ Cf. Bordt (1991), 522.

¹⁷ Cf. *Euthphr.* 5C8–5D6; *Hp.Ma.* 287C1–287D2; *Prt.* 330C1–2; 330D2–5; Nehamas (1975), 170–1, 175. Some commentators (e.g. Frede (1967), 61–2, 64; Frede (1992), 400; Mann (2000), 173) understand the phrases 'the good' and 'the man' as referring anaphorically back to the particular good thing and the particular man just mentioned.

¹⁸ Cf. above, subsection to n. 77 of Ch. 3.

characterization of being (at 250A8–250D4) turned on a fallacious slip from the claim that the kind being is neither stable nor changing in that neither stability nor change constitutes its nature to the claim that the kind being is neither stable nor changing in that it instantiates neither stability nor change. The distinction between these ways in which the kind being could be neither stable nor changing, needed to guard against the fallacy, is in line with the distinction between types of predication that needs to be drawn to answer the late-learners, given that the third interpretation is correct. Later¹⁹ I shall endeavour to show that Plato does draw such a distinction between types of predication: the distinction between the ‘definitional’ and ‘ordinary’ readings of sentences.

4.2 THE COMBINATION OF KINDS

Do kinds blend? The Visitor proposes to question all thinkers interested in being, including both the late-learners and those addressed earlier (251C8–251D4). He asks them whether no distinct kinds blend, or all distinct kinds blend, or some distinct kinds blend and some do not:

- VIS. Πότερον μήτε τήν οὐσίαν κινήσει καὶ στάσει 251D5
 προσάπτωμεν μήτε ἄλλο ἄλλῳ μηδὲν μηδενί, ἀλλ’ ὡς
 ἄμεικτα ὄντα καὶ ἀδύνατον μεταλαμβάνειν ἀλλήλων
 οὕτως αὐτὰ ἐν τοῖς παρ’ ἡμῖν λόγοις τιθώμεν; ἢ πάντα εἰς
 ταῦτόν συναγάγωμεν ὡς δυνατὰ ἐπικοινωνεῖν ἀλλήλοις; ἢ
 τὰ μὲν, τὰ δὲ μή; τούτων, ὦ Θεαίτητε, τί ποτ’ ἂν αὐτοὺς 251E1
 προαιρεῖσθαι φήσομεν;
- THY. Ἐγὼ μὲν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν οὐδὲν ἔχω πρὸς ταῦτα
 ἀποκρίνασθαι.
- VIS. Τί οὖν οὐ καθ’ ἐν ἀποκρινόμενος ἐφ’ ἐκάστου τὰ E5
 συμβαίνοντα ἐσκέψω;
- THY. Καλῶς λέγεις. E7
- VIS. Are we to apply neither being to change and stability nor any 251D
 other thing to any other, but posit them in our sentences as if they
 were unmixable and it were impossible for them to participate in
 one another? Or shall we bring them all together as if capable of 251E
 communicating with one another? Or some but not others? Which
 of these alternatives shall we say that they choose, Theaetetus?
- THY. I am in no way able to answer these questions on their behalf.
- VIS. Why don’t you examine what follows in each case while answering
 them one by one?
- THY. Fine.

¹⁹ Cf. below, subsections to nn. 66 and 81.

Although the plan is to examine what follows from each alternative (251E5–7), the procedure actually adopted is somewhat different: the inquirers become convinced that the first and the second alternative have unacceptable consequences and they conclude that the third alternative is correct.²⁰ The argument presupposes that the three alternatives are exhaustive – as indeed they are.

The first alternative refuted (251E8–252D1). The first alternative, according to which no distinct kinds blend, is refuted as follows:

- VIS. Καὶ τιθῶμέν γε αὐτοὺς λέγειν, εἰ βούλει, πρῶτον
μηδενὶ μηδὲν μηδεμίαν δύναμιν ἔχειν κοινωνίας εἰς μηδὲν.
οὐκοῦν κίνησις τε καὶ στάσις οὐδαμῆ μεθέξεται οὐσίας; 251E8
EIO
THT. Οὐ γὰρ οὖν. 252A1
- VIS. Τί δέ; ἔσται πότερον αὐτῶν οὐσίας μὴ προσ-
κοινωνοῦν;
THT. Οὐκ ἔσται.
- VIS. Ταχὺ δὴ ταύτη γε τῆ συνομολογίᾳ πάντα ἀνά- A5
στατα γέγονεν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἅμα τε τῶν τὸ πᾶν κινούντων καὶ
τῶν ὡς ἐν ἰστάντων καὶ ὅσοι κατ' εἶδη τὰ ὄντα κατὰ ταῦτα
ἴσασαύτως ἔχοντα εἶναι φασιν ἅει· πάντες γὰρ οὗτοι τό γε
εἶναι προσάπτουσιν, οἱ μὲν ὄντως κινεῖσθαι λέγοντες, οἱ δὲ
ὄντως ἐστηκότ' εἶναι. A10
THT. Κομιδῆ μὲν οὖν.
- VIS. Καὶ μὴν καὶ ὅσοι τότε μὲν συντιθέασιν τὰ πάντα, 252B1
τοτε δὲ διαιροῦσιν, εἴτε εἰς ἓν καὶ ἕξ ἑνὸς ἄπειρα εἴτε εἰς
πέρασ ἔχοντα στοιχεῖα διαιρούμενοι καὶ ἐκ τούτων συντι-
θέντες, ὁμοίως μὲν ἔαν ἓν μέρει τοῦτο τιθῶσι γιγνόμενον,
ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἔαν ἅει, κατὰ πάντα ταῦτα λέγοιεν ἂν οὐδέν,
εἴπερ μηδεμία ἔστι σύμμειξις. B5
THT. Ὅρθῶς.
- VIS. Ἔτι τοίνυν ἂν αὐτοὶ πάντων καταγελαστότατα
μετίοιεν τὸν λόγον οἱ μηδὲν ἑῶντες κοινωνίᾳ παθήματος
ἑτέρου θάτερον προσαγορεύειν. B10
THT. Πῶς; 252C1
- VIS. Τῶν τε εἶναι πού περὶ πάντα ἀναγκάζονται
χρησθαι καὶ τῶ χωρὶς καὶ τῶ τῶν ἄλλων καὶ τῶ
καθ' αὐτὸ καὶ μυρίοις ἑτέροις, ὧν ἀκρατεῖς ὄντες
εἴργεσθαι καὶ μὴ συνάπτειν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις οὐκ ἄλλων C5
δέονται τῶν ἐξελεγχόντων, ἀλλὰ τὸ λεγόμενον οἴκοθεν τὸν
πολέμιον καὶ ἐναντιωσόμενον ἔχοντες, ἐντὸς ὑποφθεγ-

²⁰ Cf. Szaif (1998), 417.

- γόμενον ὡσπερ τὸν ἄτοπον Εὐρυκλέα περιφέροντες ἀεὶ πορεύονται.
- THT. Κομιδῆ λέγεις ὁμοίον τε καὶ ἀληθές. 252DI
- VIS. And, if you wish, let us suppose that they say in the first place that nothing has any power of communion with anything in any way. Then change and stability will not partake in any way of being. 251E
- THT. Surely not. 252A
- VIS. And will either of them be if it does not communicate with being?
- THT. It will not be.
- VIS. By this agreement all positions are quickly upset, it seems, that of those who change the totality of things, that of those who make it stable as one, and that of those who say that beings, as befits forms, are always in the same manner in the same way. For all these apply being, some by saying that things really change, some that they are really stable.
- THT. Exactly.
- VIS. Further, all those who sometimes combine all things and sometimes divide them, whether they divide and combine into one and out of one indefinitely many elements or a finite number of them, whether they posit this to happen in turn or constantly, in all cases they would be saying nothing, if there is no mixture. 252B
- THT. Right.
- VIS. Moreover, those who in no way allow us to address one thing through the communion with a different condition²¹ would pursue the argument in the most ridiculous way of all.
- THT. How so? 252C
- VIS. They are somehow obliged to use ‘to be’ and ‘separately’ and ‘from the others’ and ‘by itself’ and thousands of other expressions about all things. Being unable to abstain from these and not to join them in sentences, they do not need others to refute them, but, as the saying goes, they have the enemy and the opponent at home, and they always go around with him speaking from inside, like that amazing Eurycles.²² 252D
- THT. This is true and the similitude holds.

The first alternative is that to which the late-learners are committed.²³ For, the late-learners are among those to whom the Visitor and Theaetetus

²¹ For ‘πάθημα’ meaning ‘condition’ or ‘property’ cf. LSJ *s.v.* ‘πάθημα’ III 3; *Sph.* 228E6. The phrase ‘κοινωνία παθήματος ἑτέρου’ could also be rendered by ‘through the communion with the affection of a different thing’. I take ‘μηδέν’ as an adverb (‘in no way’, cf. LSJ *s.v.* ‘μηδείς’ III) modifying ‘ἔδοντες’ (cf. Cambiano (1981), 458). Were ‘μηδέν’ the object of ‘ἔδοντες’, an alternative translation would be: ‘those who do not allow us to call anything a different thing by reason of its communion with that different condition’ (cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 140–1).

²² On the ventriloquist Eurycles cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 141–2.

²³ Cf. Cornford (1935), 257; Frede (1967), 42, 61; Movia (1991), 284–5; Szaif (1998), 417.

address their questions (cf. 251D2). Moreover, the advocates of the view that no distinct kinds blend are described as ‘those who in no way allow [οἱ μηδὲν ἕζωντες] us to address [προσαγορεύειν] one thing through the communion with a different condition’ (252B9–10). Here ‘μηδὲν ἕζωντες’ (252B9) and ‘προσαγορεύειν’ (252B10) recall the ‘οὐκ ἕζωντες’ (251B9) and the ‘προσαγορεύομεν’ (251A6) used in the formulation of the late-learners’ difficulties.

The late-learners do not explicitly endorse the first alternative, i.e. the claim that no distinct kinds blend. They forbid certain ways of applying names to things and allow others; but they do not formulate an ontological thesis about the blending of kinds. The late-learners are, however, committed to the first alternative. For, they only permit us to apply the name ‘good’ to the kind goodness and the name ‘man’ to the kind man because they only permit applications of names whereby the nature or essence of a kind is fully described. Thus, they accept only affirmative predicative sentences whereby the nature or essence of the kind signified by the subject-expression is fully described. Since an affirmative predicative sentence can fully describe the nature or essence of the kind signified by its subject-expression only if its predicate-expression signifies that very kind,²⁴ the late-learners are committed to accepting only affirmative predicative sentences whose subject- and predicate-expressions signify the same kind. Hence they are committed to the claim that no distinct kinds enjoy any ontological relations of any sort required for the truth of any affirmative predicative sentence about them. They are therefore committed to the claim that no distinct kinds blend.²⁵

The first alternative is refuted by two arguments. According to the first (251E10–252B7), if no distinct kinds blend then being blends neither with change nor with stability. Then all the ontological views discussed earlier are false.²⁶ For some of them claim that things are *really* changing, others that they are *really* stable. The first claim is true only if being blends with change, the second only if it blends with stability. Note that the combination of being is expressed by the adverb ‘really’, which can be added to any predicative sentence: the kind being is therefore treated as an

²⁴ Cf. below, paragraph to n. 71.

²⁵ The first alternative was originally introduced as that whereby ‘nothing has any power of communion with anything in any way’ (251E9). Were the first position to amount to the claim that no kind combines with any kind, the late-learners should be described as committed (not to accepting, but) to rejecting it: for they allow us to call goodness good. They are only committed to accepting the first alternative if it amounts to the claim that no kind combines with any *other* kind.

²⁶ As several commentators convincingly argue (cf. Heinaman (1982–83), 176–84; Clarke (1994), 40), the point is not that if no distinct kinds blend then all the formulations of earlier ontologists are *meaningless*, but that if no distinct kinds blend then all earlier ontological theories are *false*.

ingredient of every situation where something participates in a kind other than being.²⁷ Even the physicists err who speak of elements combining and separating:²⁸ for they are committed to admitting that things are *really* changing. The argument is *ad auctoritatem*: it shows that whoever claims that no distinct kinds blend must regard many authoritative philosophers as mistaken. Moreover, the arguments in the present section are addressed to whoever has theorized about being, including also the thinkers mentioned earlier (cf. 251C8–251E2): these will surely be unhappy with the consequences shown by the argument at hand.

The second argument against the first alternative, that no distinct kinds blend, occurs at 252B8–252D1: the claim that no distinct kinds blend cannot be consistently stated (this is the second case of a self-refutative argument in the *Sophist*: the first was at 238D1–239A12).²⁹ How does the inconsistency arise? Three answers are possible.

According to the first, whoever states the thesis that no distinct kinds blend blends distinct linguistic expressions, which are kinds (because they are repeatable types). Specifically, in stating the view that no distinct kinds blend, one must use a phrase like ‘is separately from the others on its own’, thereby combining the linguistic expressions ‘is’, ‘separately’, etc., which are distinct kinds. What is stated is that no distinct kinds blend, but the speech act carried out displays a blending of distinct kinds and therefore shows what is stated to be false.³⁰

The second answer to the penultimate paragraph’s question understands the claim that no distinct kinds blend as tantamount to the claim that no distinct kinds are correctly combined within a speech act whereby a speaker attributes one of them to the other (cf. 262E13). But this claim is made by using some sentence like ‘Every kind is separately from the others on its own’, namely by performing a speech act whereby one or more kinds are attributed to others. The speech act is therefore incorrect.

According to the third answer to the antepenultimate paragraph’s question, if the claim expressed by some sentence like ‘Every kind is separately from the others on its own’ were true, then every kind would blend with the kinds expressed by ‘to be’, ‘separately from’, ‘others’, and ‘on its own’, so that distinct kinds would blend, whence the claim would be false. Therefore if the claim were true then it would be false. Hence it is false.³¹

The first answer gives Plato a weak argument because the view that linguistic expressions are kinds is not obvious: the thinkers under attack

²⁷ Cf. Szaif (1998), 418. The conception of being as a vowel-kind is foreshadowed: cf. 253C1–2; below, n. 38 and text thereto.

²⁸ Cf. 243B3–7 (with Notomi (2007), 257). ²⁹ Cf. Ackrill (1955), 75.

³⁰ Cf. Denyer (1991), 162–3; Szaif (1998), 418. ³¹ Cf. Bordt (1991), 523; Notomi (1999), 233.

could deny it. Moreover, the refutation of the second alternative (to be discussed in due course)³² suggests that the blend of distinct kinds consists in their enjoying ontological relations of the sort required for the truth of affirmative predicative sentences about them. This sort of mixture is completely different from the blend generated by successive utterance. The second answer faces the objection that it interprets the problematic blend of distinct kinds as their involvement in a single speech act. But, as I said, the refutation of the second alternative suggests that the blend of distinct kinds consists in their enjoying ontological relations of the sort required for the truth of affirmative predicative sentences about them. I therefore opt for the third answer.

The second alternative refuted (252D2–II). The second alternative, according to which all distinct kinds blend, is refuted as follows:

- VIS. Τί δ', ἂν πάντα ἀλλήλοις ἔῶμεν δύναμιν ἔχειν ἐπι- 252D2
κοινωνίας;
- ΤΗΤ. Τοῦτο μὲν οἷός τε κάγῶ διαλύειν.
- VIS. Πῶς; D5
- ΤΗΤ. Ὅτι κίνησις τε αὐτῆ παντάπασιν ἴσταιτ' ἂν καὶ
στάσις αὖ πάλιν αὐτῆ κινῶιτο, εἴπερ ἐπιγιγνοῖσθην ἐπ'
ἀλλήλοιν.
- VIS. Ἀλλὰ μὴν τοῦτό γέ που ταῖς μεγίσταις ἀνάγκαις
ἀδύνατον, κίνησιν τε ἴστασθαι καὶ στάσιν κινεῖσθαι; D10
- ΤΗΤ. Πῶς γὰρ οὗ; D11
- VIS. Should we then concede that all [*sc.* distinct kinds] have a power of 252D
communion with one another?
- ΤΗΤ. Even I am able to solve this.
- VIS. How?
- ΤΗΤ. Because change itself would come to be in all ways stable and
stability itself would in turn change, if they came to be one about
the other.
- VIS. But this is most necessarily impossible, that change come to be stable
and stability change.
- ΤΗΤ. Sure.

Were all distinct kinds to blend, change would also blend with stability, so that 'change itself would come to be in all ways stable and stability itself would in turn change' (252D6–7). 'But this is most necessarily impossible, that change come to be stable and stability change' (252D9–10).

³² Cf. below, subsection to n. 94.

This refutation is puzzling. Plato has reasons for deeming it impossible that stability change. But is he in a position to declare that it is impossible that change be stable? One may doubt it: after all, he seems to hold that all kinds are stable³³ and he asserts that change is a kind.³⁴ However, as I shall argue,³⁵ there is a way of understanding Plato's language whereby he is right to regard it as 'most necessarily impossible that change come to be stable and stability change' (252D9–10).

Dialectic. Having shown that the first two alternatives are untenable, the Visitor and Theaetetus endorse the third:

VIS. Τὸ τρίτον δὴ μόνον λοιπόν. 252D12

THE. Ναί.

VIS. Καὶ μὴν ἐν γέ τι τούτων ἀναγκαῖον, ἢ πάντα ἢ
μηδὲν ἢ τὰ μὲν ἐθέλειν, τὰ δὲ μὴ συμμείγνυσθαι. 252E1

THE. Πῶς γὰρ οὐ;

VIS. Καὶ μὴν τὰ γε δύο ἀδύνατον ηὔρεθη.

THE. Ναί.

E5

VIS. Πᾶς ἄρα ὁ βουλόμενος ὀρθῶς ἀποκρίνεσθαι τὸ
λοιπὸν τῶν τριῶν θήσει.

THE. Κομιδῆ μὲν οὖν.

E8

VIS. Only the third [*sc.* alternative] is therefore left. 252D

THE. Yes.

VIS. And one of these is necessary: either all [*sc.* distinct kinds] are willing
to mix, or none are, or some are and some are not. 252E

THE. Sure.

VIS. And two were found to be impossible.

THE. Yes.

VIS. So, whoever wants to answer correctly will posit the remaining one
of the three.

THE. Absolutely.

So, some distinct kinds combine and some do not. The two inquirers then argue that a science is needed to study which kinds combine with which. At 252E9–253B8 two analogies are introduced to show this.

The first analogy (252E9–253A12) concerns letters. Some letters combine and some do not. Vowels have a special status in that they run through all other letters and enable them to combine. Plato does not explain what the combination of letters amounts to. It could be successive pronounceability: the letters 'π' and 'β' do not combine in that the sequence 'πβ' is

³³ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 67 of Ch. 3. ³⁴ Cf. 254D4–5; *Prm.* 129D6–129E1.

³⁵ Cf. below, subsection to n. 94.

unpronounceable; the letters ‘π’ and ‘ε’ combine in that the sequence ‘πε’ is pronounceable.³⁶ Another perhaps likelier hypothesis is that the combination of letters amounts to successive occurrence within words of a given language (ancient Greek in the case at hand).³⁷ Either way, to know which letters combine an art is needed: literacy. Similarly, since some distinct kinds combine and some do not, a science is needed to know which do.

The second analogy (253B1–5) concerns musical notes. Some notes combine and some do not. As with letters, Plato does not explain what their combination amounts to. It could be something like yielding a harmonious sound when played together. Those who possess the art whereby they know which notes combine are musical, those who do not know this are unmusical. Something similar holds for the other arts or lack thereof (253B6–8).

The analogy between letters and kinds is developed at 253B9–253C5. Just as the combination of certain letters, i.e. vowels, allows that of others, so also certain kinds are responsible for the combination or division of other kinds. Commentators have coined the expression ‘vowel-kind’ for the kinds responsible for the combination or division of others. Plato does not specify which kinds are the vowel-kinds. Later considerations (between 254D9 and 259E3) make it plausible to assume that there are two vowel-kinds: being and difference. In particular, it may be plausibly assumed that being is the vowel-kind responsible for the combination of other kinds³⁸ whereas difference is the vowel-kind responsible for their division.³⁹ Plato seems committed to distinguishing two levels of combination: immediate and mediated combination, which occurs thanks to the immediate combination of a further factor (the vowel-kind being).

Plato links the communion of kinds with division and collection, whose knowledge he identifies as dialectic (253C6–253E3). The passage describing the workings of division and collection (253D1–253E3) is obscure and variously interpreted.⁴⁰ Plato does not explain how the communion of kinds relates to division and collection. Is it that the definitions discovered by the method of division are true predicative sentences whereby the nature or essence of the kind signified by the subject expression is fully described?⁴¹

³⁶ Cf. Galligan (1983), 269. ³⁷ Cf. Trevaskis (1966), 115.

³⁸ Cf. *Prm.* 162A4–5; Ryle (1960), 445; Bondeson (1973), 16–17.

³⁹ Cf. *Spb.* 256B2–4 (with text to n. 140 below); Cornford (1935), 261–2; Ross (1951), 113; Owen (1971), 236; Frede (1967), 37–8; Gómez-Lobo (1977), 38, 45; Gómez-Lobo (1981), 82; Szaif (1998), 346–7; Notomi (1999), 242. Lentz (1997), 103, tries to show that change and stability are also vowel-kinds, but his argument is far-fetched.

⁴⁰ As reported in n. 11 of Ch. 1, some scholars deny that 253D5–253E3 describes division and collection.

⁴¹ Cf. Fattal (1991), 156.

Some 'very important' kinds. After agreeing that dialectic studies which kinds combine, the Visitor and Theaetetus examine which kinds combine (254B8–257A12). Thus, they practise dialectic.

They cannot study the combination of all kinds because there are too many. They therefore consider 'some of those that are called very important' (254C4): being, stability, and change.⁴² Stability and change do not combine with one another (254D7–9, cf. 252D2–11) whereas being combines with both (254D10–11, cf. 250B8–11). The observation that each of these three kinds is different from the other two and identical to itself (254D12–254E1, cf. 250A8–250C5) prompts the question whether difference and identity are two further kinds or are instead the same as any of the first three (254E2–255A3).⁴³

This question leads to three arguments (255A4–255E7) showing that the two newly introduced kinds are different from the first three. The first argument (255A4–255B7) shows that identity and difference are different from change and stability, the second (255B8–255C8) that identity is different from being, and the third (255C9–255E7) that difference is different from being. The arguments, which display a similar structure (they establish that some obvious falsehood follows from assuming an identification to be denied), are problematic: the first two seem unsound, the third is extremely compressed.

The arguments that identity and difference are different from being, change, and stability could seem a digression from the planned practice of dialectic. However, at 253D2–3 the Visitor described one of the jobs of the 'dialectical science' as to avoid regarding a kind 'which is different as identical'. The arguments for the distinctness of the two newly introduced kinds from the first three may be regarded as preventing mistakes of this sort. They therefore also pertain to dialectic.⁴⁴

Plato never offers an argument that identity is different from difference, just as he never offers one that change is different from stability. This is probably because he takes it that identity is contrary to difference (cf. 259D2–7) and stability to change (cf. 250A8–10), and he believes that contrariety entails difference (cf. *R.* 5. 475E9–476A1).⁴⁵

⁴² Following Cornford (1935), 276–7, I render 'μεγίστων' (254C4) by 'very important' (cf. 218C7–218D2; *Plt.* 285E4–286A1; 286A6; 286A8–286B1; Nehamas (1982), 219). The fact that being, stability, and change are described as 'some of those [sc. kinds] that are called very important' suggests that there are other 'very important' kinds (cf. Lewis (1975), 139). At 254D4–5 the Visitor says that being, stability, and change are 'very important among the kinds [μέγιστα . . . τῶν γενῶν]': this does not rule out further 'very important' kinds.

⁴³ Cf. *Prm.* 143A4–143B8.

⁴⁴ Cf. Gómez-Lobo (1977), 41.

⁴⁵ Cf. Bluck (1963), 150–1.

4.3 IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE ARE DIFFERENT FROM
CHANGE AND STABILITY

The argument (255A4–255B7) for distinguishing identity and difference from change and stability is the following:

- VIS. Ἄλλ' οὐ τι μὴν κίνησις γε καὶ στάσις οὔθ' ἕτερον
οὔτε ταυτόν ἐστι. 255A4
A5
- THY. Πῶς;
- VIS. Ὅτιπερ ἂν κοινῇ προσείπωμεν κίνησιν καὶ στάσιν,
τοῦτο οὐδέτερον αὐτοῖν οἶόν τε εἶναι.
- THY. Τί δῆ;
- VIS. Κίνησις τε στήσεται καὶ στάσις αὖ κινήσεται·
περὶ γὰρ ἀμφότερα θάτερον ὅποτερονοῦν γιγνόμενον
αὐτοῖν ἀναγκάσει μεταβάλλειν αὖ θάτερον ἐπὶ τούναντίον
τῆς αὐτοῦ φύσεως, ἅτε μετασχὸν τοῦ ἐναντίου. A10
255B1
- THY. Κομιδῆ γε.
- VIS. Μετέχεται μὴν ἄμφω ταύτου καὶ θατέρου.
- THY. Ναί.
- VIS. Μὴ τοίνυν λέγωμεν κίνησιν γ' εἶναι ταυτόν ἢ
θάτερον, μηδ' αὖ στάσιν. B5
- THY. Μὴ γάρ. B7
- VIS. But surely change and stability are neither the different nor the
identical. 255A
- THY. How so?
- VIS. Whatever we apply in common to change and stability cannot be
either of them.
- THY. Why?
- VIS. Change will be stable and stability, in turn, will change: for one of
the two, whichever it may be, by coming to be about both,⁴⁶ will
oblige the other to transform into the contrary of its own nature,
by participating in its contrary. 255B
- THY. Sure.
- VIS. But they both participate in the identical and the different.
- THY. Yes.
- VIS. Let us then not say that change is the identical or the different, nor
that stability is.
- THY. Let us not.

⁴⁶ I take 'θάτερον ὅποτερονοῦν . . . αὐτοῖν' (255A11–12) as a single phrase, which I translate by 'one of the two, whichever it may be'. The phrase is equivalent to 'change or stability, whichever it may be' (cf. Heindorf (1810), 409–10). I construe 'περὶ ἀμφότερα' (255A11) with 'γιγνόμενον' (255A11): cf. Centrone (2008), 185. Some commentators and translators treat it as an adverbial clause: cf. Movia (1991), 331 ('in both cases'); Brann *et al.* (1996), 64 ('with respect to both'). The only other occurrences of 'περὶ ἀμφότερα' in Plato (*Hp.Ma.* 301B8 and 301C1–2) support my construal.

The argument seems to develop as follows: if change or stability were difference or identity, then, since both stability and change participate in both difference and identity, either stability would participate in change or change would participate in stability, so that either stability would change or change would be stable – both of which are impossible.

Commentators have realized that this argument is problematic.⁴⁷ Review it in slow motion. Suppose that change is identical to either difference or identity. Since stability participates in both difference and identity, stability participates in change, a result which is false, at least for Plato. The hypothesis wherefrom this result follows is therefore false. Hence change is different from both difference and identity. So far, all is well. Now suppose that stability is identical to either difference or identity. Since change participates in both difference and identity, change participates in stability. The argument now assumes that this result is false. But Plato seems committed to denying that the result in question is false, or, equivalently, to affirming that change participates in stability: for he seems to hold that all kinds are stable and he asserts that change is a kind.⁴⁸ Plato therefore seems not to be entitled to infer that the hypothesis from which this result follows is false, so that he apparently cannot conclude that stability is different from both difference and identity.

The problem cannot be solved by assuming that Plato in the *Sophist* modifies his conception of kinds by adopting the view that all kinds change (because they suffer an affection in that they are known, cf. 248C11–248E6).⁴⁹ For, were this assumption correct, Plato would then be committed to the claim that the kind stability changes, which would create a parallel problem for the argument that change is different from both difference and identity.⁵⁰ Nor, for similar reasons, can the problem be solved by assuming that for Plato in the *Sophist* every kind both changes and is stable.

Did the problem with the argument at 255A4–255B7 elude Plato?⁵¹ Such an account of the situation might be encouraged by the other dialogues' insistence that no kind can be characterized by its own contrary.⁵² Nevertheless, a more charitable interpretation should be attempted, one that avoids saddling Plato with a poor argument.

⁴⁷ Cf. Crombie (1963), 405–6; Frede (1967), 34; Vlastos (1970), 276–8; Ketchum (1978), 43, 58; Heinaman (1981), 55–60; Reeve (1985), 49; Stough (1990), 376–7; Movia (1991), 332.

⁴⁸ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 67 of Ch. 3; n. 34 of the present chapter and text thereto.

⁴⁹ Cf. above, n. 58 of Ch. 3 and text thereto.

⁵⁰ Cf. Heinaman (1981), 55. ⁵¹ Cf. Guthrie (1962–81), v 150.

⁵² Cf. *Prt.* 330B6–330E2; *Hp.Ma.* 291D1–5; *Smp.* 210E2–211A5; *Phd.* 94A1–7; 102D6–103A2; 103B4–5; 103C1–2; 103C7–8; 104B7–8; 104C7–8; 105A2–3; *Prm.* 129B1–3; 129D2–129E4; 131D8–9; 150A7–150B5; *Thr.* 189C5–189D3.

'Ordinary' and 'generalizing' readings of sentences. In Greek as well as English, sentences containing abstract noun-phrases may be read in two ways. On its 'ordinary' reading, 'σ φς' is true just if the kind signified by 'σ' instantiates the kind signified by 'φ' (here and in the rest of this paragraph 'σ' and 'φ' are schematic letters to be replaced, respectively, with an abstract noun-phrase and a verb-phrase that signify kinds). On its 'generalizing' reading, 'σ φς' is true just if everything that instantiates the kind signified by 'σ' instantiates the kind signified by 'φ'. The distinction is applicable, with obvious modifications, also to sentences where the abstract noun-phrase is not in subject position.⁵³

On its 'ordinary' reading, 'Change is stable' is true just if the kind change instantiates the kind stability. Plato is probably committed to endorsing 'Change is stable' if it is understood according to this reading (because he seems to hold that all kinds are stable).⁵⁴ On its 'generalizing' reading, 'Change is stable' is true just if everything that instantiates the kind change instantiates the kind stability. Does Plato believe that whatever instantiates change instantiates stability? Or does he deny it? One might think that he believes it, on the basis of two considerations: first, whatever changes must endure throughout the time of the change and must therefore retain some characteristics;⁵⁵ secondly, as Plato himself recognizes in other dialogues,⁵⁶ the same thing can change in one respect and be stable in another. But, if Plato accepts that whatever instantiates change instantiates stability, then he must endorse 'Change is stable' on its 'generalizing' reading, and then the rescue of his argument based on the distinction between 'ordinary' and 'generalizing' readings of sentences fails. For the rescue to succeed, Plato must reject 'Change is stable' on its 'generalizing' reading, and therefore deny that whatever instantiates change instantiates stability.⁵⁷ He is committed to such a denial if he maintains that whatever instantiates stability is completely changeless⁵⁸ and therefore does not instantiate change (because he surely holds that something instantiates change). Accordingly, within

⁵³ Cf. Runciman (1962), 96–8; Bluck (1963), 113–4, 142; Crombie (1963), 402–3; Mates (1979), 222–4; W. J. Prior (1980), 201–2; Bostock (1984), 104. The 'generalizing' reading of sentences containing abstract noun-phrases is close to their 'Pauline predication' reading, put forward by several commentators (cf. Vlastos (1970), 270–4; Gómez-Lobo (1977), 34, 43; Kostman (1989), 343; Pelletier (1990), 102, 111; Bordt (1991), 509, 523, 524–5). The 'Pauline predication' reading, according to which 'σ φς' is true just if it is necessary that everything that instantiates the kind signified by 'σ' instantiate the kind signified by 'φ', differs because of its modal operator.

⁵⁴ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 67 of Ch. 3. ⁵⁵ Cf. Clarke (1994), 42.

⁵⁶ Cf. *R.* 4. 436c3–437a3; *Th.* 181c1–181e8; *Lg.* 10. 893c4–7; Reeve (1985), 52, 58; Künnle (2004), 316.

⁵⁷ Cf. below, n. 63 and text thereto.

⁵⁸ In the *Sophist* there are elements for crediting Plato with such a view: cf. 248e2–5; 249b12–249c1 with 249d3–4; above, paragraph to n. 67 of Ch. 3.

the confines of the present subsection I assume that in the *Sophist* whatever instantiates stability is completely changeless.

On its 'ordinary' reading, 'Stability changes' is true just if the kind stability instantiates the kind change. Plato is probably committed to rejecting 'Stability changes' if it is thus understood: for he seems to hold that kinds are stable.⁵⁹ On its 'generalizing' reading, 'Stability changes' is true just if everything that instantiates the kind stability instantiates the kind change. Plato is probably committed to rejecting 'Stability changes' if it is thus understood: for, as I just said, he seems to hold that kinds are stable.

Some support for interpreting the argument at 255A4–255B7 in the light of the 'generalizing' reading of sentences containing abstract noun-phrases comes from earlier passages.⁶⁰ If the 'generalizing' reading is operative in Plato's argument at 255A4–255B7, then the argument may be regarded as sound.⁶¹ This is seen by considering its components separately.

- (1) 'Change is identical' and 'Change is different' are both true on their 'generalizing' reading: for everything that instantiates change instantiates identity (since everything is identical to itself, cf. 256A7–8) and everything that instantiates change instantiates difference (since everything is different from something, cf. 255E3–6 and 259A4–6).⁶² Suppose that stability were identical to identity or difference. Then 'stable' would signify the same kind as either 'identical' or 'different', so that 'Change is stable' would be true on its 'generalizing' reading. Since 'Change is stable' is false on its 'generalizing' reading,⁶³ stability is identical neither to identity nor to difference.
- (2) 'Stability is identical' and 'Stability is different' are both true on their 'generalizing' reading: for everything that instantiates stability instantiates both identity and difference (since everything is both identical to itself and different from something). Suppose that change were identical to identity or difference. Then 'changing' would signify the same

⁵⁹ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 67 of Ch. 3.

⁶⁰ At 250B8–11 'Both stability and change are' is equated with 'Both stability and change are contained by being'.

⁶¹ Cf. Bostock (1984), 108–9; Kostman (1989), 346.

⁶² Were the 'Pauline predication' reading preferred to the 'generalizing' reading of sentences containing abstract noun-phrases (cf. above, n. 53), Plato would be here committed to the claim that it is necessary that everything that instantiates change instantiate difference. The only reasonable ground for endorsing this claim would be that it is necessary that there be at least two different things. I am uneasy with crediting Plato with such a strong tacit assumption (although, to be sure, in the *Sophist* he attacks monism). For this reason I prefer the 'generalizing' reading over the 'Pauline predication' reading.

⁶³ Here it is crucial that Plato be committed to rejecting 'Change is stable' on its 'generalizing' reading (cf. above, text to n. 57).

kind as either 'identical' or 'different', so that 'Stability changes' would be true on its 'generalizing' reading. Since 'Stability changes' is false on its 'generalizing' reading, stability is identical neither to identity nor to difference.⁶⁴

The rescue of the argument at 255A4–255B7 based on the distinction between 'ordinary' and 'generalizing' readings of sentences containing abstract noun-phrases faces an objection. Immediately before this argument, the Visitor claimed that being, change, and stability 'turn out to be three' (254D12). He then inferred that 'each of them is therefore different from the two but identical to itself' (254D14–15). Here the implicitly stated sentence 'Stability is different from being' must be understood according to its 'ordinary' reading. For, were it understood according to its 'generalizing' reading, it would be true just if everything that instantiates the kind stability is different from the kind being, which is not the case (or, alternatively, just if everything that instantiates the kind stability is different from everything that instantiates the kind being, which again is not the case). Again, the implicitly stated sentence 'Stability is identical to itself' is probably supposed to be understood according to its 'ordinary' reading (it surely does not look as if it is to be understood according to its 'generalizing' reading). This makes it implausible to assume that the crucial premisses of the argument at 255A4–255B7 ('Change is identical', 'Change is different', 'Stability is identical', and 'Stability is different') are to be understood according to their 'generalizing' reading. But such an assumption is essential to the rescue of the argument based on the distinction between 'ordinary' and 'generalizing' readings.⁶⁵ To be sure, it cannot be excluded that Plato tacitly switched from the 'ordinary' to the 'generalizing' reading of the relevant sentences: how damaging the objection is, is to some extent a subjective matter. I find it crippling.

'Ordinary' and 'definitional' readings of sentences. There is another important distinction between ways of understanding sentences.⁶⁶ Although, for simplicity's sake, I concentrate on certain predicative sentences constructed

⁶⁴ The 'generalizing' reading of the relevant premisses makes also the parallel argument at 250A8–250C5 sound. I omit the details, which can, however, be worked out easily.

⁶⁵ Cf. Bostock (1984), 109; van Eck (2000), 57, 63. 'Stability is different from being' shows that the claim made by a sentence on its 'ordinary' reading does not entail the one it makes on its 'generalizing' reading. So, the rescue of the argument at 255A4–255B7 based on the distinction between 'ordinary' and 'generalizing' readings cannot be defended by appealing to such an alleged entailment. Further criticisms of this rescue may be found in van Eck (2000), 56–7 and 58.

⁶⁶ Cf. Frede (1967), 30–5; Ketchum (1978), 43–4; Roberts (1986), 232–3; Stough (1990), 377; Meinwald (1991), 67–8; Frede (1992), 399–401; Mann (2000), 178–9; van Eck (2000), 59–63.

around 'is' and 'is not', the distinction to be drawn is applicable also to sentences of different forms. The considerations whereby the distinction will be established can be easily adapted to the other cases.

If 'φ' signifies a kind, then the sentence 'σ is (a) φ' has an 'ordinary' reading, whereby it is true just if the entity signified by 'σ' instantiates the kind signified by 'φ' (throughout the present subsection 'σ' and 'φ' are schematic letters to be replaced, respectively, with any name and any general term).⁶⁷ For example, since Socrates (the entity signified by 'Socrates') instantiates astuteness and man (the kinds signified by 'astute' and 'man'), 'Socrates is astute' and 'Socrates is a man' are true if they are understood according to their 'ordinary' reading. Again, since all kinds are stable, the kind change (the entity signified by 'change') instantiates stability (the kind signified by 'stable'), so 'Change is stable' is true on its 'ordinary' reading. For similar reasons, 'Stability is stable', 'Change is identical', 'Change is different', and 'Change is a being' are all true on their 'ordinary' reading. However, since the kind change does not instantiate the kind change (because no kinds change), 'Change changes' (regarded as a mere notational variant of 'Change is changing') is false on its 'ordinary' reading. For similar reasons, 'Stability changes' is false on its 'ordinary' reading. Since Socrates instantiates neither handsomeness nor horse (the kinds signified by 'handsome' and 'horse'), 'Socrates is handsome' and 'Socrates is a horse' are false on their 'ordinary' reading.

The account carries over naturally to negations: if 'φ' signifies a kind, then 'σ is not (a) φ' is true on its 'ordinary' reading just if the entity signified by 'σ' does not instantiate the kind signified by 'φ'. Since the kind change does not instantiate the kind change, 'Change does not change' (regarded as a notational variant of 'Change is not changing') is true on its 'ordinary' reading. Similarly, since Socrates does not instantiate the kind handsomeness, 'Socrates is not handsome' is true on its 'ordinary' reading.

In some cases, a sentence has not only an 'ordinary' but also a 'definitional' reading. A 'definitional' reading of 'σ is (a) φ' or 'σ is not (a) φ' is available just if both 'σ' and 'φ' signify kinds. If both 'σ' and 'φ' signify kinds, then the sentence 'σ is (a) φ' is true on its 'definitional' reading just if the kind signified by 'σ' is identical to the kind signified by 'φ'. For instance, since 'stability' and 'stable' signify the same kind, 'Stability is stable' is true if it is understood according to its 'definitional' reading. For similar reasons, 'Largeness is large' and 'Change changes' are true on their

⁶⁷ On general terms cf. above, n. 33 of Ch. 2. Recall that the indefinite article is needed in some English sentences but not in Greek.

'definitional' reading. There are also less trivial examples of sentences about kinds that are true on their 'definitional' reading: 'Soul is change capable of changing itself' is true on its 'definitional' reading because 'soul' and 'change capable of changing itself' signify the same kind.⁶⁸ In fact, every correct definition is a sentence that is true on its 'definitional' reading. On the other hand, since 'change' and 'stable' signify different kinds, 'Change is stable' is false on its 'definitional' reading. For similar reasons, 'Stability changes' (regarded as a notational variant of 'Stability is changing') is false on its 'definitional' reading.

The account carries over to negations: if both ' σ ' and ' ϕ ' signify kinds, then ' σ is not (a) ϕ ' is true on its 'definitional' reading just if the kind signified by ' σ ' is different from the kind signified by ' ϕ '. For instance, since 'change' and 'stable' signify different kinds, 'Change is not stable' is true on its 'definitional' reading. For similar reasons, 'Being is not stable', 'Being does not change' (regarded as a notational variant of 'Being is not changing'), 'Change is not a stability', 'Change is not identical', 'Change is not different', and 'Change is not a being' are all true on their 'definitional' reading.⁶⁹

Regarding the logical relations between the claims made by a sentence on its 'ordinary' and 'definitional' readings, note what follows. 'Change is stable' is true on its 'ordinary' reading but false on its 'definitional' reading. So, the claim made by a sentence on its 'ordinary' reading need not entail the claim made by that same sentence on its 'definitional' reading. 'Change changes' is true on its 'definitional' reading but false on its 'ordinary' reading. So, the claim made by a sentence on its 'definitional' reading need not entail the claim made by it on its 'ordinary' reading. 'Stability is stable' is true on both its readings. So, the claim made by a sentence on its 'ordinary' reading need not be incompatible with the claim made by it on its 'definitional' reading. Finally, 'Stability changes' is false on both readings. The same sentence may therefore be false on both of its readings.

One might wonder why the truth conditions of ' σ is (a) ϕ ' and ' σ is not (a) ϕ ' on their 'definitional' reading are given with a restriction to kinds and with the requirement of identity or difference obtaining between the kinds signified by ' σ ' and ' ϕ '. As for the restriction to kinds, consider that if ' σ is (a) ϕ ' is understood according to its 'definitional' reading, it is taken

⁶⁸ Cf. *Lg.* 10. 895D1–896A5.

⁶⁹ The above truth conditions of sentences understood according to their 'ordinary' and 'definitional' readings are deficient because they omit to mention the existential component of the incomplete use of 'to be' (cf. below, subsection to n. 78 of Ch. 5). I adopted a curtailed presentation to avoid complications that are unnecessary at the present stage.

to offer a complete description of the nature of the entity signified by 'σ'. There is evidence suggesting that for Plato only kinds have natures.⁷⁰ Supposing that this is right, not only the entity signified by 'φ' but also that signified by 'σ' must be a kind for 'σ is (a) φ' to have a 'definitional' reading. Similar considerations apply to 'σ is not (a) φ': if understood according to its 'definitional' reading, 'σ is not (a) φ' denies that 'σ is (a) φ' succeeds in offering a complete description of the nature of the entity signified by 'σ'.

Let me now say something about the requirement of identity or difference obtaining between the kinds signified by 'σ' and 'φ'. Given that 'σ' and 'φ' signify kinds, it is natural to require that 'σ is (a) φ' be true on its 'definitional' reading only if the kind signified by 'σ' is identical to the kind signified by 'φ': for, given that 'σ is (a) φ' succeeds in offering a complete description of the nature of the kind signified by 'σ', the kind signified by 'φ' must be identical to that signified by 'σ'.⁷¹

What might seem problematic is the converse implication: it should not be the case that 'Goodness is the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*' comes out true on its 'definitional' reading (because the sentence does not succeed in offering a complete description of the nature of the kind goodness), but someone might maintain that 'goodness' and 'the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*' signify the same kind (because the definite description 'the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*' picks out the kind goodness).⁷² Note, however, that the sentence 'Goodness is the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*' does not count as one for which a 'definitional' reading is available. The sentences for which a 'definitional' reading is available are those where 'is' or 'is not' is complemented by a general term, possibly introduced by an indefinite article:⁷³ but the sentence 'Goodness is the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*' is not of this sort.⁷⁴ Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, even if the sentence in question were allowed a 'definitional' reading, 'the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*' would probably not signify the same kind as 'goodness'. Some remarks in the *Sophist* and elsewhere⁷⁵ indicate that for Plato two expressions signify the same kind only if they are intersubstitutable *salva veritate* in many (perhaps all) contexts. I am not sure whether this requirement implies that if two expressions signify the same kind then they

⁷⁰ Cf. *Ti.* 49A6–51B6; Frede (1992), 402; Mann (2000), 179.

⁷¹ Also consider that definitions have traditionally been regarded as statements of identity of a special sort (cf. Arist. *Top.* 1.7, 103^a23–7). In the *Sophist*, the giants are described as 'defining [ὀρίζομενοι] body and being as identical [τᾶσ'τὸν]' (246B1).

⁷² Cf. Nehamas (1982), 220. ⁷³ Cf. above, n. 67 and text thereto.

⁷⁴ Cf. above, n. 33 of Ch. 2. ⁷⁵ Cf. 255B11–255C2; 255C9–11; *Prm.* 142B5–142C5.

are synonymous,⁷⁶ but it seems to suffice to exclude that ‘goodness’ and ‘the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*’ signify the same kind (consider ‘In the course of the fourth century BC, goodness became the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*’, which is true because the *Republic* was written in the fourth century BC and in it for the first time the kind goodness is praised more highly than any other kind, and ‘In the course of the fourth century BC, goodness became goodness’, which is false because it is not the case that during the fourth century BC the kind goodness became itself). All Plato needs is that if ‘ σ ’ and ‘ ϕ ’ signify the same kind, then ‘ σ is (a) ϕ ’ is true when it is understood as offering a complete description of the nature of the kind signified by ‘ σ ’.

Clearly, the concept of signification does a lot of work.⁷⁷ I cannot pursue here the complicated issue of Plato’s views on signification. I restrict myself to a few suggestions that seem to yield the correct results. These suggestions are speculative and I shall not attempt to substantiate them here. A name of a perceptible particular signifies that perceptible particular (‘Theaetetus’ signifies Theaetetus).⁷⁸ A name of a kind signifies that kind (‘being’ signifies the kind being).⁷⁹ The *definiens* of the definition of a kind signifies that kind (‘change capable of changing itself’ signifies the kind soul). Adjectives and participles signify the kinds they stand for (‘stable’ and ‘changing’ signify, respectively, the kinds stability and change). But definite descriptions do not in all cases signify the entities they pick out (‘the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*’ does not signify the kind goodness). Rather, a definite description signifies the characteristic (possibly a kind) that distinguishes what it picks out from everything else (‘the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*’ signifies the characteristic of being a kind which in the *Republic* is more highly praised than any other).

If ‘ σ is (a) ϕ ’ is understood according to its ‘definitional’ reading, then it is taken to offer a complete description of the nature of the kind signified by ‘ σ ’, but not necessarily an illuminating or informative description: the banal ‘Largeness is large’ is supposed to come out true on its ‘definitional’ reading. Thus, although every correct definition is a sentence that is true on its ‘definitional’ reading, the converse fails. The ‘definitional’ reading of sentences is important for Plato because it is the reading in accordance with which a sentence offered as an answer to the ‘What is it?’ question, asked with regard to a kind, is to be understood. It goes without saying

⁷⁶ Cf. Frede (1967), 15.

⁷⁷ The terminology of signification is prominent in the *Sophist*: cf. ‘σημαίνειν’ (250B5, 255B12, 257B9–10, 258B3, 261E2, 262B6) and ‘σημείον’ (237D9, 262A6, 262D9).

⁷⁸ Cf. 262A6–7 with 262B10–262C1. ⁷⁹ Cf. 255B11–12 with 255C9–11.

that the ‘What is it?’ question, asked with regard to kinds, plays a central role in Plato’s philosophy.

It is worth noting that one of the examples discussed shows that the ‘definitional’ reading of sentences is different from the reading of sentences whereby they make statements of identity: for ‘Goodness is the kind most highly praised in the *Republic*’ is true on the reading whereby it makes a statement of identity but false on its ‘definitional’ reading. Another difference between the ‘definitional’ reading and the reading whereby statements of identity are made is that the first is available only for sentences about kinds whereas the second is not thus restricted.⁸⁰

Textual evidence: (1) 250C6–7. At 250A8–250D4 the Visitor and Theaetetus refute their hard-won characterization of being by an argument in three steps.⁸¹ In the first step (250A8–250C5), they establish that being is ‘something different from these [*sc.* stability and change]’ (250C4); in the second (250C6–8), they infer that ‘by its own nature, being neither is stable nor changes’ (250C6–7); in the third (250C9–250D4), they infer that being is ‘outside both of these [*sc.* change and stability]’ (250D2).

The inference from the first to the second step is valid. In the second step, the adverbial phrase ‘by its own nature’ (250C6) indicates a special way in which the kind being neither is stable nor changes: that whereby neither stability nor change constitutes the nature of the kind being. The

⁸⁰ What I dub the ‘definitional’ reading of sentences about kinds is similar to but nevertheless different from a reading defended by some commentators. In particular, Meinwald (1991), 67–8, and Mann (2000), 178–9, contrast the ‘ordinary’ reading with one according to which if both ‘σ’ and ‘φ’ signify kinds, then ‘σ is (a) φ’ is true just if the kind signified by ‘σ’ is *either* identical to the kind signified by ‘φ’ or *subordinate to it in some classificatory tree*. There is much to be said for the position of Meinwald and Mann. Space restrictions refrain me fully from explaining why I prefer my ‘definitional’ reading to theirs. One reason is that their reading does not allow a satisfactory interpretation of certain arguments in the *Sophist*. In particular, I am unable to get their reading properly to account for the parallel between the arguments at 243E4–6, 250A8–250C5, and 255A4–255B7 (because 243E4–6 seems to contemplate the identity of the hot and the cold with being, not their bearing to it the relation envisaged by Meinwald and Mann). Another reason is that a coherent development of the position of Meinwald and Mann seems to require certain occurrences of ‘ἕτερος’ to express the relation neither-identical-nor-subordinate-in-some-classificatory-tree. I am keen to keep ‘ἕτερος’ expressing a relation that obtains between all and only non-identical things. Frede (1967), 30–3 is undecided on whether the reading of sentences to be contrasted with the ‘ordinary’ one amounts to my ‘definitional’ reading or the one later put forward by Meinwald and Mann. Frede (1992), 401–2 agrees with Meinwald and Mann, while Frede (1996a), 197 is again neutral. My ‘definitional’ reading is close both to the ‘*auto kath’auto* predication’ reading of Silverman (2002), 177 and to the reading or readings which some commentators offer of ‘self-predicative sentences’: cf. Cherniss (1944), 298–9; Cherniss (1957a), 258–9; Allen (1960), 46–7, 59; Nehamas (1979), 179; Bestor (1980), 58, 74; Nehamas (1982), 204.

⁸¹ Cf. above, subsection to n. 76 of Ch. 3. The present subsection recalls some results of that to n. 77 of Ch. 3.

claim that the kind being neither is stable nor changes in this special way is precisely the meaning of the sentence ‘Being neither is stable nor changes’ on its ‘definitional’ reading: for, as I pointed out in the last subsection, the ‘definitional’ reading of a sentence about a kind is that whereby the sentence is taken to affirm, or deny, that being so-and-so constitutes the nature of a certain kind.

The inference from the argument’s second step to the third is invalid. It depends on a slip in the understanding of the adverbial phrase ‘by its own nature’: the sentence ‘By its own nature, being neither is stable nor changes’ (250c6–7) comes to be regarded as saying that there is a special way in which the kind being instantiates neither change nor stability (rather than that there is a special way in which the kind being is neither changing nor stable). From this it is inferred that the kind being instantiates neither change nor stability. The claim that the kind being instantiates neither change nor stability is precisely the meaning of the sentence ‘Being neither is stable nor changes’ on its ‘ordinary’ reading.

The invalid move from the argument’s second step to the third may therefore be regarded as a slip from the claim expressed by ‘Being neither is stable nor changes’ on its ‘definitional’ reading to the claim expressed by this sentence on its ‘ordinary’ reading. Plato is conscious of the invalidity of the inference from the second to the third step and artfully presents it so that it has a semblance of validity. Although he does not speak of the two claims as the two meanings of the same sentence on different readings, the passage does suggest that he is in control of the difference between the ‘definitional’ and the ‘ordinary’ readings of the sentence ‘Being neither is stable nor changes’.

Textual evidence: (2) 255E3–6. The Visitor says: ‘We shall say that it [*sc.* difference] runs through all of them [*sc.* being, stability, change, identity, and difference]:⁸² for each one is different from the others not by virtue of its own nature [οὐ διὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν], but by virtue of participating in the idea of the different [ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ μετέχειν τῆς ιδέας τῆς θατέρου]’ (255E3–6). This remark appears to presuppose that a kind can be different from a kind either ‘by virtue of its own nature’ or ‘by virtue of participating in the idea of the different’ with respect to that kind (only the second way of being different obtains in the situation where any one among being, stability, change, identity, and difference is different from any other one of them). This suggests that for Plato there are in general two ways in which

⁸² Cf. Nehamas (1982), 202–3, 219.

a kind can be so-and-so: either ‘by virtue of its own nature’ or ‘by virtue of participating in the idea of’ so-and-so.⁸³ A plausible gloss on these two ways in which a kind can be so-and-so matches them with the ‘definitional’ and ‘ordinary’ readings of sentences: a kind is so-and-so ‘by virtue of its own nature’ just if being so-and-so is its nature, i.e. just if sentences describing it as being so-and-so are true on their ‘definitional’ reading; a kind is so-and-so ‘by virtue of participating in the idea of’ so-and-so just if it instantiates the kind so-and-so, i.e. just if sentences describing it as being so-and-so are true on their ‘ordinary’ reading.⁸⁴

Two passages (255B1 and 256B6) suggest that Plato is willing to describe both the situation where a kind is so-and-so ‘by virtue of its own nature’ and the situation where a kind is so-and-so (not ‘by virtue of its own nature’, but) by instantiating the kind so-and-so as cases of participation in the kind so-and-so.⁸⁵ The wording of 255E4–6 is consistent with this suggestion: ‘. . . each one is different from the others not by virtue of its own nature, but [nevertheless] by virtue of participating in the idea of the different [*sc.* in a way different from that which would make it different by virtue of its own nature]’.

Textual evidence: (3) 257D14–258C6. The Visitor argues that not-being is. He states his conclusion by asserting that not-being ‘is not inferior to any of the others in being’ (258B9–10) and ‘firmly has its own nature [τῆν αὐτοῦ φύσιν]’ (258B11). He adds that ‘just as the large was large and the beautiful was beautiful [. . .], so also not-being in the same way was and is a not-being’ (258B11–258C3, cf. 254D1–2). Here the claim that not-being is a not-being (alongside the claims that largeness is large and beauty is beautiful) is treated as equivalent to the claim that not-being has its own nature. This, in turn, makes it plausible to assume that for Plato the kind not-being is a not-being ‘by nature’, the kind largeness is large ‘by nature’, and the kind beauty is beautiful ‘by nature’. This fits well with the ‘definitional’ reading of the sentences ‘Not-being is a not-being’, ‘Largeness is large’, and ‘Beauty is beautiful’.⁸⁶

The evidence considered in the present and the previous two subsections is defeasible: the three *Sophist* passages could be interpreted in ways that do

⁸³ Waive the objection that the generalization involves equating ‘participating in the kind difference with respect to so-and-so’ with ‘participating in the kind difference-with-respect-to-so-and-so’.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Prm.* 158A3–6. Difference is of course also different ‘by virtue of its own nature’. But, when the Visitor commits himself to the claim that difference is different from each of the other four kinds, the claim is that difference instantiates difference with respect to each of the other four kinds, not that being different is the nature of the kind difference.

⁸⁵ Cf. below, paragraph to n. 182; Bluck (1963), 151; Kostman (1989), 354. ⁸⁶ Cf. Frede (1967), 45.

not require Plato to rely on different readings of sentences. Nevertheless, the evidence reviewed carries considerable cumulative weight. It adds up to a robust case for crediting Plato with something like the distinction between 'ordinary' and 'definitional' readings of sentences.

'Definitional' readings in the argument at 255A4–255B7. Can the distinction between 'ordinary' and 'definitional' readings of sentences rescue Plato's argument at 255A4–255B7?

The most straightforward application of the distinction between 'ordinary' and 'definitional' readings of sentences fails to rescue the argument. For, on the distinction's most straightforward application, one of the parts of the argument goes as follows: suppose that stability is identical to difference; difference holds of change; so, stability also holds of change; but it is not the case that stability holds of change; stability is therefore different from difference. The last premiss of this argument is the claim that it is not the case that stability holds of change. This claim is true given that it amounts to the claim that it is not the case that stability holds of change by nature (for 'Change is stable' is not true on its 'definitional' reading). For this claim to contradict the previously established result, namely the claim that stability holds of change, this earlier claim must amount to the claim that stability holds of change by nature. For this claim to be inferred from the assumptions that stability is identical to difference and that difference holds of change, the assumption that difference holds of change must amount to the claim that difference holds of change by nature. But it is not the case that difference holds of change by nature (for 'Change is different' is not true on its 'definitional' reading): difference holds of change only in that change instantiates difference. The argument is therefore unsound.⁸⁷

The distinction between 'ordinary' and 'definitional' readings of sentences can, however, be employed differently to rescue Plato's argument at 255A4–255B7. Here is my reconstruction of this argument.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Cf. Ketchum (1978), 48; Heinaman (1981), 61–2; Reeve (1985), 50–1; van Eck (2000), 62–3. One might try to modify the account of what it is for a kind to hold of a kind by nature by adopting a reading of sentences that is different both from my 'definitional' reading and from the 'ordinary' reading. I shall not pursue this project, but I should point out that the reading favoured by Meinwald and Mann (cf. above, n. 80) does not give better results.

⁸⁸ My reconstruction of the argument is similar to that of Moravcsik (1962), 45–7 and Moravcsik (1992), 184. Moravcsik's reconstruction has been criticized by Berger (1965), 70–3, who however seems to misunderstand it. Due to space limitations, I cannot offer a detailed presentation and discussion of Moravcsik's reconstruction. I only point out that there are some differences between my reconstruction and Moravcsik's, which cannot easily recognize a role for the 'ἄτε... ἐναντίου' clause at 255B1.

The first premiss is:

- [1] Whatever kind holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability is different from both stability and change.

Premiss [1] is supported by a subordinate argument. Let *K* be any kind that holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability:

- [1.1] *K* is a kind and *K* holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability.

Suppose, for reductio, that

- [1.2] *K* is identical to stability.

Propositions [1.1] and [1.2] yield:

- [1.3] Stability holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability.

Now another premiss:

- [1.4] Stability holds of stability by nature.

Premiss [1.4] is true. For, stability holds of stability by nature just if 'Stability is stable' is true on its 'definitional' reading. But, as I pointed out earlier, 'Stability is stable' is true on its 'definitional' reading because stability is identical to stability.

From [1.3] and [1.4] the following result may be inferred:

- [1.5] Stability holds of change by nature.

Step [1.5] may be regarded as following from [1.3] and [1.4] on the basis of the assumption that holding by nature is one of the ways in which kinds hold of kinds.

Now another premiss:

- [1.6] It is not the case that stability holds of change by nature.

Premiss [1.6] is true. For, stability holds of change by nature just if 'Change is stable' is true on its 'definitional' reading. But 'Change is stable' is not true on its 'definitional' reading because change is different from stability.

Since [1.5] and [1.6] are contradictories, premiss [1.2], from which the contradiction has been derived, may be denied. Hence:

- [1.7] *K* is different from stability.

A parallel argument will establish the corresponding result for change:

- [1.8] *K* is different from change.

From propositions [1.7] and [1.8] the following may be inferred:

[1.9] *K* is different from both stability and change.

Since *K* was arbitrarily chosen, one may generalize. Premiss [1] is thereby established.

The argument's second premiss is:

[2] Identity is a kind and holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability.

Premiss [2] is grounded in intuition: no difference can be felt between the way or ways in which identity holds of change and the way or ways in which identity holds of stability. As far as I can tell, premiss [2] is true.

Similar considerations apply for the third premiss:

[3] Difference is a kind and holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability.

Propositions [1], [2], and [3] yield Plato's desired result:

[4] Identity is different from both stability and change and difference is different from both stability and change.

An analogous reconstruction may be given of the first step of the argument whereby the Visitor and Theaetetus criticize their final characterization of being. The whole argument occupies 250A8–250D4, its first step is at 250A8–250C5. The conclusion of the first step is that being is 'something different from these [*sc.* stability and change]' (250C4). This conclusion may be inferred from [1] in combination with the premiss that being is a kind and holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability. In fact, Plato may be taken to endorse this premiss when he says that 'both of them [*sc.* change and stability] and each are in the same way [εἴναι . . . ὁμοίως]' (250A11–12). While the inference at 255A4–255B7 deals with any kind that holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability, the inference at 250A8–250C5 focuses directly on a specific kind, the kind being, which holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability. Thus, in the inference at 250A8–250C5 two claims are deduced from the two identities hypothesized: on the one hand, from the hypothesis that being is identical to change it is inferred that 'both of them [*sc.* change and stability] and each change [*sc.* in the same way]'⁸⁹ (250B2), i.e. that change holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability; on the other hand, from the hypothesis that being is identical to stability it is inferred that 'they [*sc.* change and

⁸⁹ Here and at 250B5 'in the same way' is mentally to be supplied from 250A11.

stability] are stable [*sc.* in the same way]’ (250B5), i.e. that stability holds of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability.⁹⁰

The noun ‘nature’. The following passage is the heart of the argument at 255A4–255B7: ‘Change will be stable and stability, in turn, will change: for one of the two, whichever it may be, by coming to be about both, will oblige the other to transform into the contrary of its own nature, by participating in its contrary’ (255A10–255B1).

The passage’s first part, ‘Change will be stable and stability, in turn, will change’ (255A10), introduces the sentences ‘Change is stable’ and ‘Stability changes’ (the future tense may be ignored because it merely indicates what *will* follow from the hypotheses to be refuted). These two sentences, ‘Change is stable’ and ‘Stability changes’, express distinct false consequences entailed by different hypotheses. The distinctness of the consequences is indicated by the expression ‘in turn’ (‘αὖ’, 255A10). Specifically, ‘Change is stable’ expresses a false consequence entailed by the hypothesis that some kind which ‘we apply in common to change and stability’ is identical to stability; ‘Stability changes’ expresses a false consequence entailed by the hypothesis that some kind which ‘we apply in common to change and stability’ is identical to change.

The passage’s second part, introduced by ‘for’ (‘γάρ’, 255A11), explains and justifies the first. It says that ‘one of the two [*sc.* change and stability], whichever it may be, by coming to be about both, will oblige the other to transform into the contrary of its own nature’ (255A11–255B1). Mark the presence of the noun ‘nature’ (‘φύσις’) at the end of this sentence, at 255B1.⁹¹ The noun ‘nature’ occurs also at 250C6, 255E5, and 258B11: these three occurrences, embedded in passages where claims are made which may be plausibly linked to the ‘definitional’ reading of sentences,⁹² have probably the function of signalling that link. Such, I take it, is the role of the occurrence of ‘nature’ at 255B1: it indicates that the ‘definitional’ reading of sentences should be adopted. And the sentences whose ‘definitional’ reading

⁹⁰ Cf. above, text to n. 76 of Ch. 3. Some commentators (cf. Runciman (1962), 94; Stough (1990), 357) suggest a simpler reconstruction of the inference at 250A8–250C5. In their view, Plato is merely claiming that ‘Change and stability are’ does not have the same signification as ‘Change and stability are changing’ or ‘Change and stability are stable’, with no commitment to the first being true and the last two false. On this basis, Plato would deduce that being is identical neither to change nor to stability. This exegesis gives Plato a sound argument, but faces two damning objections: first, the argument it credits Plato with fails to match the parallel arguments at 243E4–7 and 255A4–255B7; secondly, it recognizes no role for the argument’s initial assumption, that change and stability are ‘most contrary to one another’ (250A8–9).

⁹¹ Cf. Clarke (1994), 42.

⁹² The passages were discussed above, in the subsections to nn. 81, 82, and 86. Cf. *Prm.* 139D1–5; *Cra.* 389A7–8.

is flagged can be no other than ‘Change is stable’ and ‘Stability changes’. For, the remark that ‘one of the two [*sc.* change and stability], whichever it may be, [...] will oblige the other to transform into the contrary of its own nature’ (255A11–255B1) is explaining why the claims expressed by ‘Change is stable’ and ‘Stability changes’ are false. In particular, the claim expressed by ‘Change is stable’ is false because if it were true then change would be transformed ‘into the contrary of its own nature’ (255A12–255B1), i.e. would have a nature that is the contrary of the one it actually has. The sentence ‘Change is stable’ is therefore false if it is understood as describing the nature of change, i.e. if it is understood according to its ‘definitional’ reading. Similar points hold for ‘Stability changes’.

These points are incorporated in the last subsection’s reconstruction of the argument. For, a crucial step of that reconstruction was the inference to the false result that either change holds of stability or stability of change in the special way required for the truth of corresponding sentences understood according to their ‘definitional’ reading (cf. [I.5]).

The adverb ‘in common’. The argument concerning identity, difference, change, and stability at 255A4–255B7 is the last of a series of three arguments each of which establishes that one or more kinds are different from two contraries. The trio’s first member is part of the refutation of the pluralists (243E4–7); it proves that being is different from the hot and the cold. The second member is the first step (250A8–250C5) of the refutation of the last characterization of being attempted by the Visitor and Theaetetus (250A8–250D4); it shows that being is different from change and stability. It is plausible to assume that the three arguments are parallel, especially in view of the Visitor’s remark (249E6–250A7) that the second argument involves questions similar to the first’s. One of the premisses of the first argument says that ‘they [*sc.* the hot and the cold] both are in the same way [ὁμοίως]’ (243E5). The context makes it plausible to assume that this amounts to the claim that the kind being holds in the same way or ways of the hot as of the cold.⁹³ To this premiss of the first argument there corresponds one in the second to the effect that ‘both of them [*sc.* change and stability] and each are in the same way [ὁμοίως]’ (250A11–12). In view of the parallel between the three arguments, it is plausible to maintain that the claim made by this premiss of the second argument is that the kind being holds in the same way or ways of change as of stability.

Given these precedents, it may be plausibly assumed that when, in the third argument, the Visitor states that ‘whatever we apply in common to

⁹³ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 7 of Ch. 3.

change and stability cannot be either of them' (255A7–8), the adverb 'in common' ('κοινῆ' at 255A7) plays the same role as the adverb 'in the same way' ('ὁμοίως') in the two earlier arguments (at 243E5 and 250A11). In other words, it may be plausibly assumed that the point made is that any kind holding of change in precisely the same way or ways as it holds of stability cannot be identical to either. This warrants that [1] in the penultimate subsection's reconstruction is faithful to the text (255A7–8).

'Ordinary' and 'definitional' readings and the claim that no distinct kinds blend. At 251C8–252E8 Plato considers three alternatives about the blending of kinds: either no distinct kinds blend, or they all blend, or some do and some do not. After an elaborate refutation of the first alternative and a quick one of the second, he concludes that the third is right.

As I pointed out,⁹⁴ the refutation of the second alternative, according to which all distinct kinds blend, is puzzling. The argument (252D2–11) is that if all distinct kinds were to blend, then change and stability would also blend, so that 'change itself would come to be in all ways stable [κίνησις . . . αὐτὴ παντάπασις ἴσταιτ' ἄν] and stability itself would in turn change [στάσις αὖ πάλιν αὐτὴ κινῶιτο]' (252D6–7). 'But this is most necessarily impossible, that change come to be stable and stability change' (252D9–10).⁹⁵ This argument commits Plato to the claim that change is not stable; but it looks as if Plato should concede that change is stable (for, as I observed earlier, he seems to hold that all kinds are stable and he asserts that change is a kind).⁹⁶

The conceptual apparatus involved in my reconstruction of the argument at 255A4–255B7 suggests a solution for the puzzle. The sentences 'Change is stable' and 'Stability changes' have both an 'ordinary' and a 'definitional' reading. Although true on its 'ordinary' reading, 'Change is stable' is false on its 'definitional' reading. 'Stability changes' is false on both readings. By saying that 'this is most necessarily impossible, that change come to be stable and stability change' (252D9–10), Plato is using (variations of) these sentences according to their 'definitional' reading. The assertions he makes are therefore true. But, were the second alternative

⁹⁴ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 33.

⁹⁵ The point is recalled at 254D7–8: 'τὼ γε δύο φάμεν αὐτοῖν ἀμείκτω πρὸς ἀλλήλω'.

⁹⁶ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 67 of Ch. 3; n. 34 of the present chapter and text thereto. One could interpret the argument in a way that avoids crediting Plato with the controversial claim that change is not stable: the consequence of the hypothesis that all distinct kinds blend is that *both* change is stable *and* stability changes, and Plato's reason for rejecting this consequence could be that stability does not change. Such an interpretation would avoid the difficulty sketched in the main text above: Plato surely holds that stability does not change. This exegesis faces the objection that it makes part of Plato's formulation redundant: if what is regarded as impossible is only stability's change, why mention change's stability?

correct, it would follow that ‘Change is stable’ and ‘Stability changes’ would be true on their ‘definitional’ reading. This is because the second alternative, according to which all distinct kinds blend, amounts to the view that all distinct kinds enjoy all ontological relations of any sort required for the truth of any affirmative predicative sentence about them, in whatever way the sentence is understood, even if it is understood according to its ‘definitional’ reading. In fact, on reflection, the second alternative is inconsistent. For, there is only one way in which two distinct kinds could enjoy the ontological relation required for the truth of an affirmative predicative sentence about them understood according to its ‘definitional’ reading: being identical. Needless to say, two distinct kinds are not identical. Given that the second alternative amounts to the view that all distinct kinds enjoy all ontological relations of any sort required for the truth of any affirmative predicative sentence about them, the first alternative, according to which no distinct kinds blend, must amount to the view that no distinct kinds enjoy any ontological relations of any sort required for the truth of any affirmative predicative sentence about them. This is what the argument calls for anyhow.⁹⁷

Plato says that the impossible consequence of the hypothesis that all distinct kinds blend is that ‘change itself would come to be in all ways stable and stability itself would in turn change’ (252D6–7). There is a curious asymmetry in the description of this impossible consequence: of change it is said that it would ‘come to be *in all ways* stable’ (252D6), while of stability it is simply said that it would ‘change’ (252D7). The asymmetry is perhaps not a matter of chance. Plato might be suggesting that change would become stable in all ways,⁹⁸ hence, in particular, in the way corresponding to the ‘definitional’ reading of ‘Change is stable’. Stability would of course also change in all ways, but there is no need to underscore it. For stability does not change in any way: neither in that corresponding to the ‘definitional’ reading of ‘Stability changes’ nor in that corresponding to its ‘ordinary’ reading.

4.4 IDENTITY IS DIFFERENT FROM BEING

The argument (255B8–255C8) for distinguishing identity from being goes as follows:

⁹⁷ Cf. 251E9–10. Earlier I argued that the late-learners are committed to the first alternative (cf. above, paragraph to n. 23). The late-learners must endorse certain affirmative predicative sentences about kinds: those understood according to their ‘definitional’ reading where the subject- and predicate-expressions signify *the same* kind. Even the late-learners must, however, assert that no *distinct* kinds enjoy any ontological relations of any sort required for the truth of any affirmative predicative sentence about them.

⁹⁸ For ‘παντάπασιν’ meaning ‘in all ways’ cf. *Smp.* 208A8; *Lg.* 3. 679C7.

- VIS. Ἄλλ' ἄρα τὸ ὄν καὶ τὸ ταῦτόν ὡς ἓν τι διανοητέον
ἡμῖν; 255B8
- THY. Ἴσως. B10
- VIS. Ἄλλ' εἰ τὸ ὄν καὶ τὸ ταῦτόν μηδὲν διάφορον
σημαίνεται, κίνησιν αὖ πάλιν καὶ στάσιν ἀμφότερα εἶναι
λέγοντες ἀμφότερα οὕτως αὐτὰ ταῦτόν ὡς ὄντα προσερού- 255C1
μεν.
- THY. Ἄλλὰ μὴν τοῦτο γε ἀδύνατον.
- VIS. Ἀδύνατον ἄρα ταῦτόν καὶ τὸ ὄν ἓν εἶναι.
- THY. Σχεδόν. C5
- VIS. Τέταρτον δὴ πρὸς τοῖς τρισὶν εἶδεσιν τὸ ταῦτόν
τιθῶμεν;
- THY. Πάνυ μὲν οὔν. C8
- VIS. But should we then think of being and the identical as a single thing? 255B
- THY. Perhaps.
- VIS. But if 'being' and 'identical' signify nothing different, then, again,
by saying that change and stability both are we will in this way be 255C
addressing them as being both identical.⁹⁹
- THY. But this is surely impossible.
- VIS. It is therefore impossible that the identical and being be a single
thing.
- THY. I suppose so.
- VIS. Must we then posit the identical as fourth in addition to the three
kinds?
- THY. By all means.

Is the argument at 255B8–255C8 invalid? At first blush, the argument at 255B8–255C8 goes as follows. Suppose identity were identical to being. Then 'Change and stability are identical' would follow from 'Change and stability are'. But the second sentence is true: for it is logically equivalent¹⁰⁰ to the true 'Change is and stability is'. The first sentence is instead false: for it is logically equivalent to the false 'Change is identical to stability'. So, identity is different from being.

This argument is objectionable. For, the sentence 'Change and stability are identical' has two readings: a collective one and a distributive one. On its collective reading, 'Change and stability are identical' is logically equivalent to 'Change is identical to stability'; on its distributive reading, 'Change and stability are identical' is logically equivalent to 'Change is

⁹⁹ My translation follows Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 151. Alternatives: '... addressing both of them as being identical' (cf. N. P. White (1993), 48); '... addressing both of them as identical because they are' (where 'ταῦτόν' is an object of 'προσερούμεν' and not a complement of 'ὡς ὄντα') (cf. Brann *et al.* (1996), 65).

¹⁰⁰ I use 'logically equivalent' in such a way that a sentence *s* is logically equivalent to a sentence *s'* just if both *s* entails *s'* and *s'* entails *s*.

identical to something and stability is identical to something'. Obviously, 'Change and stability are identical' is false on its collective reading, true on its distributive reading. The argument treats 'Change and stability are identical' as false because it adopts the collective reading. But, in the context of the argument, the distributive reading should be preferred because the premiss from which 'Change and stability are identical' is inferred, i.e. 'Change and stability are', is to be understood according to its distributive reading: it is logically equivalent to 'Change is and stability is'.¹⁰¹

It cannot be excluded that Plato did in fact propose the penultimate paragraph's argument but failed to spot the problem with it. Nevertheless, with charitable spirit, I shall explore ways of rescuing Plato from an objectionable argument.

The sentences involved in the argument at 255B8–255C8 have one or more readings. Suppose that being and identity were 'a single thing' (255B8). Then 'being' and 'identical' would signify the same kind. Since two general terms¹⁰² that signify the same kind are intersubstitutable without change in signification in sentences where they occur, the sentence 'Change and stability are' (a notational variant of 'Change and stability are beings') would have the same signification as the sentence 'Change and stability are identical' (cf. 255B11–255C2). 'But this [*sc.* that the two sentences have the same signification] is surely impossible' (255C3): for 'Change and stability are identical' may be understood as saying that change and stability are identical to one another, whereas 'Change and stability are' cannot be understood as saying this. 'It is therefore impossible that the identical and being be a single thing' (255C4).¹⁰³

This interpretation gives Plato a sound argument. Gregory Vlastos objects that it does not fit the text:¹⁰⁴ for, the text does not speak of what 'Change and stability are identical' may be understood as saying. The interpretation in question may perhaps be defended by claiming that what Plato explicitly says is only that 'Change and stability are' does not have the same signification as 'Change and stability are identical', leaving it to the reader to realize that the difference in signification follows from the fact that the second sentence may be understood as saying something which the first sentence cannot be taken to say. It must, however, be admitted that if this is right then much is left to the reader's ingenuity.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Peck (1952), 48; Bluck (1963), 144; Trevaskis (1966), 103; Vlastos (1970), 286–7; Owen (1971), 266; Bostock (1984), 91.

¹⁰² On general terms cf. above, n. 33 of Ch. 2.

¹⁰³ Cf. Lacey (1959), 49; Runciman (1962), 93; Trevaskis (1966), 103–4; Notomi (1999), 242.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Vlastos (1970), 287.

The sentences involved in the argument at 255B8–255C8 have only collective readings. To avoid saddling Plato with a poor argument, a different interpretation is worth looking for. It cannot be chance that the expression ‘both’ (ἄμφότερα) occurs twice in the passage (at 255B12 and 255C1). It is impossible to give a sure explanation of the role of ‘both’ here, but one as plausible as any is that the expression forces the collective reading of the sentences containing it (evidence for this will be mentioned later).¹⁰⁵ If this explanation is correct, then ‘Change and stability both are’ and ‘Change and stability are both identical’ have only collective readings. The expression ‘each’ plays the opposite role because it forces the distributive reading: ‘Each of change and stability is’ and ‘Each of change and stability is identical’ have only distributive readings (neither of these last sentences occurs in 255B8–255C8 – I mention them merely to generate a contrast that clarifies the issue). Now, ‘Change and stability both are’ (a sentence with only a collective reading) is logically equivalent to ‘Each of change and stability is’ (the corresponding sentence with only a distributive reading). Although logically equivalent, the sentences ‘Change and stability both are’ and ‘Each of change and stability is’ have subtly different meanings: their relationship is a bit like that between ‘Socrates speaks to himself’ and ‘Socrates speaks to Socrates’, which are also logically equivalent despite having subtly different meanings. ‘Change and stability both are’ and ‘Each of change and stability is’ are both true. On the other hand, ‘Change and stability are both identical’ (a sentence with only a collective reading) is not logically equivalent to ‘Each of change and stability is identical’ (the corresponding sentence with only a distributive reading): in fact, the first is false (because it is logically equivalent to the false ‘Change is identical to stability’) while the second is true (because it is logically equivalent to the true ‘Change is identical to something and stability is identical to something’).¹⁰⁶ Given this, suppose that being and identity were

¹⁰⁵ Cf. below, n. 109 and text thereto.

¹⁰⁶ How is it that ‘Change and stability are both identical’ is logically equivalent to ‘Change is identical to stability’ whereas ‘Each of change and stability is identical’ is logically equivalent to ‘Change is identical to something and stability is identical to something’? Regard ‘identical’ as short for ‘identical to something’. Then it is easy to see that ‘Each of change and stability is identical’, which abbreviates ‘Each of change and stability is identical to something’, is logically equivalent to ‘Change is identical to something and stability is identical to something’ (the sentences have in fact the same signification). On the other hand, ‘Change and stability are both identical’, being short for ‘Change and stability are both identical to something’, has the same signification as ‘Change and stability are identical to the same thing’, which in turn is logically equivalent to ‘Change is identical to stability’. The crucial point here is that ‘Change and stability are both identical to something’ has the same signification as ‘Change and stability are identical to the same thing’: consider that ‘Jim and Jane are both pulling a boat’ has the same signification as ‘Jim and Jane are pulling the same boat’ (contrast ‘Each of Jim and Jane is pulling a boat’).

‘a single thing’ (255B8). Then ‘being’ and ‘identical’ would signify the same kind. Since two general terms that signify the same kind are intersubstitutable without change in truth value for the whole sentences where they occur, ‘Change and stability both are’ (regarded as a notational variant of ‘Change and stability both are beings’) would have the same truth value as ‘Change and stability are both identical’. But this is not the case: as I pointed out, the first sentence is true whereas the second is false – indeed, what it says ‘is surely impossible’ (255C3). Therefore being is different from identity.¹⁰⁷

One strength of this interpretation is that it shows that when earlier in the *Sophist* the Visitor said that ‘both of them [*sc.* change and stability] and each are in the same way [εἶναι . . . ὁμοίως . . . ἀμφοτέρω αὐτὰ καὶ ἑκάτερον]’ (250A11–12), the joint presence of ‘both’ and ‘each’ was not redundant.¹⁰⁸ Another strength is that the argument attributed to Plato has a parallel in the *Hippias Major* (299B8–303D10). Hippias claims (300B6–301D4) that for every *F*, *x* and *y* are both *F* just if each of *x* and *y* is *F*. He offers as examples several values of ‘*F*’ for which this obtains: ‘*F*’ may for instance be replaced by ‘just’, ‘healthy’, and ‘made of gold’. Socrates refutes Hippias’ claim (301D5–302B6) by mentioning as counterexamples the cases where ‘*F*’ is replaced by ‘one’ and ‘two’: if each of *x* and *y* is one, it does not follow that *x* and *y* are both one, and if *x* and *y* are both two, it does not follow that each of *x* and *y* is two.¹⁰⁹ In our *Sophist* passage, ‘being’ behaves like ‘just’, ‘healthy’, and ‘made of gold’ whereas ‘identical’ behaves like ‘one’.¹¹⁰

4.5 DIFFERENCE IS DIFFERENT FROM BEING

The argument (255C9–255E7) for distinguishing difference from being goes as follows:

¹⁰⁷ Cf. van Eck (2000), 67–8.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. 243E1–2 (where ‘ἀμφοτέρω’ is replaced by ‘ἄμφω’, but ‘ἀμφοτέρω’ reappears at 243E5).

¹⁰⁹ In the passage from the *Hippias Major* the author systematically uses ‘both’ (‘ἀμφοτέροι’) to flag that an attribute holds collectively of two items: cf. 299C9, 300A10 (where ‘ἀμφοτέροι’ is associated with ‘κοινῆ’), 300B1, 300B4, 300B8, 300D8, 300E4, 300E5, 300E9, 300E10, 301A3, 301A6, 301B8, 301C1–2, 301D8, 301E1, 301E3, 301E4, 301E5, 302A5, 302A7, 302A8, 302B2, 302B3, 302C1, 302C2, 302C3, 302C5, 302D1, 302D2, 302D4, 302E6, 302E8, 302E11, 303A2, 303A5, 303A6, 303A10, 303B2–3, 303B4, 303B5, 303B6, 303C4, 303C5, 303D2. At one point, at 303B8, the author uses ‘both together’ (‘συναμφοτέροι’) instead of ‘both’ (‘ἀμφοτέροι’): a similar variation occurs in the *Sophist*, at 249D4 and 250C3. Also note that the passage from the *Hippias Major* employs the distinction between the collective and the distributive holding of attributes to show that certain attributes are distinct: the interpretation of *Sph.* 255B11–255C3 under consideration puts forward an argument of this sort.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *R.* 5. 475E9–476A3; 7. 524B10; *Tht.* 185B2; 203D7–8; *Prm.* 143D1–5; Klein (1977), 60–1.

- VIS. Τί δέ; τὸ θάτερον ἄρα ἡμῖν λεκτέον πέμπτον; ἢ
τοῦτο καὶ τὸ ὄν ὡς δύο ἄττα ὀνόματα ἐφ' ἐνὶ γένει διανοεῖ-
σθαι δεῖ;
THT. Τάχ' ἄν.
VIS. Ἄλλ' οἶμαί σε συγχωρεῖν τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν αὐτὰ
καθ' αὐτά, τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἄλλα¹¹¹ ἀεὶ λέγεσθαι.
THT. Τί δ' οὐ;
VIS. Τὸ δὲ γ' ἕτερον ἀεὶ πρὸς ἕτερον· ἢ γάρ;
THT. Οὕτως.
VIS. Οὐκ ἄν, εἴ γε τὸ ὄν καὶ τὸ θάτερον μὴ πάμπλου
διεφερέτην· ἀλλ' εἴπερ θάτερον ἀμφοῖν μετεῖχε τοῖν εἶδοῖν
ὡσπερ τὸ ὄν, ἦν ἄν ποτέ τι καὶ τῶν ἐτέρων ἕτερον οὐ πρὸς
ἕτερον· νῦν δὲ ἀτεχνῶς ἡμῖν ὅτιπερ ἄν ἕτερον ἦ, συμβέ-
βηκεν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἐτέρου τοῦτο ὅπερ ἐστὶν εἶναι.
THT. Λέγεις καθάπερ ἔχει.
VIS. Πέμπτον δὴ τὴν θατέρου φύσιν λεκτέον ἐν τοῖς
εἶδεσιν οὔσαν οἷς προαιρούμεθα.
THT. Ναί.
VIS. Καὶ διὰ πάντων γε αὐτῆν αὐτῶν φήσομεν εἶναι διεληλυθυῖαν·
ἐν ἑκαστῷ γὰρ ἕτερον εἶναι τῶν ἄλλων οὐ διὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ
φύσιν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ μετέχειν τῆς ιδέας τῆς θατέρου.
THT. Κομιδῆ μὲν οὔν.
VIS. And must we speak of the different as a fifth [*sc.* kind]? Or must we
regard this and being as two names for a single kind?
THT. Perhaps.
VIS. However, I think you agree that of beings, some are spoken of on
their own, some always relatively to other things.¹¹²
THT. Of course.
VIS. But the different is always spoken of relatively to something different.
Isn't that so?
THT. Yes.
VIS. This would not have been the case if being and the different had not
differed completely: but if the different had participated in both
kinds, as being does, one of the things that are different would at
some point have been different not relatively to something different.

¹¹¹ Two MSS (B and D, the two representatives of family β) read 'πρὸς ἄλληλα' instead of 'πρὸς ἄλλα' (cf. Simp. *in Cat.* 159, 17).

¹¹² Giving 'always' ('ἀεὶ', 255C14) narrow scope, whereby it governs only the immediately preceding 'relatively to other things' ('πρὸς ἄλλα') (cf. Diès (1925), 368; Movia (1991), 335; N. P. White (1993), 58; Duerlinger (2005), 125). One can also give 'always' large scope: '... of beings, some are always spoken of on their own, some relatively to other things' (cf. Cornford (1935), 281; Brann *et al.* (1996), 65).

But now, in our view, whatever is different, it results of necessity that it is just what it is from something different.¹¹³

THY. It is just as you say.

VIS. Therefore the nature of the different must be said to be fifth among the kinds we are selecting. 255E

THY. Yes.

VIS. And we shall say that it runs through all of them: for each one is different from the others not by virtue of its own nature, but by virtue of participating in the idea of the different.¹¹⁴

THY. By all means.

The main interpretations of Plato's argument that difference is different from being are five.

According to the first, Plato distinguishes a complete and an incomplete use of 'to be'. On its complete use, 'to be' has no complement (not even implicit). 'To be' in its complete use is often employed to make statements of existence. On its incomplete use, 'to be' is construed with some complement (which, however, may remain implicit, in which case the incomplete use of 'to be' is elliptical). 'To be' in its incomplete use is often employed to make statements of predication. The complete and the incomplete uses of 'to be' are semantically close: there is no change in the verb's sense (the relation between 'Jim is', which exemplifies the complete use, and 'Jim is slow', which exemplifies the incomplete use, is analogous to that between 'Jim is running' and 'Jim is running slowly'). Because of this semantic closeness there is a single kind, the kind being, for both uses of 'to be'. Since 'to be' in its complete and incomplete uses is often employed to make, respectively, statements of existence and of predication, the semantic closeness of the two uses implies an existential component of statements of predication. By contrast, 'different' has only an incomplete use: it must be construed with some complement (which may occasionally remain implicit). If difference, the kind signified by 'different', were identical to being, the kind signified by 'to be', then 'different' would have both a complete and an incomplete use. Difference is therefore different from being.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ For the formulation here cf. *Prm.* 133C8; 133E3–4; 134A3–8.

¹¹⁴ Cf. *Prm.* 143B3–6; Cherniss (1957b), 18.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Lacey (1959), 49; Xenakis (1959), 33; Moravcsik (1962), 48, 54; Bostock (1984), 92–4; Brown (1986), 462, 474–7, 478; Moravcsik (1992), 185; Rickless (2007), 242. Moravcsik (1960), 125 and Ferg (1976), 337–9 identify the incomplete use of 'to be' with its 'converse' use (on which cf. below, subsection to n. 184). The account in the main text above differs from that endorsed by some of the commentators just mentioned, who take there to be a sharp semantic difference between the complete and the incomplete uses of 'to be'. My position is close to that of Lesley Brown (cf. below, n. 80 of Ch. 5 and text thereto). The semantic closeness between the complete and the incomplete

According to the second exegesis, Plato introduces an ontological classification. He distinguishes two kinds of beings: some beings are beings on their own (e.g. fingers, men, horses), others are beings relatively to something (e.g. large things, fathers). By contrast, all things that are different are different relatively to something. To clarify, consider first the class of beings. What is it that makes beings into beings? With some beings, the answer to this question does not set the beings concerned in relation to something. For instance, what is it that makes a finger into a being? The appropriate answer is that what makes a finger into a being is its being a finger, an answer that does not set the being concerned in relation to something. With other beings, the answer to the above question does set the beings concerned in relation to something. For instance, what is it that makes a large thing into a being? The appropriate answer is that what makes a large thing into a being is its being larger than things of the same sort that are of standard size, and this answer does set the being concerned in relation to something. Consider then the class of things that are different. What is it that makes a thing that is different different? With all things that are different, the answer to this question sets things that are different in relation to something: if about anything that is different one asks what makes it different, the appropriate answer is that what makes this thing that is different different is its being different from something, an answer that sets the given thing that is different in relation to something. Since some beings are beings on their own and some are beings relatively to something, and since all things that are different are different relatively to something, it follows that being is different from difference.¹¹⁶

According to the third exegesis, Plato's distinction between being and difference relies on the logical structure of sentences involving these kinds. Being (always viewed as a vowel-kind linking further kinds) can be involved in sentences with two logical structures, which are displayed in 'John and Mary are 25 years old' and 'John and Mary are married': the first sentence says that John and Mary participate in being with respect to the kind

uses of 'to be' would be described by Lesley Brown by saying that the complete use of 'to be' is C₂ complete. Other verbs have complete and incomplete uses that are not semantically as close (cf. 'to grow' in 'Jane is growing' and 'Jane is growing tomatoes'): in such cases Lesley Brown would say that the complete use of the verb is C₁ complete.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Apelt (1897), 172; Cornford (1935), 282; Ross (1951), 113–14; Owen (1957), 107; Bluck (1963), 148–50; Meinhardt (1968), 53–4; Vlastos (1970), 290; Seligman (1974), 60–3; Heinaman (1982–83), 186; Heinaman (1983), 14; Movia (1991), 335–6, 342; Szaif (1998), 353–4; Dancy (1999), 59–70; Malcolm (2006b), 282–4. The second exegesis comes in subtly different versions, which I cannot follow up. In the main text I offer what seems to me the best possible argument that is recognizably close to those attributed to Plato by the commentators just mentioned.

25-years-old independently of one another (this would be reflected in its formalization by a conjunctive formula, e.g. ‘*Oj & Om*’); the second sentence says that John and Mary participate in being with respect to the kind married relatively to one another (this would be reflected in its formalization by an atomic formula with a two-place relation constant, e.g. ‘*Vjm*’). Difference can instead be involved in sentences of only one logical structure, which is displayed in ‘John and Mary are different’: this sentence says that John and Mary participate in difference with respect to one another (this would be reflected in its formalization by an atomic formula with a two-place relation constant, e.g. ‘*Djm*’). Difference cannot be involved in sentences saying that two items participate in it independently of one another.¹¹⁷

According to the fourth exegesis, Plato distinguishes two incomplete uses of ‘to be’. On its first incomplete use, ‘to be’ is employed to make statements of identity: beings are then called beings ‘on their own’ (because whatever any being is by being identical to it is that being itself). On its second incomplete use, ‘to be’ is employed to make statements of predication: beings are then called beings ‘relatively to others’ (because whatever any being is by participating in it is different from it). By contrast, whatever is different is called different relatively to something different from it. Difference is therefore different from being.¹¹⁸

According to the fifth exegesis, Plato distinguishes two classes of beings on the basis of two incomplete uses of ‘to be’. The two uses of ‘to be’ are not those invoked by the fourth exegesis, namely those involved in statements of identity and predication, but those induced by ‘definitional’ and ‘ordinary’ readings of sentences.¹¹⁹ The two classes of beings are those of perceptible particulars and kinds. Consider perceptible particulars first. A perceptible particular can be called a being only in so far as it instantiates kinds, which are of course different from it. What entitles a perceptible particular to rank as a being is its participation in being with respect to something different from it. This may be expressed by a sentence ‘ σ is (a) ϕ ’ understood according to its ‘ordinary’ reading (throughout this paragraph, ‘ σ ’ and ‘ ϕ ’ are schematic letters to be replaced, respectively, with a name and a general term). The condition of perceptible particulars is described by Plato by saying that ‘of beings, some are spoken of [. . .] always relatively to other things’ (255C13–14). Now consider kinds. A kind

¹¹⁷ Cf. de Vries (1988), 390–2.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Owen (1965), 71; Owen (1968a), 108; Owen (1971), 255–8; Wiggins (1971), 289–90; Reeve (1985), 54–5; Bordt (1991), 525–6; Fine (1993), 171–2.

¹¹⁹ Cf. above, subsection to n. 66.

is entitled to rank as a being not only by its instantiating kinds (which may be expressed by a sentence ‘σ is (a) φ’ understood according to its ‘ordinary’ reading), but also by its being identical to some kind, namely itself (and this may be expressed by a sentence ‘σ is (a) φ’ understood according to its ‘definitional’ reading). So, what distinguishes any kind from perceptible particulars is its participating in being with respect to itself (although it also participates in being with respect to other things). The condition of kinds is described by Plato by saying that ‘of beings, some are spoken of on their own’ (255C13–14).¹²⁰ Now consider what entitles any item to rank as something different: it is its participating in difference with respect to something different from it. Since things can participate in the kind being with respect both to themselves and to something else, while things can participate in the kind difference only with respect to something else, the kind being is different from the kind difference.¹²¹

Assessment of the interpretations. The third exegesis relies on a comparison of situations of different types: the kind being connects things through the mediation a further kind (for instance, it connects John to Mary through the kind 25-years-old or through the kind married); the kind difference connects things without the mediation of anything further (for instance, it connects John to Mary directly).

The fourth and fifth exegesis both presuppose that when Plato says that ‘of beings, some are spoken of on their own [αὐτὰ καθ’ αὐτά], some always relatively to other things [πρὸς ἄλλα]’ (255C13–14), he is using the phrase ‘relatively to other things’ (‘πρὸς ἄλλα’, 255C14) in a strict way, i.e. as implying distinctness. This might seem to count in favour

¹²⁰ Since stability is a kind and all kinds instantiate stability, stability instantiates stability, so ‘Stability is stable’ is true on its ‘ordinary’ reading. Stability may therefore be described as ‘spoken of on its own’ by appeal to the ‘ordinary’ reading of ‘Stability is stable’. This, however, does not hold for all kinds: ‘Change changes’ is false on its ‘ordinary’ reading, so change cannot be described as ‘spoken of on its own’ by appeal to the ‘ordinary’ reading of ‘Change changes’. Only the ‘definitional’ reading of sentences guarantees that all kinds may be described as ‘spoken of on their own’.

¹²¹ Cf. Frede (1967), 12–29; Meinwald (1991), 75; Frede (1992), 400–2; Frede (1996a), 196–7; Mann (2000), 88. These commentators offer somewhat different versions of the fifth interpretation, which I cannot follow up. Let me only mention that they regard ‘being said to be on its own’ and ‘being said to be relatively to other things’ as labels or even descriptions of uses of ‘to be’: one use of ‘to be’ would be the one induced by something similar to the ‘definitional’ reading of sentences (cf. n. 80 above), the other the one induced by their ‘ordinary’ reading. This is problematic: as I pointed out in n. 120 above, ‘Stability is stable’ is true on its ‘ordinary’ reading, but it is hard to see how this could be a case where something is said to be relatively to other things (similarly with ‘Being is a being’ and several other examples). By contrast, according to the interpretation presented in the main text above, ‘being said to be on its own’ and ‘being said to be relatively to other things’ are descriptions of the conditions of kinds and perceptible particulars.

of these interpretations. In fact, it does not. For ‘other’ may be used loosely, without implying distinctness. Such a loose usage of ‘other’ occurs in ancient discussions of relatives. For instance, in the *Philebus*, shortly after contrasting things beautiful ‘relatively to something’ (‘πρὸς τι’, 51C6) with things beautiful ‘by themselves’ (‘καθ’ αὐτά’, 51C7), Plato draws this contrast again by opposing things beautiful ‘relatively to something else’ (‘πρὸς ἕτερον’, 51D7) to things beautiful ‘on their own’ (‘αὐτὰς καθ’ αὐτάς’, 51D8). Moreover, in a fragment of Plato’s pupil Hermodorus recorded by Simplicius, the labels ‘by themselves’ and ‘relatively to other things’ introduce absolute and relative beings: ‘Of beings, some are spoken of by themselves [καθ’ αὐτά], like man and horse, some relatively to other things [πρὸς ἕτερα], and of these some as contraries, like good to bad, some instead as relative to something [πρὸς τι], and of these some as determinate, some instead as indeterminate’ (*in Ph.* 248, 2–5). Something similar occurs in Aristotle’s *Categories*: ‘Relative to something [πρὸς τι] are called such things as those which are said to be just what they are of other things [ἑτέρων], or in whatever other way relatively to an other [πρὸς ἕτερον]’ (7, 6^a36–7).¹²² An advocate of the fourth or fifth exegesis might retort that when he discusses difference, Plato says that ‘the different is always spoken of relatively to something different [πρὸς ἕτερον]’ (255D1): here ‘different’ is to be taken strictly (i.e. as implying distinctness), hence it must be taken strictly also in the discussion of being, at 255C13–14.¹²³ This retort is answered by pointing out that the occurrence of ‘relatively to other things’ (‘πρὸς ἄλλο’, 255C14) is most naturally taken as meaning ‘relatively to something’ and that the occurrence of ‘relatively to something different’ (‘πρὸς ἕτερον’, 255D1) may then be understood as providing a ground for the (unformulated) claim that anything that is different is always spoken of relatively to something: anything that is different is always spoken of relatively to something because it is spoken of relatively to something different from it.

The fourth exegesis faces a problem. It credits Plato with two claims: that on the use of ‘to be’ corresponding to statements of identity, the only thing which any being is is that being itself; and that on the use of ‘to be’ corresponding to statements of predication, all things which any being is are different from that being. While the first view is uncontroversial, Plato is committed to rejecting the second. For he says that ‘everything

¹²² Cf. *Cat.* 6, 5^b17; 5^b20; 5^b28; 5^b32; 7, 6^a37; 6^a38; 6^b7; 8, 11^a25; 11^a27; *Top.* 6.8, 146^b3; *Ph.* 1.7, 190^a35; *Metaph.* Δ15, 1021^a26–8; Frede (1967), 17; Ferg (1976), 338; Heinaman (1983), 15; Bostock (1984), 93; Brown (1986), 476; Szaif (1998), 354; Dancy (1999), 47–8, 59.

¹²³ Cf. Frede (1967), 17.

participates in the identical' (256A7–8). This implies that even on the use of 'to be' corresponding to statements of predication, something (i.e. identity) which some being (i.e. identity) is is not different from that being.¹²⁴ Plato could adequately draw a distinction between the uses of 'to be' corresponding to statements of identity and predication by saying that while on the use of 'to be' corresponding to statements of identity, the only thing which any being is is that being itself, on the use of 'to be' corresponding to statements of predication, *at least one* thing which any being is is different from that being. But this distinction cannot be easily extracted from Plato's words: 'Of beings, some are always spoken of on their own, some relatively to other things' (255C13–14).¹²⁵

The first, third, and fourth exegeses share a problem. By saying that 'of beings, some . . . , some . . . ' (255C13–14), Plato seems to introduce two disjoint classes of beings. But the second, the third, and the fourth exegeses do not introduce two disjoint classes of beings: they introduce uses of 'to be' on which the verb is applicable to the same items (i.e. to everything).¹²⁶ The exegeses in question can overcome this objection only by rejecting the assumption on which it relies: by denying that Plato introduces two disjoint classes of beings. The construction 'of beings, some . . . , some . . . ' (τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν . . . τὰ δέ . . . , 255C13–14) must then be taken not to introduce a classification. This is strained because constructions of this sort usually do introduce classifications. The second and the fifth exegeses do not face this difficulty because they take the passage to introduce disjoint classes of beings.

In conclusion, the first, third, and fourth exegeses are implausible. It is difficult to decide between the survivors, namely the second and the fifth exegeses.

One consideration tells against the second exegesis. The Visitor regards Theaetetus as acquainted with the distinction between beings: for he introduces it with the words 'I think you agree that . . . ' (255C13) (he employs the present 'you agree', not the future 'you will agree').¹²⁷ But the classes of beings introduced by the second exegesis, namely beings that are on their own (e.g. fingers, men, horses) and beings that are relatively to something (e.g. large things, fathers), have not been discussed in the dialogue so far. True, there is evidence that the distinction between beings that are on their own and beings that are relatively to something was commonplace in the

¹²⁴ Cf. Nehamas (1982), 203.

¹²⁵ The above translation gives 'always' ('ἀεί', 255C14) large scope (cf. above, n. 112) because such a construal fits better with the fourth exegesis.

¹²⁶ Cf. Bluck (1963), 147; Kostman (1989), 352–3; Szaif (1998), 354. ¹²⁷ Cf. Owen (1971), 257.

Academy.¹²⁸ However, even if this distinction was commonplace in the Academy, the Visitor has no reason for regarding Theaetetus as acquainted with it (for Theaetetus is not a student of the Academy). The fifth exegesis is unaffected by this problem: the distinction between ‘ordinary’ and ‘definitional’ readings of sentences, on which the classification of beings is based according to the fifth exegesis, has been operating for some time in the dialogue.

An objection may be raised against the fifth exegesis: “Difference is different” is true on its “definitional” reading because difference is identical to itself, contrary to the claim, essential to the fifth exegesis, that what entitles any item to rank as something different is its participating in difference with respect to something different from it’. This objection is misguided. Think of difference and being as two-place relations (although Plato does not conceive of them in this way, such an approach helps to clarify the confusion behind the objection). For all x and y , if the two-place relation of difference obtains between x and y , then x is different from y . But it is not the case that for all x and y , if the two-place relation of being obtains between x and y , then x is different from y . This suffices to show that difference and being are different two-place relations. And this is, roughly, Plato’s argument. Of course, the two-place relation of being obtains between difference and difference, both because difference is identical to difference (which makes ‘Difference is different’ true on its ‘definitional’ reading) and because difference instantiates difference with respect to everything else (which makes ‘Difference is different’ true on its ‘ordinary’ reading). But, on reflection, far from refuting the claim that difference and being are different, this point corroborates it (because it confirms that for some x , the two-place relation of being obtains between x and x).¹²⁹

One consideration speaks in favour of the fifth exegesis. Later in the dialogue, at 257D14–258C6, Plato develops an argument for the claim that certain kinds are. The argument appears to rely on the assumption that, for a kind, to be is to have a certain specific nature.¹³⁰ This assumption fits well with the position which the fifth exegesis attributes to Plato.

¹²⁸ Cf. Hermodorus *apud* Simp. in *Ph.* 248, 2–5; D. L. 3. 108–9; *Divisiones Aristoteleae* 39B–40B Mutschmann; Simp. in *Cat.* 63, 22–4.

¹²⁹ Cf. Silverman (2002), 177–8.

¹³⁰ Cf. below, subsection to n. 125 of Ch. 5. The same assumption is operative at 245C8–9: cf. above, n. 31 of Ch. 3 and text thereto.

As I said, it is difficult to decide between the second and the fifth exegeses. I opt for the fifth because the considerations in its favour outweigh those in favour of its competitor.

4.6 APPARENTLY INCONSISTENT SENTENCES

Pairs of sentences concerning change. After arguing that identity and difference are different from being, change, and stability (255A4–255E7), the Visitor and Theaetetus resume examining the communion of kinds: no longer of three, as originally planned, but five. They examine four pairs of sentences concerning change (255E8–256D10) (the symbol ‘ \Leftarrow ’ is to be read as ‘is justified by’):

- | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------|--|
| (1) (255E11–256A2) | ‘Change is not-stability’ | \Leftarrow | ‘Change is different from stability’ |
| | ‘Change is’ | \Leftarrow | ‘Change participates in being’ |
| (2) (256A3–256B5) | ‘Change is not-identical’ | \Leftarrow | ‘Change is different from the identical’ |
| | ‘Change is identical’ | \Leftarrow | ‘Change is identical to itself’ |
| (3) (256C4–9) | ‘Change is not-different’ | \Leftarrow | ‘Change is different from the different’ |
| | ‘Change is different’ | \Leftarrow | ‘Change is different from the different’ |
| (4) (256C10–256D10) | ‘Change is a not-being’ | \Leftarrow | ‘Change is different from being’ |
| | ‘Change is a being’ | \Leftarrow | ‘Change participates in being’ |

The last three pairs seem inconsistent. They are not, however, genuinely inconsistent because in uttering them ‘we are not speaking likewise’ (256A11–12). Indeed, both members within each pair are true.

In all four pairs the first member is a negative sentence whereby change is said to be not-something. In each case, the reason why change is not-this is that change is different from this, i.e. participates in difference with respect to this. The importance of difference was anticipated at the end of the preceding passage, when each of the five very important kinds was said to be ‘different from the others [. . .] by virtue of participating in the idea of the different’ (255E4–6).

Pair (1). Here is the discussion of pair (1):

- VIS. Πρῶτον μὲν κίνησιν, ὡς ἔστι παντάπασιν ἕτερον
στάσεως. ἢ πῶς λέγομεν; 255E11
THT. Οὕτως.
VIS. Οὐ στάσις ἄρ' ἐστίν.
THT. Οὐδαμῶς. E15
VIS. Ἔστι δέ γε διὰ τὸ μετέχειν τοῦ ὄντος. 256A1
THT. Ἔστιν. A2
- VIS. Let us first say¹³¹ that change is completely different from stability. 255E
Or how do we speak of it?
THT. Like this.
VIS. Therefore it is not-stability.
THT. In no way.¹³²
VIS. But it is because it participates in being. 256A
THT. It is.

The second member of pair (1) is the affirmative sentence 'Change is' (256A1). Since on earlier occasions the sentence 'Change and stability are' was understood as making the claim that change and stability exist,¹³³ 'Change is' at 256A1 is probably also making an existential claim.¹³⁴

Pairs (2)–(4). Pairs (2), (3), and (4) are discussed at 256A3–256B5, 256C4–9, and 256C10–256D10:

- VIS. Αὔθις δὴ πάλιν ἡ κίνησις ἕτερον ταύτου ἔστιν. 256A3
THT. Σχεδόν.
VIS. Οὐ ταῦτόν ἄρα ἐστίν. A5
THT. Οὐ γὰρ οὔν.
VIS. Ἀλλὰ μὴν αὐτῇ γ' ἦν ταῦτόν διὰ τὸ μετέχειν αὐτῶν πᾶν
ταύτου.¹³⁵
THT. Καὶ μάλα.

¹³¹ I supply 'λέγωμεν' from 255E8.

¹³² 'In no way' ('οὐδαμῶς', 255E15) picks up the 'not' ('οὐ') within 'not-stability' ('οὐ στάσις', 255E14). In other words, Theaetetus' answer 'In no way' is short for 'Change is in-no-way-stability'. Plato sometimes uses 'οὐδαμῶς' to modify an expression complementing 'εἶναι': cf. *Phlb.* 52B7; *R.* 8. 549A1; *Lg.* 7. 820E11. Two passages, *Lg.* 1. 634B5 and 7. 806A3, provide examples with verbs other than 'εἶναι'.

¹³³ Cf. 249B2–4; 250A11–250B1; 254D10–11.

¹³⁴ Cf. Kamlah (1963), 40; Rosen (1983), 274–6; Brown (1986), 471–3; O'Brien (1991a), 311, 328; O'Brien (1995), 63, 100, 130; Szaif (1998), 352–3; O'Brien (1999), 30–1; Esposti Ongaro (2008), 250; Thomas (2008), 643.

¹³⁵ The reading 'αὐτῇ γ' ἦν ταῦτόν διὰ τὸ μετέχειν αὐτῶν πᾶν ταύτου', adopted by Robinson, is an emendation proposed by Madvig (1871), 383 (cf. O'Brien (1991a), 273–4; O'Brien (1995), 46). The main MSS have 'αὐτῇ γ' ἦν ταῦτόν διὰ τὸ μετέχειν αὐτῶν πᾶν' αὐτῶν'.

- VIS. Τὴν κίνησιν δὴ ταῦτόν τ' εἶναι καὶ μὴ ταῦτόν
 ὁμολογητέον καὶ οὐ δυσχεραντέον. οὐ γὰρ ὅταν εἴπωμεν
 αὐτὴν ταῦτόν καὶ μὴ ταῦτόν, ὁμοίως εἰρήκαμεν, ἀλλ'
 ὀπότεον μὲν ταῦτόν, διὰ τὴν μέθεξιν ταύτου πρὸς ἑαυτὴν
 οὕτω λέγομεν, ὅταν δὲ μὴ ταῦτόν, διὰ τὴν κοινωνίαν αὐ
 θατέρου, δι' ἣν ἀποχωριζομένη ταύτου γέγονεν οὐκ ἐκεῖνο
 ἀλλ' ἕτερον, ὥστε ὀρθῶς αὐ λέγεται πάλιν οὐ ταῦτόν.
 256B1
- THE. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν. B5
- VIS. Again, change is different from the identical. 256A
 THE. Pretty much.
 VIS. Hence it is not-identical.
 THE. Certainly not.¹³⁶
 VIS. But it was¹³⁷ identical to itself because everything participates in the
 identical.
 THE. Definitely.
 VIS. Hence we must agree that change is both identical and not-identical
 and we must not be annoyed.¹³⁸ For, when we call it identical and
 not-identical, we are not speaking likewise. But, when we call it
 identical, we speak thus because of its participation in the identical
 with respect to itself, whereas when we call it not-identical, we speak
 thus because of its communion with the different, whereby, being
 separated from the identical, it becomes not that but different, so
 that again it is correctly called not-identical. 256B
 THE. Definitely.
- VIS. Λέγομεν δὴ πάλιν· ἡ κίνησις ἐστὶν ἕτερον τοῦ
 ἑτέρου, καθάπερ ταύτου τε ἦν ἄλλο καὶ τῆς στάσεως;
 256C4
 C5
 THE. Ἀναγκαῖον.
 VIS. Οὐχ ἕτερον ἄρ' ἐστὶ πη καὶ ἕτερον κατὰ τὸν νυνδὴ
 λόγον.
 THE. Ἀληθῆ. C9
- VIS. Let us then say again: is change different from the different, just as
 it was different from the identical and stability? 256C
 THE. Necessarily.
 VIS. Hence, according to the present argument, it is somehow not-
 different and different.
 THE. True.

¹³⁶ Here 'not' ('οὐ', 256A6) picks up the 'not' ('οὐ') within 'not-identical' ('οὐ ταῦτόν', 256A5). In other words, Theaetetus' answer 'Certainly not' is short for 'It is certainly not-identical'.

¹³⁷ Cf. 254D14–15. ¹³⁸ For 'δυσχεραίνω' meaning 'to be annoyed' cf. *Theaet.* 195C1.

- VIS. Τί οὖν δὴ τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο; ἄρ' αὖ τῶν μὲν τριῶν
ἕτερον αὐτὴν φήσομεν εἶναι, τοῦ δὲ τετάρτου μὴ φῶμεν,
ὁμολογήσαντες αὐτὰ εἶναι πέντε, περὶ ὧν καὶ ἐν οἷς
προϋθέμεθα σκοπεῖν; 256C10
256D1
- THY. Καὶ πῶς; ἀδύνατον γὰρ συγχωρεῖν ἐλάττω τὸν
ἀριθμὸν τοῦ νυνδὴ φανέντος.
- VIS. Ἀδεῶς ἄρα τὴν κίνησιν ἕτερον εἶναι τοῦ ὄντος
διαμαχόμενοι λέγωμεν; D5
- THY. Ἀδεέστατα μὲν οὖν.
- VIS. Οὐκοῦν δὴ σαφῶς ἡ κίνησις ὄντως οὐκ ὄν ἐστι καὶ
ὄν, ἐπεὶ περ τοῦ ὄντος μετέχει;
- THY. Σαφέστατά γε. D10
- VIS. What about what comes after this? Shall we say that it [*sc.* change]
is different from the three and deny that it is different from the
fourth, having agreed that those about and on which we propose to
inquire are five? 256C
256D
- THY. How could we? For it is impossible to concede that they are fewer
in number than it appeared just now.
- VIS. Must we then fearlessly contend that change is different from being?
- THY. Most fearlessly.
- VIS. Is it then clearly the case that change really is a not-being and a
being, since it participates in being?
- THY. Most clearly.¹³⁹

The discussion of pair (2), at 256A3–256B5, provides an important piece of information. Earlier the Visitor had declared that there might be some kinds which are ‘causes of the division’ (253C3) between kinds. Now, at 256B2–3, he says that change is separated from identity because of its communion with difference. This suggests that difference is a kind causing division or separation (which, I take it, are the same thing) and that, in general, if x participates in difference with respect to y then x is separated from y .¹⁴⁰

The position of the negative particle. The expressions ‘is not-stability’, ‘is not-identical’, ‘is not-different’, and ‘is a not-being’ are not part of colloquial English. Two considerations induce me to employ formulations like ‘Change is not-stability’, ‘Change is not-identical’, etc., however barbaric they sound.

¹³⁹ At 259A6–259B1 Plato advances similar considerations with difference in place of change: difference is because it participates in being, but is a not-being because it is different from being.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. above, n. 39 and text thereto.

First, the Greek language allows two types of predicate-expression involving (a form of the verb translated by) 'to be', a negative particle, and a complement: in predicate-expressions of the first type, 'to be' is combined with the complex consisting of the negative particle governing the complement (cf. 'ἔστιν οὐ δίκαιος', 'is not-just', Arist. *Int.* 10, 19^b28); in predicate-expressions of the second type, the negative particle governs 'to be' and the complex thus generated is combined with the complement (cf. 'οὐκ ἔστι δίκαιος', 'is not just', Arist. *Int.* 10, 19^b27–8). Only predicate-expressions of the first type occur in Homer, whereas later classical authors like Herodotus, Demosthenes, and Plato use predicate-expressions of both types, with the second type gaining progressively more ground.¹⁴¹ In these classical authors, predicate-expressions of the two types appear to be semantically equivalent (choice seems a matter of style). In *De interpretatione*, probably written not long after Plato's *Sophist* and influenced by it, Aristotle treats 'οὐκ ἄνθρωπος' ('not-man') as a syntactic unit.¹⁴² Moreover, both in *De interpretatione* and in the probably later *Prior Analytics*, he compares the logical force of predicate-expressions of the two types.¹⁴³

Secondly, in the negative members of the first three pairs of sentences presently under consideration, Plato uses only predicate-expressions of the first type and avoids those of the second. At least part of the reason is probably that earlier in the dialogue sentences involving a negative particle governing 'to be' caused insurmountable difficulties. Only in the negative member of the fourth pair does Plato have the negative particle governing 'to be'. But when he reaches this result, Plato springs it upon his readers with inescapable logic: they must swallow the negative construct consisting of the negative particle governing a form of 'to be'.¹⁴⁴

The use of articles. There is some variation in the form of the inferences supporting the negative members.¹⁴⁵ In two cases, the inference starts with an instance of the schema 'Change is different from ϕ ' and concludes to the corresponding instance of 'Change is not- ϕ ' (with ' ϕ ' replaced by an abstract noun or an adjective). This happens with the negative members of pairs (1) and (2). With pair (1), the premiss is 'Change is different from stability [ἕτερον στᾶσεως]' and the conclusion is 'Change is not-stability [οὐ στᾶσις]'. With pair (2), the premiss is 'Change is different from

¹⁴¹ Cf. Moorhouse (1959), 138–40; Cavini (1985), 18.

¹⁴² Cf. *Int.* 2, 16^a30–33; 10, 19^b5–12. ¹⁴³ Cf. *Int.* 10, 19^b5–20^b12; *APr.* 1.46, 51^b5–52^a38.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. McDowell (1982), 117–8; van Eck (2002), 69. ¹⁴⁵ Cf. Lewis (1975), 140–1.

(the)¹⁴⁶ identical [ἕτερον ταύτου]’ and the conclusion is ‘Change is not-identical [οὐ ταύτόν]’ (note that Plato has no qualms placing the article before ‘ταύτόν’).¹⁴⁷ On the other hand, in two cases the inference starts with an instance of the schema ‘Change is different from the φ’ and concludes to the corresponding instance of ‘Change is not-φ’ (with ‘φ’ replaced by an adjective or a participle). This happens with the negative members of pairs (3) and (4). With pair (3), the premiss is ‘Change is different from the different [ἕτερον τοῦ ἑτέρου]’ and the conclusion is ‘Change is not-different [οὐχ ἕτερον]’. With pair (4), English does not permit a word-by-word rendering of the Greek, but were one offered then the result would be ‘Change is different from the being [ἕτερον τοῦ ὄντος]’ for the premiss and ‘Change is not-being [οὐκ ὄν]’ for the conclusion (cf. 259A8–259B1).

This difference in the linguistic form of the inferences carries little weight.¹⁴⁸ Elsewhere Plato allows himself to use an adjective with no prefixed article to refer to a kind (for example, at *R.* 6. 505C6 he employs ‘ἀγαθόν’ without article to refer to goodness).¹⁴⁹

The ‘is’-ambiguity interpretation. Nowhere in the *Sophist* does Plato use a sentence like ‘The verb “to be” has two senses: sometimes it expresses participation, on other occasions identity’.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, some commentators hold that in 256A3–256B5 and 256C4–256D10, and especially in the first of these passages, Plato distinguishes the identity sense of ‘to be’ from its predicative sense.¹⁵¹ They maintain this for two reasons: first, they believe that while the affirmative members of pairs (2)–(4) involve the predicative sense of ‘to be’, their negative members involve its identity sense;¹⁵² secondly, they notice Plato’s remark that in the two members of pair

¹⁴⁶ In Greek no article corresponds to this occurrence of ‘the’. But, without ‘the’, the English sentence would be unbearably harsh.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. 254E2; 255A1; 255B8; 255B11; 255C6; 259D2; *Tht.* 185C10; 186A6; Lewis (1975), 142. At *Sph.* 255C9 Plato even uses ‘τὸ θέτερον’, perhaps by analogy with ‘τὸ ταύτόν’ at 255C6.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Brown (2008), 447; van Eck (2008), 107.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. *Sph.* 255A4–5; *Euthphr.* 10D12–13; *Hp.Ma.* 293E7; *Men.* 74E4–6; *Phd.* 76D8; 77A4; *R.* 5. 476A4–5; *Prm.* 130B5; 158A3–6; Bury (1897), 215; Burnet (1924), 49; Lewis (1975), 138–9; Malcolm (1981), 288, 292–3; Kirwan (1991), 324; Malcolm (1991), 67, 195.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. above, the paragraphs to which nn. 118 and 124 are appended.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Ackrill (1957), 82–4; Ryle (1960), 446; Runciman (1962), 89–90, 94; Moravcsik (1962), 51; Bluck (1963), 151–2; Crombie (1963), 400, 499; Bröcker (1964), 466; Vlastos (1965), 46–7; Malcolm (1967), 145; Vlastos (1969), 336; Vlastos (1970), 287–93; Owen (1971), 256–7; von Weizsäcker (1973), 234–5; Gómez-Lobo (1977), 39–40; Ray (1984), 66–8; Crivelli (1990), 40, 59; Bordt (1991), 526–7; Fronterotta (2007), 436–7.

¹⁵² The distinction between the identity sense of ‘to be’ and its predicative sense, introduced by the fathers of modern logic (cf. Frege (1892a), 193–5; Russell (1903), 64; Russell (1919), 172; Wittgenstein (1922), 3.323), has become commonplace and made its way into textbooks (cf. e.g. Lemmon (1965),

(2) ‘we are not speaking likewise’ (256A11–12), a remark whereby a distinction of senses appears to be drawn.

There are two difficulties for the view that in 256A3–256B5 and 256C4–256D10 Plato distinguishes the identity sense of ‘to be’ from its predicative sense. The first has to do with the absence of this very verb. The main evidence for crediting Plato with the distinction in question comes from the first passage, 256A3–256B5. Here however ‘to be’ does not occur at some points where one would expect it if Plato were distinguishing two senses of it. For consider some of Plato’s formulations: ‘When we call it identical and not-identical . . .’ (256A11–12), ‘When we call it identical . . .’ (256B1), ‘When we call it not-identical . . .’ (256B2). ‘To be’ is not in sight.¹⁵³

The second difficulty for the view that in 256A3–256B5 and 256C4–256D10 Plato is distinguishing senses of ‘to be’ comes from the argument a little earlier that being is different from identity (255B8–255C8). This argument states that an impossibility would follow ‘if “being” and “identical” signify nothing different’ (255B11–12). But, if later Plato were to distinguish between the identity sense of ‘to be’ from its predicative sense, it would be strange for the first to remain unmentioned here.¹⁵⁴

Can the exegesis be rescued according to which in 256A3–256B5 and 256C4–256D10 Plato is distinguishing the identity sense of ‘to be’ from its predicative sense? The second difficulty is pedantic. For the earlier argument aims at showing that the kind being is different from the kind identity, and in such a context Plato might feel no need to mention the identity sense of ‘to be’. Plato might even be refraining from mentioning it to avoid clouding the issue.

The first difficulty is harder. Recall: it is that ‘to be’ does not occur at some points where one would expect it if Plato were distinguishing two senses of it. Specifically, in his discussion of pair (2) (256A3–256B5) Plato uses the following formulations: ‘When we call it identical and not-identical . . .’ (256A11–12), ‘When we call it identical . . .’ (256B1), ‘When we call it not-identical . . .’ (256B2). However, to begin with, note that ‘to be’ occurs in the initial part of the discussion of pair (2): there Plato says about change that ‘it is not-identical’ (256A5), that ‘it was identical to itself’ (256A7), and that it ‘is both identical and not-identical’ (256A10). So ‘to be’ is part of the picture.

160; Thomason (1970), 144–5). Some philosophers, however, contest it (cf. e.g. Williams (1981), 10–12).

¹⁵³ Cf. Owen (1971), 258; Gosling (1973), 219; Lewis (1975), 141; Lockwood (1975), 480; Ketchum (1978), 46; W. J. Prior (1980), 200–1; Bostock (1984), 95–6; Brown (1986), 471; Brown (2002), 12; Brown (2008), 446.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Bostock (1984), 91–2.

Also note that Plato wants to alert his readers to the fact that ‘when we call [εἶπωμεν] it [*sc.* change] identical and not-identical, we are not speaking [εἰρήκομεν] likewise’ (256A11–12). The Greek verb translated by ‘we call’, namely ‘εἶπωμεν’, may be regarded as a mere stylistic variant of the Greek verb rendered by ‘we are speaking’ (‘εἰρήκομεν’): for ‘εἶπον’ is supplied as the aorist for ‘εἶρω’, of which ‘εἶρηκα’ is the perfect.¹⁵⁵ It may therefore be plausibly inferred that Plato wants to focus the reader’s attention on different ways in which we ‘call’ something something: specifically, on different ways of ‘calling’ change something. Now suppose Plato had used ‘to be’ at the points where, according to certain commentators, he should have used it if he had been distinguishing senses of the verb. In other words, suppose Plato had used some sentence like: ‘When we call change being identical and not being identical, we are not speaking likewise’. Then he would have made a mistake. For the way in which ‘being identical’ (a phrase involving ‘to be’ in the predicative sense) is applied to change would have been the same as that in which ‘not being identical’ (a phrase involving ‘to be’ in the identity sense) is applied to it: the difference lies not in the way the phrases are applied, but in the phrases themselves. So, if Plato wants to explain the difference between the identity sense of ‘to be’ and its predicative sense in terms of different ways in which we ‘call’ something something, it becomes clear why he refrains (and why he ought to refrain) from using ‘to be’ at the points where, according to certain commentators, he should have used it if he had been distinguishing senses of it. But does Plato want to explain the difference between the identity sense of ‘to be’ and its predicative sense in terms of different ways in which we ‘call’ something something? Why should he? A simple answer is that Plato is taking the natural course of explaining an ambiguity in terms of ‘speaking in different ways’ and realizes that what on the level of speech acts corresponds to ‘to be’ in its incomplete use is the speech act of ‘calling’ something something. By claiming that there are different ways of ‘calling’ something something (such as those displayed in calling change identical and in calling change not-identical), Plato is precisely making the point that there are different senses of ‘to be’ in its incomplete use.

So, the difficulties faced by the exegesis according to which in 256A3–256B5 and 256C4–256D10 Plato is distinguishing the identity sense of ‘to be’ from its predicative sense are not insurmountable. Three further considerations in favour of this exegesis should be mentioned. First, in his discussion of pair (3) the Visitor says that change ‘is somehow [ἔστι πῃ]

¹⁵⁵ Cf. LSJ *s.v.* ‘ἔρω’.

not-different and different' (256c7). The adverb 'somehow' modifying 'is' might be signalling that different senses of 'to be' are involved.¹⁵⁶ Secondly, the distinction between the identity sense of 'to be' and its predicative sense contributes to solve the argument of the late-learners on one of its plausible diagnoses (although Plato himself does not explicitly link the distinction with the late-learners). Thus, the study of the capability of combination of change with other important kinds would provide the essential tool for disarming the late-learners. Thirdly, there is external evidence that people who were under the spell of the late-learners' difficulties felt that the obstacle concerns the verb 'to be'. Aristotle reports that some of the 'later ancients' were worried at having to admit that 'the same thing is one and many' (*Ph.* I.2, 185^b27). He adds: 'Therefore some abolished "is" [τὸ ἐστὶν ἀφείλον], like Lycophron, while others modified formulations [τὴν λέξιν μετερρύθμιζον], so that the man is not white but has whitened, and is not walking but walks [ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὐ λευκός ἐστὶν ἀλλὰ λελεύκωται οὐδὲ βαδίζων ἐστὶν ἀλλὰ βαδίζει], in order not to make the one many by applying "is" [ἵνα μὴ ποτε τὸ ἐστὶ προσάπτοντες πολλὰ εἶναι ποιῶσι τὸ ἓν], as if one and being were said in only one way' (185^b27–32). The late-learners themselves find it difficult to describe a man by 'applying colours and shapes and sizes and vices and virtues to him' (251a9–10). Colours, shapes, sizes, vices, and virtues are all attributed most naturally by using 'to be' (cf. 'is white', 'is fat', 'is tall', 'is cowardly', and 'is courageous'). The list omits actions and states, which (at least in Greek) would be normally attributed without employing 'to be' (cf. 'walks', 'runs', 'sleeps').¹⁵⁷ So, the difficulties of the late-learners are probably connected with 'to be'. Therefore if the distinction drawn and exemplified by Plato at 256a3–256b5 and 256c4–256d10 is a reply to the late-learners, it probably concerns 'to be'.

It is not clear that the last paragraphs' defence of the exegesis according to which in 256a3–256b5 and 256c4–256d10 Plato distinguishes the identity sense of 'to be' from its predicative sense is successful. Alternatives interpretations must therefore be explored.

Distinguishing statements of identity and predication without an ambiguity of 'to be'. In his discussion of pair (2) Plato says that 'when we call it [*sc.* change]

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Vlastos (1970), 292. In some of its occurrences in the *Sophist* 'somehow' ('πῆ') may be taken to mean 'in some sense': cf. 241d7; 256b6; 259c9. It must, however, be acknowledged that 'somehow' ('πῆ') could be understood differently: it could, for instance, express hesitation in front of an apparent contradiction.

¹⁵⁷ A similar point can be made about the *Philebus* passage (14c11–14d3) that appears to contain another presentation of the late-learners' difficulty.

identical and not-identical, we are not speaking likewise' (256A11–12). What distinction is he drawing? He could still be distinguishing statements of identity from statements of predication without linking them with senses of 'to be'. There are two ways in which he might do this.

The first relies on associating the difference between statements of identity and predication with expressions which are not (forms of) 'to be'.¹⁵⁸ Plato might be focusing on whether certain expressions perform the semantic function of naming. Specifically: if both expressions accompanying 'to be' or 'not to be' perform the semantic function of naming, then the whole sentence makes a statement of identity; if instead one of these expressions performs the semantic function of describing, then the whole sentence makes a statement of predication. For instance, if 'change' and 'identical' within 'Change is identical' perform the function of naming, then the whole sentence makes a statement of identity. If instead 'identical' performs the function (not of naming, but) of describing, then the whole 'Change is identical' makes a statement of predication.

However, the interpretation according to which in 256A3–256B5 and 256C4–256D10 Plato is distinguishing statements of identity and predication on the basis of whether certain expressions perform the semantic function of naming faces difficulties. If Plato intended to draw such a distinction in the way suggested then his use of articles would be misleading: for he fails to employ articles where they would clarify that an expression is used to name. For instance, at 256A3–6 he explains 'ἡ κίνησις οὐ ταύτόν ἐστιν' by 'ἡ κίνησις ἕτερον ταύτου ἐστιν', not by 'ἡ κίνησις ἕτερον τοῦ ταύτου ἐστιν' (Plato has no qualms about placing the article before 'ταύτόν').¹⁵⁹ Had Plato intended to distinguish statements of identity and predication on the basis of whether certain expressions perform the semantic function of naming, it would have been awkward of him not to resort to the obvious means of making this clear. So, if the absence of 'to be' at crucial points of Plato's exposition counts against the interpretation according to which Plato is distinguishing the identity sense of 'to be' from its predicative sense,¹⁶⁰ then the absence of articles at crucial points also counts against the interpretation according to which Plato is distinguishing statements of identity and predication on the basis of whether certain expressions perform the semantic function of naming. Note also that neither in 256A3–256B5 nor in 256C4–256D10 is anything explicitly said about the use of names to perform the semantic function of naming or otherwise.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Owen (1971), 251, 257–8; Lockwood (1975), 480; Brown (1986), 471; Brown (2002), 3, 13–16; Brown (2008), 447–9.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. above, n. 147 and text thereto; Bostock (1984), 96–7. ¹⁶⁰ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 153.

There is a second way in which Plato might be distinguishing statements of identity and predication without identifying their difference with one between senses of 'to be'. Perhaps he draws this distinction without associating it with any specific component expression of the sentences used.¹⁶¹ As far as I can see, this exegesis does not face textual difficulties.

The 'relational' interpretation. Some commentators favour a 'relational' interpretation of 256A3–256B5, according to which Plato is hinting at different possible completions of relational expressions.¹⁶² Specifically, the 'relational' interpretation assumes that Plato is carrying out two inferences that involve deleting complements of relational expressions: on the one hand, he would be inferring 'Change is different' from 'Change is different from the identical' and then 'Change is not-identical' from 'Change is different' (on the ground that 'not-identical' means the same as 'different'); on the other hand, he would be inferring 'Change is identical' from 'Change is identical to change'.

The 'relational' interpretation faces a difficulty: it cannot be seamlessly applied to pairs (3) and (4).¹⁶³ Consider pair (3), whose members are 'Change is not-different' and 'Change is different'. Both sentences are inferred from 'Change is different from the different', but the mechanism which the 'relational' interpretation assumes to be operating in pair (2) cannot be applied in the case of pair (3) so as to yield 'Change is not-different': 'Change is different from the different' gives 'Change is not-identical to the different' or 'Change is not-identical' (on the ground that 'not-identical' means the same as 'different'). One might attempt to rescue the 'relational' interpretation by suggesting that the inference at work starts with 'Change is identical to change' and leads to 'Change is identical' and 'Change is not-different' (on the ground that 'not-different' means the same as 'identical'). This rescue, however, generates a further difficulty: it makes it superfluous to mention 'Change is different from the different' (all the materials for inferring 'Change is not-different' and 'Change is different' would be already available in 256A3–256B5, where 'Change is identical to change' and 'Change is different from the identical' are already present). Matters are even worse with pair (4), whose members are 'Change is a not-being' and 'Change is a being'. The first sentence is inferred from 'Change is different from being', the second from 'Change participates in being'. But the mechanism which the 'relational' interpretation assumes

¹⁶¹ Cf. Brown (1986), 471; Brown (2002), 3, 13–16; Brown (2008), 449.

¹⁶² Cf. Anscombe (1966), 414; Gosling (1973), 218–19. ¹⁶³ Cf. Brown (2008), 446.

to be operating in pair (2) cannot be applied to ‘Change is different from being’ so as to generate ‘Change is a not-being’: what it yields is ‘Change is different’ and then ‘Change is not-identical’. The ‘relational’ interpretation must therefore be rejected.

Saturated and unsaturated relations. One might be tempted by a variant of the ‘relational’ interpretation. When he says that ‘when we call it [*sc.* change] identical and not-identical, we are not speaking likewise’ (256AII–I2), couldn’t Plato be alluding to the fact that when we call change identical we saturate the second place of the relation of identity (because we are saying either that change is identical to change or that change is identical to something), whereas when we call change not-identical we leave the second place of the relation of identity unsaturated (because what we are saying is that change is different from identity)?¹⁶⁴

This will also not work. For, when Plato considers the possibility of change being stable (256B6–256C3), one is supposed to infer that in this case too ‘we must not be annoyed’ (256AII) because ‘we are not speaking likewise’ (256AII–I2). But, since stability is not a relation, there is no question of a second place of it being saturated in one case and remaining unsaturated in the other.

The ambiguity of ‘not’. So, again, what distinction is Plato drawing when, in his discussion of pair (2), he says that ‘when we call it [*sc.* change] identical and not-identical, we are not speaking likewise’ (256AII–I2)? One might be tempted to locate an ambiguity in ‘not’. Plato’s view is perhaps that the expression ‘not-identical’ may be used in two ways depending on how one understands the negative particle ‘not’. On one way of understanding ‘not’, the application of ‘not-identical’ to change is taken to mean that change is different from identity; on another way of understanding ‘not’, the application of ‘not-identical’ to change is taken to mean that change does not instantiate identity (with respect to some unspecified item).¹⁶⁵

Whatever the textual merits of this interpretation, it should be rejected because it fails to credit Plato with a philosophically acceptable position: for it generates two possible readings for negative sentences without performing a parallel service for affirmative sentences (which do not contain an occurrence of ‘not’ that could generate the two readings).¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Bostock (1984), 97–8.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Lewis (1975), 134–6.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Brown (2002), 13.

'Definitional' and 'ordinary' readings of sentences. Earlier I argued that the distinction between 'ordinary' and 'definitional' readings of sentences plays a role in the *Sophist*.¹⁶⁷ Plato could have this distinction in mind when, in his discussion of pair (2), he says that 'when we call it [*sc.* change] identical and not-identical, we are not speaking likewise' (256A11–12).¹⁶⁸

In fact, the distinction between 'ordinary' and 'definitional' readings of sentences yields the desired results. For, as I pointed out earlier, 'Change is not identical', 'Change is not different', and 'Change is not a being' are all true if they are understood according to their 'definitional' reading; and (the position of the negative particle 'not' aside) these are the negative members of the last three pairs of sentences. The negative member of the first pair, 'Change is not-stability', can be regarded as a negative descriptive sentence, meaning more or less the same as 'Change is not a (case of) stability': this is also true on its 'definitional' reading. On the other hand, 'Change is a being', 'Change is identical', and 'Change is different', i.e. the affirmative members of the pairs of sentences, are all true on their 'ordinary' reading.

Evaluation of the interpretations. Only three options are viable: when, in his discussion of pair (2), he says that 'when we call it [*sc.* change] identical and not-identical, we are not speaking likewise' (256A11–12), Plato could have in mind either the distinction between the identity sense of 'to be' and its predicative sense, or a distinction between statements of identity and predication not linked with any component of the sentences used, or the distinction between 'ordinary' and 'definitional' readings of sentences.

Considerations of economy make it unlikely that both the distinction between statements of identity and predication (be it connected with senses of 'to be' or independent of any components of the sentences used) and that between 'ordinary' and 'definitional' readings of sentences play a role in the central part of the *Sophist*. Since the distinction between 'ordinary' and 'definitional' readings of sentences is surely operative in the dialogue, it is probably the distinction Plato has in mind when he says that 'when we call it [*sc.* change] identical and not-identical, we are not speaking likewise' (256A11–12).

Is change stable? The following exchange occurs at 256B6–256C3, between the discussions of pairs (2) and (3):

¹⁶⁷ Cf. above, subsections to nn. 66, 81, 82, and 86.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Frede (1967), 71–2; Frede (1992), 422–3.

- VIS. Οὐκοῦν κἄν εἴ πη μετελάμβανεν αὐτὴ κίνησις 256B6
 στάσεως, οὐδὲν ἄν ἄτοπον ἦν στάσιμον αὐτὴν προσαγο-
 ρεύειν;
- THT. Ὅρθότατά γε, εἴπερ τῶν γενῶν συγχωρησό-
 μεθα τὰ μὲν ἀλλήλοις ἐθέλειν μίγνυσθαι, τὰ δὲ μή. B10
- VIS. Καὶ μὴν ἐπὶ γε τὴν τούτου πρότερον ἀπόδειξιν ἢ 256C1
 τῶν νῦν ἀφικόμεθα, ἐλέγχοντες ὡς ἔστι κατὰ φύσιν ταύτη.
- THT. Πῶς γὰρ οὐ; C3
- VIS. So, even if change itself had somehow participated in stability, it 256B
 would not have been absurd to call it stable?
- THT. Absolutely correct, if we are to agree that some kinds consent to
 mix with one another and some do not.
- VIS. And we achieved the demonstration of this before the present ones,¹⁶⁹ 256C
 by offering a refutation to the effect that it is this way according to
 nature.
- THT. Precisely.

The Visitor's initial remark, 'Even if change itself had somehow participated [κἄν εἴ πη μετελάμβανεν] in stability, it would not have been [οὐδὲν ἄν . . . ἦν] absurd to call it stable' (256B6–8), is a counterfactual conditional ('εἴ' with the indicative imperfect in the protasis combined with 'ἄν' with the indicative imperfect in the apodosis is one of the standard forms of the counterfactual conditional).¹⁷⁰ Many commentators therefore believe that the Visitor is committing himself to the contradictories of both its antecedent and its consequent, i.e. both to the claim that change does not participate in stability in any way and to the claim that it is absurd to call change stable.¹⁷¹

This interpretation faces a difficulty. In the last subsection I argued that the distinction of linguistic usages operative in the discussion of pairs of apparently inconsistent sentences concerning change is that between 'ordinary' and 'definitional' readings of sentences. Since 'Change is stable' is true on its ordinary reading, it follows both that there is a way in which change partakes of stability and that it is not absurd to call change stable. But, according to the interpretation under consideration, the Visitor commits himself both to the claim that change does not participate in

¹⁶⁹ Cf. 252E1–253A3.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Kühner and Gerth (1892–1904), II.2 469–70. For the combination of 'κἄν' with 'εἴ' see LSJ s.v. 'κἄν' I.1.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Heindorf (1810), 414; Malcolm (1985c), 85; de Rijk (1986), 163; Roberts (1986), 240; Meinhardt (1990), 238; Stough (1990), 365; O'Brien (1995), 108; Notomi (1999), 242; van Eck (2000), 57; Brown (2002), 14; Brown (2008), 445, 448.

stability in any way and to the claim that it is absurd to call change stable. It would be awkward for the Visitor to commit himself to this in the middle of an exchange in which he explicitly helps himself to the distinction between ‘ordinary’ and ‘definitional’ readings of sentences, thinking of which he says that ‘when we call it [*sc.* change] identical and not-identical, we are not speaking likewise’ (256A11–12). Moreover, Plato earlier argued that ‘by its own nature, being neither is stable nor changes’ (250C6–7) and then pretended to be puzzled by the fact that being is ‘outside of both of these [*sc.* change and stability]’ (250D2). The condition of change is analogous to that of being: change also ‘by its own nature’ is not stable but nevertheless is not ‘outside’ stability. It beggars belief to suppose that Plato would have failed to realize this.

This difficulty should lead one to question the interpretation of the Visitor’s initial remark outlined in the penultimate paragraph. One textual hint should be taken into account: the occurrence of the adverb ‘somehow’ (πῆ) at 256B6 is matched by its presence shortly later, at 256C7.¹⁷² This suggests that the Visitor is indicating that the distinction of linguistic usages that may be observed in the pairs of apparently inconsistent sentences concerning change plays a role also with respect to ‘Change is stable’. In the last subsection I argued that the distinction of linguistic usages relevant to the pairs of apparently inconsistent sentences concerning change is that between ‘ordinary’ and ‘definitional’ readings of sentences. Thus, the Visitor is probably hinting that the sentence ‘Change is stable’ has both a ‘definitional’ and an ‘ordinary’ reading, and it is false on the first but true on the second.¹⁷³ So far the sentence ‘Change is stable’ was always treated as false¹⁷⁴ because it was always understood according to its ‘definitional’ reading. The moment has come to mention that it is also true, albeit on a different reading.

There are two reasons why this is the moment for the Visitor to raise the issue of the two readings of ‘Change is stable’. First, the Visitor has just said that ‘when we call it [*sc.* change] identical and not-identical, we are not speaking likewise’ (256A11–12), and the different ways of speaking are those corresponding to ‘ordinary’ and ‘definitional’ readings of sentences. Secondly, there is an asymmetry within the discussion of pairs of apparently inconsistent sentences concerning change. In pairs (2), (3), and (4) the second member (‘Change is identical’, ‘Change is different’, and ‘Change

¹⁷² Cf. above, n. 156; Apelt (1897), 174; Frede (1967), 34; Kostman (1989), 348; Mann (2000), 181.

¹⁷³ Cf. Apelt (1897), 174; Frede (1967), 34; Striker (1970), 38–9; Mann (2000), 181.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. 250B5–7; 252D6–11; 254D7–9; 255A7–255B2.

is a being') is obtained by deleting a negative particle from the predicate-expression of the first member ('Change is not-identical', 'Change is not-different', and 'Change is a not-being'). Pair (1) is anomalous: its second member, 'Change is', is not obtained by deleting a negative particle from the predicate-expression of the first member, 'Change is not-stability'. The reason for the anomaly is clear. The Visitor wants both members of each of his pairs to be true, but the sentence obtained by deleting a negative particle from the predicate-expression of 'Change is not-stability' is 'Change is stable' (ignore the difference between 'stability' and 'stable'). This sentence has been so far regarded as false.¹⁷⁵ Saying immediately that there is a reading of 'Change is stable' on which it is true would have been hard on Theaetetus. For this reason the Visitor replaces 'Change is stable' with 'Change is', a sentence previously recognized as true.¹⁷⁶ Once he has introduced the distinction of readings in his discussion of 'Change is identical' and 'Change is not-identical', the Visitor may go back to the first pair. He does not need to repeat that 'Change is not-stability' is true: he only needs to add that 'Change is stable' is true on one reading.¹⁷⁷

The consequent of the counterfactual conditional that constitutes the Visitor's initial remark is: '... it would not have been absurd to call it [*sc.* change] stable' (256B7–8). There is surely a cross-reference to an earlier observation by the Visitor himself: he had emphatically declared that 'this is most necessarily impossible [ταῖς μεγίσταις ἀνάγκαις ἀδύνατον], that change come to be stable [κίνησιν... ἴστασθαι]' (252D9–10). This amounted to regarding it as absurd to call change stable. Earlier, the Visitor focused on the 'definitional' reading of 'Change is stable': since the kind change is different from the kind stability, he correctly concluded that 'Change is stable', which he understood according to its 'definitional' reading, is false. He stated this conclusion by saying that 'this is most necessarily impossible, that change come to be stable' (252D9–10). He could also have stated it by saying that it is 'absurd to call it [*sc.* change] stable' (256B7–8). Now, the Visitor concentrates on the 'ordinary' reading of 'Change is stable': since the kind change instantiates the kind stability, he correctly hints that 'Change is stable', which he understands according to its 'ordinary' reading, is true. To this result he alludes by hinting that it is

¹⁷⁵ Cf. above, n. 174. ¹⁷⁶ Cf. above, n. 133; Brown (2002), II.

¹⁷⁷ Lesley Brown explores a different explanation of the purpose of the Visitor's first remark at 256B6–8. But it stands or falls together with an interpretation of Plato's analysis of the pairs of apparently inconsistent sentences which I previously rejected (cf. above, paragraph to n. 159).

not 'absurd to call it [*sc.* change] stable' (256B7–8). He could have added that it is not the case that 'this is most necessarily impossible, that change come to be stable' (252D9–10).¹⁷⁸

Theaetetus endorses the Visitor's initial remark: 'Absolutely correct, if we are to agree that some kinds consent to mix with one another and some do not' (256B9–10). By recalling the previously established result that 'some kinds consent to mix with one another and some do not' (256B9–10), Theaetetus intends to mitigate the surprise caused by the suggestion that change 'somehow' participates in stability: since some kinds consent to mix and others do not, one should not be astonished at discovering that change 'somehow' participates in stability.¹⁷⁹

The problem remains that the Visitor's initial remark is a counterfactual conditional: 'Even if change itself had somehow participated in stability, it would not have been absurd to call it stable' (256B6–8). The Visitor therefore appears to commit himself to the claims that change does not participate in stability in any way and that it is absurd to call change stable. This problem may perhaps be solved by assuming that the Visitor's counterfactual conditional is a rhetorical device ushering a new approach. In other words, the Visitor is not committing himself to the claims that change does not participate in stability in any way and that it is absurd to call change stable; rather, he is alluding to the fact that so far the possibility that change somehow participate in stability and be called stable was either denied or ignored.¹⁸⁰ The Visitor's remark might perhaps be paraphrased

¹⁷⁸ Lacey (1959), 50 has a different explanation of why one could regard it absurd to call change stable (cf. Heinaman (1981), 65): even in the unreal situation where change participates in stability, someone might have been inclined to think that it was absurd to call change stable. For, even in this unreal situation, change would have been called not only stable but also not-stability, and one might have regarded this as an inconsistent description. The impression of inconsistency, and therefore absurdity, would have dissolved once one realized that in the unreal situation change's participation in stability would have obtained together with its participation in difference from stability. One point tells against Lacey's reconstruction: were it correct, one would expect Plato to say that the impression of absurdity derives from the fact that change is called both stable and not-stability (cf. 256A10–11). Plato, however, only says that the impression of absurdity arises from the fact that change is called stable.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Campbell (1867), *Spb.* 154–5; Apelt (1897), 174; Cambiano (1981), 464. Some commentators find it difficult to explain how the thesis that 'some kinds consent to mix with one another and some do not' (256B9–10) could be relevant at this point. This difficulty induces some to emend the text: either to postulate a lacuna between 256B8 and 256B9, where the Visitor's initial remark and Theaetetus' endorsement of it join (cf. Schleiermacher (1807), 496; Heindorf (1810), 413–14; Schleiermacher (1824), 512; Ritter (1910), 61; Cornford (1935), 287), or to transpose or delete the Visitor's initial remark (cf. Peipers (1883), 327–8, 340; Roberts (1986), 241).

¹⁸⁰ Cf. above, n. 174.

as follows: 'If, contrary to what we said so far, change does somehow participate in stability, then, contrary to what we said so far, it is not absurd to call it stable'.¹⁸¹

Many will remain unconvinced by my considerations in the last paragraph. The price they must pay is to accept that the Visitor commits himself to the claims that change does not participate in stability in any way and that it is absurd to call change stable, and therefore to saddle him with a complete failure to recognize that the kind change is stable like all other kinds. This is too high a price for me.

Granted that the account offered in the preceding paragraphs is on the right track, it should be noted that the Visitor's hint that change 'somehow' participates in stability probably presupposes that there are several ways in which a kind can participate in a kind. The 'ordinary' and the 'definitional' reading of sentences will then correspond to different ways in which a kind can participate in a kind.¹⁸²

4.7 NOT-BEING AND DIFFERENCE

An exchange about not-being and difference. After examining several pairs of apparently inconsistent sentences concerning change (255E8–256D10), the Visitor and Theaetetus proceed to discuss not-being and difference (256D11–257A12). This discussion divides into two halves: the first establishes some general results (256D11–256E8); the second applies them to the kind being (257A1–12).

Here is the first half:

| | |
|---|--------|
| VIS. Ἔστιν ἄρα ἐξ ἀνάγκης τὸ μὴ ὄν ἐπὶ τε κινήσεως | 256D11 |
| εἶναι καὶ κατὰ πάντα τὰ γένη· κατὰ πάντα γὰρ ἢ θατέρου | |
| φύσις ἕτερον ἀπεργαζομένη τοῦ ὄντος ἕκαστον οὐκ ὄν | 256E1 |
| ποιεῖ, καὶ σύμπαντα δὴ κατὰ ταῦτα οὕτως οὐκ ὄντα ὀρθῶς | |
| ἔροῦμεν, καὶ πάλιν, ὅτι μετέχει τοῦ ὄντος, εἶναί τε καὶ | |
| ὄντα. | |
| THT. Κινδυνεύει. | E5 |
| VIS. Περὶ ἕκαστον ἄρα τῶν εἰδῶν πολὺ μὲν ἔστι τὸ ὄν, | |
| ἄπειρον δὲ πλήθει τὸ μὴ ὄν. | |
| THT. Ἔοικεν. | E8 |

¹⁸¹ Ritter (1910), 61 also thinks that Plato's formulation should not be understood so strongly as to amount to a counterfactual conditional.

¹⁸² Cf. Kostman (1989), 348; above, n. 85 and text thereto.

VIS. It is therefore necessarily the case¹⁸³ that not-being be about change and with respect to all kinds: for, with respect to all of them, the nature of the different, by rendering each one different from being, makes it a not-being, and thus we will correctly call them all together in the same way not-beings, and again, since they participate in being, we will say that they are and call them beings. 256D 256E

THY. Possibly.

VIS. Therefore about each of the kinds what is is a lot whereas what is not is of indefinite multitude.

THY. So it seems.

The Visitor makes two remarks, at 256D11–256E4 and 256E6–7. Theaetetus approves both, at 256E5 and 256E8.

The converse use of 'to be'. The initial sentence of the Visitor's first remark, 'It is [. . .] necessarily the case that not-being be about change and with respect to all kinds' (256D11–12), displays the *converse* use of 'to be',¹⁸⁴ i.e. the use of 'to be' followed by 'about'. 'About' translates 'ἐπί' with the genitive,¹⁸⁵ 'ἐπί' with the dative,¹⁸⁶ 'περί' with the accusative,¹⁸⁷ or 'περί' with the genitive.¹⁸⁸ When the converse use of 'to be' is involved, '(The) φ is about σ' is equivalent to 'σ is (a) φ' (throughout this subsection, 'φ' and 'σ' are schematic letters to be replaced, respectively, with a general term and a name). Thus, in the initial sentence of the Visitor's first remark at 256D11–12, '... that not-being be about change . . .' (256D11–12) is equivalent to '... that change be a not-being . . .' (cf. 256D8). Again, 'Sitting is about Theaetetus' is equivalent to 'Theaetetus is sitting'. There is also a converse use of 'not to be', whereby '(The) φ is not about σ' is equivalent to 'σ is not (a) φ'. For instance, 'The stable is not about change' is equivalent to 'Change is not stable'.

¹⁸³ I take 'ἔστιν' (256D11) as veridical: 'it is the case that' (cf. Stallbaum (1840), 197; Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 156; Apelt (1897), 176). For 'ἐξ ἀνάγκης' modifying a veridical 'ἔστιν' cf. 259A8–259B1; Arist. *APr.* 1.15, 34^a17. There is no need to take 'ἔστιν' to mean 'it is possible', yielding the cumbersome 'It is therefore necessarily possible that . . .'.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Moravcsik (1960), 127; Kamlah (1963), 25; Frede (1967), 53; Lewis (1976), 110.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. 256D11.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. 247D2. It remains unclear whether 'ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν' at 252D7–8 is a case of 'ἐπί' with the genitive or the dative.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. 248E5; 249B12 (perhaps); 255A11; 256E6; 261B1–2; 263B12; *R.* 10. 596A7; 596B3.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. 263B4–5 and 263B11, where, however, the near presence of 'λέγειν' probably influences the construction. 'κατά' with the accusative is perhaps also amenable to being rendered by 'about' (cf. 256D12).

If an occurrence of ‘to be about’ is an example of the converse use of ‘to be’, it can mean the same as ‘to hold of’. The converse use of ‘to be’ will be important later in the dialogue, when truth and falsehood are explained. It remains unclear whether the subject expression of a sentence involving the converse use of ‘to be’ or ‘not to be’ must refer to a kind: does ‘not-being’ in ‘Not-being is about change’ refer to a kind?

The standard interpretation of 256DII–256E8. The initial sentence of the Visitor’s first remark, ‘It is [. . .] necessarily the case that not-being be about change and with respect to all kinds’ (256DII–12), sparked an exegetical debate. According to its ‘standard interpretation’,¹⁸⁹ two steps are taken in this sentence.

The claim made in the first step, ‘that not-being be about change’ (256DII–12), is equivalent to the claim, made in the immediately preceding lines, that ‘change really is a not-being’ (256D8). The ground for this claim was that the kind change is different from the kind being.

The second step is a generalization to all kinds, or rather to all kinds other than being, of the first step’s claim about change. The generalization is that not-being is about every kind other than the kind being. The ground for this generalization is analogous to that for the claim about change: the reason why not-being is about every kind other than the kind being is that every such kind is a not-being because it is different from the kind being.

A difficulty for the standard interpretation of 256DII–256E8. Look at the Visitor’s second remark: ‘Therefore about each of the kinds what is is a lot whereas what is not is of indefinite multitude’ (256E6–7). It expresses a conclusion (notice the initial ‘therefore’) and it has an affirmative and a negative component.

Consider first the affirmative component: the claim that ‘about each of the kinds what is is a lot’ (256E6). In the course of the earlier discussion of pairs of sentences (255E8–256DIO), change was said to participate in several kinds: in being (256AI, 256D8–9), identity (with respect to itself) (256A7–8, 256BI), and difference (with respect to identity) (256B2–3). Each of these participations provided a justification for describing change as being something: change is a being (256D8–9), identical (256A7, 256BI–2), and different (256B3–4). The point may be generalized: every kind participates

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 156; Runciman (1962), 84–5; Vlastos (1970), 289; Seligman (1974), 76; Lewis (1976), 91–2, 94, 109; McDowell (1982), 117–8; Ray (1984), 68; Brown (1986), 468, 473; Movia (1991), 376–7; O’Brien (1991a), 304; Frede (1992), 403; O’Brien (1995), 50–3; Szaif (1998), 432; Fronterotta (2007), 439; Centrone (2008), 197.

in many kinds and therefore is many things. 'Therefore about each of the kinds what is is a lot' (256E6) (converse use of 'to be').¹⁹⁰

Let me lay out the argument for the affirmative component of the Visitor's second remark in a way that links it to my favoured exegesis of the preceding pages of the dialogue. For *every* substitution of 'σ' with a name of a kind, there are *many* substitutions of 'φ' with general terms that signify reciprocally different kinds such that the following goes through:

[α] σ instantiates the kind φ.

[β] σ is (a) φ.

[γ] (The) φ is about σ.

The inference from [β] to [γ] is straightforward: it relies on the switch from the direct use of 'to be', in 'σ is (a) φ', to its converse use, in '(The) φ is about σ'. As for the inference from [α] to [β], consider the use of 'to be' induced by the 'ordinary' reading of sentences. According to the stipulations whereby the 'ordinary' reading of sentences was introduced, for any substitution of 'σ' and 'φ' with, respectively, a name and a general term that signifies a kind, 'σ is (a) φ' is true on its 'ordinary' reading just if the entity signified by 'σ' instantiates the kind signified by 'φ'.¹⁹¹ But now, for any substitution of 'σ' with a name of a kind, 'σ' signifies the kind it names, i.e. σ,¹⁹² so that the entity signified by 'σ' is σ. Moreover, for any substitution of 'φ' with a general term that signifies a kind, the kind signified by 'φ' is the kind φ. Therefore, for any substitution of 'σ' and 'φ' with, respectively, a name of a kind and a general term that signifies a kind, 'σ is (a) φ' is true on its 'ordinary' reading just if σ instantiates the kind φ. This warrants the inference from [α] to [β].

Inspect, then, the negative component of the Visitor's second remark: the claim that 'about each of the kinds [. . .] what is not is of indefinite multitude' (256E6–7). In the course of the earlier discussion of pairs of sentences (255E8–256D10), change was shown to be different from several kinds: from stability (255E11–12), identity (256A3), difference (256C4–5), and being (256D5–6). The point may be generalized: every kind is different from all other kinds, which are indefinitely many. Hence every kind is not indefinitely many things, so that about it 'what is not is of indefinite multitude' (256E7) (converse use of 'not to be').

¹⁹⁰ The affirmative component of the conclusion (at 256E6) has been interpreted in many different ways. An exegesis in terms of the converse use of 'to be' is, however, mandatory because of the cross-reference at 263B11–12. It remains unclear whether the immediately preceding claim that all kinds 'participate in being' (256E3) plays a role in the inference leading to the affirmative component (cf. Brown (1986), 473–4).

¹⁹¹ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 67. ¹⁹² Cf. above, n. 79 and text thereto.

The argument for the negative component of the Visitor's second remark may also be presented in a way that links it to my favoured exegesis of the preceding pages of the dialogue. For *every* substitution of 'σ' with a name of a kind, there are *indefinitely many* substitutions of 'φ' with general terms that signify reciprocally different kinds such that the following goes through:

[δ] σ is different from the kind φ.

[ε] σ is not (a) φ.

[ζ] (The) φ is not about σ.

The inference from [ε] to [ζ] depends on the switch from the direct use of 'not to be', in 'σ is not (a) φ', to its converse use, in '(The) φ is not about σ'. As for the inference from [δ] to [ε], consider the use of 'not to be' induced by the 'definitional' reading of sentences. According to the stipulations whereby the 'definitional' reading of sentences was introduced, for any substitution of 'σ' and 'φ' with, respectively, a name and a general term both of which signify kinds, 'σ is not (a) φ' is true on its 'definitional' reading just if the kind signified by 'σ' is different from the kind signified by 'φ'.¹⁹³ But, as before, for any substitution of 'σ' with a name of a kind, 'σ' signifies the kind it names, i.e. σ, so that the kind signified by 'σ' is σ. Moreover, for any substitution of 'φ' with a general term that signifies a kind, the kind signified by 'φ' is the kind φ. Therefore, for any substitution of 'σ' and 'φ' with, respectively, a name of a kind and a general term that signifies a kind, 'σ is not (a) φ' is true on its 'definitional' reading just if σ is different from the kind φ. This warrants the inference from [δ] to [ε].

Suppose that the above reconstruction of what lies behind the Visitor's second remark is right. One then wonders what role is played by the Visitor's first remark, if its standard interpretation is correct. For, if the standard interpretation of the Visitor's first remark is correct, then the first remark explains that kinds other than the kind being are not-beings because they are different from the kind being, but it says nothing to the effect that kinds are not so-and-so because they are different from the kind so-and-so.¹⁹⁴

A defense of the standard interpretation. The standard interpretation can be defended. The passage under scrutiny, 256DII–256E8, belongs to a long argument running from 255E8 to 257AI2. The argument's conclusion, reached at 257AI–I2, is that being is not (for it is not indefinitely

¹⁹³ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 69.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Campbell (1867), *Spb.* 156–7; Frede (1967), 85; van Eck (2002), 66–8; Centrone (2008), 197.

many things because it is different from indefinitely many kinds). Since this conclusion is formulated by using 'not to be', and since earlier in the dialogue 'not to be' was a source of insurmountable difficulties, the argument's initial stage (255E8–256C9) avoids 'not to be'. Specifically, in the argument's initial stage, situations where a kind *F* is different from a kind *K* are not described by sentences of the form 'σ is not (a) φ', but by sentences of the form 'σ is (a) not-φ' (where 'σ' and 'φ' are replaced, respectively, with a name of *F* and a general term that signifies *K*): 'Change is not-stability' (255E14), 'Change is not-identical' (256A5 and 256A10), and 'Change is not-different' (256C7).¹⁹⁵ The argument's second stage (256C10–256D10) considers the structurally similar case of change and being. Since change is different from being, the situation is described by the sentence 'Change is a not-being' (256D8). In effect, a use of 'not being' has now been established whereby the expression can be applied to the kind change. The argument's third stage (256D11–256E5) immediately applies this use of 'not being' to all kinds other than being (cf. 256D11–12, 256E1, and 256E2). Once the ice has been thus broken, 'not to be' can be deployed for cases where it had been avoided: situations where a kind *F* is different from a kind *K* can now be described by sentences of the form 'σ is not (a) φ' (with 'σ' and 'φ' replaced, respectively, with a name of *F* and a general term that signifies *K*). The argument's fourth stage (256E6–8) capitalizes on this possibility in terms of the converse use of 'not to be'. This warrants the result that 'about each of the kinds [...] what is not is of indefinite multitude' (256E6–7). The argument's fifth and final stage (257A1–12) reaches the conclusion that 'being, however many the others are, with respect to as many is not' (257A4–5).¹⁹⁶

This defence of the standard interpretation is rather convincing but not fully persuasive. What is Plato's justification for introducing the use of 'not to be' whereby situations where a kind *F* is different from a kind *K* are described by sentences of the form 'σ is not (a) φ' (where 'σ' and 'φ' are replaced, respectively, with a name of *F* and a general term that signifies *K*)? In effect, it boils down to his having managed to break the ice with respect to the combination of 'not' with 'to be'. Specifically, it comes to his having been able to apply 'not being' in a completely different situation, i.e. in descriptions of kinds as different from the kind being. Such a rhetorical character of Plato's argument might leave one uneasy.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Cf. above, subsection to n. 141. ¹⁹⁶ Cf. McDowell (1982), 117–18, 125.

¹⁹⁷ Some commentators propose a different defence of the standard interpretation (cf. O'Brien (1991a), 275, 290, 305; O'Brien (1995), 52, 70, 93–4; Szaif (1998), 450). They attribute to Plato a use of 'not

The interpretation of 256DII–256E8 proposed by Job van Eck. Some commentators who notice the difficulties faced by the standard interpretation suggest alternative exegeses. I examine one recent proposal, put forward by Job van Eck.¹⁹⁸ According to van Eck, one should avoid regarding the second half of the initial sentence of the Visitor's first remark as a generalization of its first half: when the Visitor says that 'it is [...] necessarily the case that not-being be about change and with respect to all kinds' (256DII–I2), he does not first make a claim about the kind change (i.e. that not-being is about it because it is different from the kind being) and then generalize it to one about all kinds other than being (i.e. that not-being is about each one of them because each is different from the kind being). Rather, by saying that 'it is [...] necessarily the case that not-being be about change and with respect to all kinds' (256DII–I2), the Visitor introduces two types of not-being that are about change: on the one hand, the not-being that is about change because change is different from being; on the other, not-being with respect to all kinds, or rather with respect to all kinds other than change, which is also about change. The second type of not-being is a novelty and needs explaining. The explanation comes in the continuation of the Visitor's first remark: 'For, with respect to all of them, the nature of the different, by rendering each one different from being, makes it a not-being' (256DI2–256E2). According to van Eck, the explanation amounts to the following: for all kinds F and K , if F is different from K , then F is different from being with respect to K , so that F is a not-being with respect to K . For instance, since change is different from stability, change is different from being with respect to stability, i.e. from being-stable, so that change is a not-being with respect to stability. The Greek sentence 'κατὰ πάντα . . . ἢ θατέρου φύσις ἕτερον ἀπεργαζομένη τοῦ ὄντος ἕκαστον οὐκ ὄν ποιεῖ' (256DI2–256E2) involves two cases of a single expression construed in common with two expressions: 'ἕκαστον' is construed in common with 'ἀπεργαζομένη' and 'ποιεῖ' (it is the object of both); 'κατὰ πάντα' is construed in common with 'τοῦ ὄντος' and 'οὐκ

being' according to which for all kinds F and K , if F is different from K then 'not being' is true of F because F is not- K and K is a being. Such an exegesis makes a mockery of the logic of Plato's argument. By parity of reasoning, it would follow that 'not Italian' applies to me because I am different from some Italian.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. van Eck (2000), 73–4; van Eck (2002), 69–70. Frede (1967), 85 proposes to understand the occurrences of 'οὐκ ὄν' at 256D8 and 'μη ὄν' at 256D11 in the light of that of 'μη ὄν' at 257B3, i.e. as difference from everything that is. This suggestion is hard to reconcile with the fact that the first of these formulations is concerned with difference from the kind being itself. Frede (1992), 403 apparently accepts the standard interpretation (cf. n. 189 above) and therefore seems to have changed his mind on this issue.

ὄν' (it links with the predicate position of both).¹⁹⁹ This exegesis avoids the difficulty faced by the standard interpretation because it warrants the negative component of the conclusion inferred by the Visitor. For, for every kind *F* and every kind *K* other than *F*, *F* is different from being with respect to *K*, so that *F* is a not-being with respect to *K*. This warrants the negative component of the Visitor's conclusion, that 'about each of the kinds [. . .] what is not is of indefinite multitude' (256E6–7).

The reconstruction offered by van Eck faces some difficulties. Is any kind different from being with respect to it? If it is, then the argument attributed to Plato by van Eck requires that such a kind be a not-being with respect to itself. This consequence, however, clashes with some remarks made later in the *Sophist* (cf. 257A4–6 and 258B11–258C1). Thus, van Eck's exegesis gives Plato a consistent position only if he accepts that every kind is identical to being with respect to it. But this is controversial. One might argue that every kind is identical to being with respect to it because there is no recognizable difference between a kind and being with respect to it. What could the difference be between beauty and being-beautiful? One might, however, argue for the contrary claim that every kind is different from being with respect to it: for every kind is different from its combination with any kind, even with the kind being. The analogy drawn by Plato (at 252E9–253A12 and 253B9–253C5) between kinds and letters suggests that as the syllable 'at' is different from the letter 't', so the combination of the vowel-kind being with any kind is different from that kind.²⁰⁰ One should be suspicious of an interpretation that attributes to Plato an argument which he can consistently accept only by endorsing the controversial assumption that every kind is identical to being with respect to it.²⁰¹

On top of this, van Eck's exegesis faces two textual difficulties. First, within the sentence 'τὸ μὴ ὄν ἐπὶ τε κινήσεως εἶναι καὶ κατὰ πάντα τὰ γένη' (256D11–12), it requires the two clauses 'ἐπὶ τε κινήσεως εἶναι' and 'καὶ κατὰ πάντα τὰ γένη' to play very different roles: the first says what one type of not-being (difference from being) holds of (change); the second explains what a different type of not-being (difference from being . . .) is related to (all kinds). Such different roles do not sit easily with

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Owen (1971), 234; van Eck (2002), 66.

²⁰⁰ Even if Ryle (1960), 434–6 is right that an important aspect of Plato's analogy between kinds and letters is that consonants cannot be pronounced without an accompanying vowel, the combination of the kind being with any kind must still be different from that kind: just as a consonant is distinct from its combination with any vowel (otherwise it could be pronounced in combination with only one vowel), so every kind is distinct from its combination with any vowel-kind.

²⁰¹ Cf. below, subsection to n. 133 of Ch. 5.

the ‘τε . . . καί . . .’ construction (even if, as van Eck urges,²⁰² one allows ‘not-being’ to have both a complete and an incomplete use).²⁰³ Secondly, van Eck’s parsing of the sentence at 256D12–256E2, with the initial ‘κατὰ πάντα’ construed in common with ‘τοῦ ὄντος’ and ‘οὐκ ὄν’ near the end, is unnatural, so much so that no translation I have consulted matches such a construal.²⁰⁴

Evaluation of the interpretations. Some help to reaching a verdict comes from a later passage:

| | |
|--|-------|
| VIS. . . . τὸ μὲν ἕτερον μετασχὼν τοῦ ὄντος | 259A6 |
| ἔστι μὲν διὰ ταύτην τὴν μέθεξιν, οὐ μὴν ἐκεῖνόν γε οὐ | |
| μετέσχεν ἄλλ’ ἕτερον, ἕτερον δὲ τοῦ ὄντος ὄν ἔστι | |
| σαφέστατα ἐξ ἀνάγκης εἶναι μὴ ὄν . . . | 259B1 |
| VIS. . . . the different, by participating in being, is in virtue of this partici- | 259A |
| pation; it is not, however, that in which it participates, but different, | |
| and, being different from being, it is most clearly necessarily the | 259B |
| case that it be a not-being . . . | |

The phrase ‘it is . . . necessarily the case’ (‘ἔστι . . . ἐξ ἀνάγκης’ construed with an infinitive construction) at 259A8–259B1 recalls the phrase ‘it is . . . necessarily the case’ (‘ἔστιν . . . ἐξ ἀνάγκης’ also construed with an infinitive construction) at 256D11.²⁰⁵ This connects the earlier passage (256D11–256E8) to the later one (259A6–259B1). At the end of the later passage (at 259A8–259B1) the point is made that the kind difference is a not-being because it is different from the kind being. If its standard interpretation is right, then the earlier passage paves the way for this later claim.²⁰⁶ For, according to the earlier passage’s standard interpretation, when the Visitor says that ‘it is [. . .] necessarily the case that not-being be

²⁰² Cf. van Eck (2002), 70–2.

²⁰³ The difference between ‘ἐπί’ and ‘κατὰ’ carries no weight because Plato sometimes changes prepositions for stylistic reasons: at *Sph.* 241B1 he uses ‘ἐν δόξαις τε καὶ κατὰ λόγους’ (‘in beliefs and among sentences’) (cf. O’Brien (1991a), 278; O’Brien (1995), 52; van Eck (2002), 66).

²⁰⁴ One might object, first, that shortly after the passage under examination the Visitor uses the sentence ‘κατὰ τοσαῦτα οὐκ ἔστιν’ (257A4–5), with ‘κατὰ τοσαῦτα’ unequivocally construed with ‘οὐκ ἔστιν’; and, secondly, that by construing ‘κατὰ πάντα’ in common with ‘ὄντος’ and ‘οὐκ ὄν’ one avoids an inelegant repetition of the universal quantification (‘κατὰ πάντα’ at 256D12 and ‘ἕκαστον’ at 256E1). True, but in spite of this van Eck’s parsing of the sentence at 256D12–256E2 strikes me as unnatural.

²⁰⁵ Cf. above, n. 183 and text thereto. There are no other occurrences of this remarkable phrase in the *Sophist*.

²⁰⁶ Cf. Leigh (2008), 116.

about change and with respect to all kinds' (256DII–12), he means that not only is the kind change a not-being because it is different from the kind being, but also in general all kinds other than being are not-beings because they are different from the kind being. Since difference is one of the kinds other than being, this implies that difference is a not-being because it is different from the kind being. This is precisely the point made at the end of the later passage (at 259A8–259B1). Only on the standard interpretation does the earlier passage provide such a preparation for the later one. This gives the edge to the standard interpretation.

'Being is not'. At 257A1–12 the Visitor draws the conclusion about the not-being of being:

- VIS. Οὐκοῦν καὶ τὸ ὄν αὐτὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἕτερον εἶναι
λεκτέον. 257A1
- THT. Ἀνάγκη.
- VIS. Καὶ τὸ ὄν ἄρ' ἡμῖν, ὅσαπέρ ἐστι τὰ ἄλλα, κατὰ
τοσαῦτα οὐκ ἔστιν· ἐκεῖνα γὰρ οὐκ ὄν ἐν μὲν αὐτό ἐστιν,
ἀπέραντα δὲ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τᾶλλα οὐκ ἔστιν αὖ. A5
- THT. Σχεδὸν οὕτως.
- VIS. Οὐκοῦν δὴ καὶ ταῦτα οὐ δυσχεραντέον, ἐπεὶπερ
ἔχει κοινωνίαν ἀλλήλοις ἢ τῶν γενῶν φύσις. εἰ δὲ τις ταῦτα
μὴ συγχωρεῖ, πείσας ἡμῶν τοὺς ἔμπροσθεν λόγους οὕτω
πειθέτω τὰ μετὰ ταῦτα. A10
- THT. Δικαιότατα εἴρηκας. A12
- VIS. Therefore even being itself must be said to be different from the
others. 257A
- THT. Necessarily.
- VIS. Hence, in our view, even being, however many the others are, with
respect to as many is not: for, not being them, it is one thing, namely
itself, but it is not in turn things indefinite in number, namely the
others.
- THT. Probably so.
- VIS. So we must not be annoyed at this either,²⁰⁷ if really the nature
of the kinds has reciprocal communion. And if someone does not
agree to this, it is after having prevailed on our earlier accounts that
he must prevail on what follows.
- THT. Absolutely right.

²⁰⁷ Cf. 256A10–11.

This is a straightforward application of the result reached in what immediately precedes: since each kind is not indefinitely many things because it is different from indefinitely many kinds, the kind being also is not indefinitely many things because it is different from indefinitely many kinds. So, being 'is not'.

Negation and not-being

Until now (257A12) Plato has only marginally touched upon not-being. He dealt with it in so far as ‘not to be’ may be applied between two expressions that signify different kinds. In other words, he dealt with a use of ‘not to be’ induced by the ‘definitional’ reading of sentences. He did not examine the use of ‘not to be’ whereby the phrase may be applied between two expressions the first of which signifies an item that does not instantiate the kind signified by the second. In other words, Plato has not studied the use of ‘not to be’ induced by the ‘ordinary’ reading of sentences containing it. To this topic Plato turns in the dialogue’s immediate sequel (from 257B1).

Section 5.1 concerns Plato’s account of negation. The scholarly output on this topic has been abundant and of outstanding quality. One of my purposes is critically to expound various exegeses and support the most plausible interpretation. Section 5.2 addresses Plato’s analysis of negative kinds, and in particular of negative kinds whose formulation involves ‘not to be’ according to the use of the verb induced by the ‘ordinary’ reading of sentences containing it (e.g. the negative kinds not-being-beautiful and not-being-just). Offering an analysis of negative kinds is a remarkable achievement since many philosophers share the intuition that there are no negative kinds (because negative kinds, were there such a thing, would cover items that have nothing in common). Section 5.3 discusses Plato’s conclusion that not-being is.

5.1 NEGATIVE PREDICATION

Negations involving ‘to be’. At *Sophist* 257B1–257C4 the Visitor and Theaetetus have the following exchange:

VIS. Ἴδωμεν δὴ καὶ τόδε.

257B1

THET. Τὸ ποῖον;

VIS. Ὅπότεν τὸ μὴ ὄν λέγωμεν, ὡς ἔοικεν, οὐκ

ἐναντίον τι λέγομεν τοῦ ὄντος ἀλλ’ ἕτερον μόνον.

ΤΗΤ. Πῶς;

B5

VIS. Οἷον ὅταν εἴπωμέν τι μὴ μέγα, τότε μᾶλλον τι
σοι φαινόμεθα τὸ σμικρὸν ἢ τὸ ἴσον δηλοῦν τῷ ῥήματι;

ΤΗΤ. Καὶ πῶς;

VIS. Οὐκ ἄρ' ἐναντίον ὅταν ἀπόφασις λέγῃται σημαί-
ναι συγχωρησόμεθα, τοσοῦτον δὲ μόνον, ὅτι τῶν ἄλλων
τι μὴνύει τὸ μὴ καὶ τὸ οὐ προτιθέμενα τῶν ἐπιόντων
ὀνομάτων, μᾶλλον δὲ τῶν πραγμάτων περὶ ἅτ' ἂν κήγεται
τὰ ἐπιφθεγγόμενα ὕστερον τῆς ἀποφάσεως ὀνόματα.

B10
257C1

ΤΗΤ. Παντάπασι μὲν οὖν.

C4

VIS. Let us consider also this.

257B

ΤΗΤ. What?

VIS. Whenever we say 'not being', it seems that we do not call something
contrary to what is, but only different.

ΤΗΤ. How so?

VIS. For instance, when we call something 'not large' do we then appear
to you to indicate the small by that expression any more¹ than the
equal?²

ΤΗΤ. How on earth?³

VIS. So, when the negative⁴ is said to mean a contrary, we shall not agree,⁵
but admit no more than this, that the 'not'⁶ prefixed to the names
that follow indicates one of the things other than them,⁷ or, rather,⁸
than whatever objects the names uttered after the negative are
given to.

257C

ΤΗΤ. By all means.

This passage contains four remarks by the Visitor and Theaetetus' reactions
to them. I examine them in turn.

¹ 'τι' modifies 'μᾶλλον': cf. LSJ *s.v.* 'μάλα' II 1. ² Cf. *Prm.* 150D4–150E5; 161C7–161E2; 164A1–2.

³ For 'Καὶ πῶς,' meaning 'How on earth?' cf. 238A10; 249A5; 250B7; 256D3; 264A3.

⁴ At 257C3 'ἀπόφασις' can only mean 'negative particle' (cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 158). This meaning is therefore required also for 257B9. Thus, I translate these two occurrences of 'ἀπόφασις' by 'negative'. At 263E12 'ἀπόφασις' means 'denial'.

⁵ Alternative translation: 'So, we shall not agree that when a negative is uttered it means a contrary. . . .' (cf. Hirschig (1856), 194).

⁶ The Greek language has two negative particles, 'μή' and 'οὐ', and Plato mentions them both.

⁷ The genitive 'τῶν ἐπιόντων ὀνομάτων' (257C1–2) is to be construed in common with 'προτιθέμενα' (257C1) and 'ἄλλων' (257B10): cf. Jowett (1892), IV 391–2; Fowler (1921), 417; Vitali (1992), 127; Cordero (1993), 180; Silverman (2002), 190. Some commentators construe 'τῶν ἐπιόντων ὀνομάτων' only with 'προτιθέμενα': cf. Ficino (1484), 361; Cornarius (1561), 156; Diès (1925), 371–2; Zadro (1961), 143; Zadro (1971), 244. Others construe it only with 'ἄλλων': cf. Stallbaum (1840), 198–9; Wagner (1856), 139–41; Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 158; Cornford (1935), 290; Benardete (1984), 55; Centrone (2008), 201. Here 'ἄλλων' is a stylistic variant of 'ἑτέρων': cf. 256C4–5 (where 'ἄλλος' is construed with the genitive). Van Eck (1997) has a different interpretation of the grammatical structure of 257B9–257C4, but, so far as I can see, his exegesis does not yield an importantly different sense of the passage.

⁸ For 'μᾶλλον δέ' meaning 'or rather' cf. *Th.* 170A7.

The Visitor's first remark ('Let us consider also this', 257B1) hints that a new topic is broached.⁹ The drift of the passage shows that the new topic has to do with 'not', which occurs in each of the Visitor's following three remarks (cf. 257B3, 257B6, and 257C1).

This result may be plausibly sharpened. The Visitor's third remark is about what we indicate when we call something 'not large', i.e. when we predicate the negative expression 'not large' of something. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the new topic deals with the predication of negative expressions.

This result may be plausibly sharpened even further. In the pages preceding the passage under consideration, Plato offered an account of negative sentences understood according to their 'definitional' reading (cf. 255E8–256D10). Since he showed awareness of the distinction between 'ordinary' and 'definitional' readings of sentences (cf. 256A11–12), one expects him to expand his account to cover also negative sentences understood according to their 'ordinary' reading: were he not to do this, the picture would be deficient. These facts generate the presumption that the Visitor's first remark heralds a general account of negative sentences. However, since several commentators deny that 257B1–257C4 concerns itself with this issue,¹⁰ the presumption must be tested.

The Visitor's second remark begins with the words 'Whenever we say "not being", . . . ' (ὅποῦται τὸ μὴ ὄν λέγωμεν, . . . , 257B3). In Greek, a neuter article in front of an expression occasionally indicates that the expression is being mentioned.¹¹ Sometimes the neuter article does not match the following expression in case, number, or gender (cf. 237D9–10, 252C2–4, and 257C1): the article then obviously indicates that the expression is being mentioned. When, however, the neuter article matches the following expression, it can be hard to tell whether it indicates that the expression is being mentioned (an example of a neuter article that matches the following expression and does indicate that it is being mentioned occurs at 237C2).

Consider what follows the Visitor's second remark. Theaetetus asks 'Πῶς;' (257B5), which could be translated by 'What do you mean?' or 'How so?'¹² Theaetetus is therefore requiring a clarification or a justification. Since the Visitor's immediately following third remark is either an answer or the beginning of an answer to Theaetetus' question, it is closely linked to the

⁹ Cf. Szaif (1998), 434–5; Silverman (2002), 190.

¹⁰ Cf. Kamlah (1963), 44; Malcolm (1967), 145; Ray (1984), 69–72; Roberts (1986), 238–9; van Eck (1995), 25–35.

¹¹ Cf. LSJ *s.v.* ὄ, ἦ, τό' B 15; Smyth (1920), 293. ¹² Cf. below, paragraph to n. 18.

second remark. But in his third remark the Visitor makes it clear that he is dealing with the negative expression ‘not large’ (cf. ‘by that expression’, ‘τῷ ῥήματι’, at 257B7). It may therefore be reasonably inferred that in his second remark he is dealing with the negative expression ‘not being’. So, the article ‘τό’ in front of ‘μὴ ὄν’ at 257B3 is probably signalling that the phrase ‘μὴ ὄν’ is mentioned (hence the quotation marks around ‘not being’ in my English translation).¹³ The Visitor is addressing the issue of what we say when we use the expression ‘not being’, which probably stands in for any form of ‘not to be’.

On my translation, after the initial words ‘Whenever we say “not being”, . . .’ (257B3), the Visitor’s second remark continues with the words ‘. . . it seems that we do not call something contrary to what is, but only different’ (257B3–4): ‘something’ is the direct object of ‘we do not call’ and ‘contrary to what is’ indicates what we do not call this something. Translators adopt a different solution. They take ‘something’ to form a single phrase with ‘contrary to what is’: ‘. . . it seems that we are not speaking of something contrary to what is, but only of something different’ (257B3–4).¹⁴ Since the Visitor’s third remark is closely linked to the second, and since the Visitor’s third remark contains the sentence ‘We call something “not large”’ (257B6), where ‘something’ is the direct object of ‘we call’ and “not large” refers to the expression for what we call this something, it may be reasonably inferred that in his second remark the Visitor is using a similar construction. This supports my translation.¹⁵

A first plausible conclusion may now be drawn regarding the interpretation of the Visitor’s second remark: the new topic is that of what we say when we use the expression ‘not being’ with regard to something. The point made by the Visitor in his second remark is that when we use ‘not being’ with regard to a thing, we are not saying about this thing that it is contrary to what is, but that it is different from what is. This is only a first approach

¹³ Cf. van Eck (1995), 30.

¹⁴ Cf. Ficino (1484), 361; Cornarius (1561), 156; Jowett (1892), IV 391; Apelt (1914), 106; Fowler (1921), 415; Diès (1925), 371; Fraccaroli (1934), 192; Cornford (1935), 290; Arangio-Ruiz (1951), 196; Taylor (1961), 164; Warrington (1961), 209; Matthews (1972), 250; Cavini (1982), 133; Benardete (1984), 53; Meinhardt (1990), 153; Mazzarelli (1991), 300; Vitali (1992), 127; Cordero (1993), 179; N. P. White (1993), 51; Brann *et al.* (1996), 68; Duerlinger (2005), 127; Ambuel (2007), 232; Centrone (2008), 199.

¹⁵ Cf. *Cri.* 48A6; *Sph.* 256A11–12; 257D9–10; LSJ *s.v.* ‘λέγω’ (B) III 3; Crivelli (1990), 65; Palmer (1999), 140; Silverman (2002), 351. At 258E7–8 the Visitor says: ‘As for a contrary of it [*sc.* of what is] [περὶ . . . ἐναντίου τινὸς αὐτῷ], we have said good-bye to it long ago’. The presence here of a phrase consisting of ‘something’ combined with ‘contrary of it [*sc.* of what is]’ might be taken to support the ordinary rendering of 257B3–4. But the parallel of 257B3–4 with the close-by 257B6 is more compelling than that with the more distant 258E7–8, which moreover differs in that it contains no verb of saying.

to the interpretation of the Visitor's second remark. A full interpretation must wait after the discussion of the Visitor's third and fourth remarks.

The Visitor's third remark raises three problems.

- (1) The first concerns the attributes largeness, smallness, and equality. There are two ways in which they can be considered as reciprocally coordinate. First, one may regard them as purely relational: largeness is largeness-with-respect-to, smallness is smallness-with-respect-to, and equality is equality-to. On this first way of treating the attributes, one must assume that there is an understood term of comparison.¹⁶ Secondly, one may regard the attributes as non-relational, their relativity being eliminated by reference to some (understood) standard: largeness is largeness-with-respect-to-the-standard, smallness is smallness-with-respect-to-the-standard, and equality is equality-to-the-standard. On the second way of understanding it, equality, being equality-to-the-standard, coincides with middling size.¹⁷ In the *Phaedo* (102B3–102D2) largeness and smallness are presented as the attributes whose presence in Simmias contributes to explaining why he is larger than Socrates and smaller than Phaedo. This accords with the first account of how largeness, smallness, and equality are regarded as coordinate in the present *Sophist* passage. On the other hand, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (2.5, 1106^a26–7) Aristotle says that 'in everything continuous and divisible it is possible to take more [πλεῖον], less [ἐλαττον], and equal [ἴσον]'. What Aristotle has primarily in mind here is probably a non-relational treatment of the attributes expressed by 'more', 'less', and 'equal', whereby relativity is eliminated by reference to some (understood) standard. This accords with the second account of how largeness, smallness, and equality are regarded as coordinate in the present *Sophist* passage. I shall not attempt to settle the question because its solution makes no difference to the ensuing discussion.
- (2) The second problem raised by the Visitor's third remark concerns the question that immediately precedes and introduces it: the question 'Πῶς;' (257B5). What is Theaetetus asking for? Two solutions are possible. (2.1) Theaetetus might be calling for a clarification (i.e. an explanation of the meaning) of the Visitor's second remark. In this case 'Πῶς;' would have to be translated as 'What do you mean?'¹⁸ Such a use of the isolated 'Πῶς;' has at least one parallel in the *Sophist*.¹⁹ (2.2) Theaetetus

¹⁶ Cf. Ross (1951), 115; Brown (2008), 457. ¹⁷ Cf. Owen (1971), 234.

¹⁸ Cf. Jowett (1892), 1V391; Fowler (1921), 415. ¹⁹ Cf. 261E7.

might be calling for a justification of the Visitor's second remark. In this case 'Πῶς;' would have to be translated as 'How so?', 'How come?', or even 'Why?'²⁰ Such a use of the isolated 'Πῶς;' has many parallels within the *Sophist*.²¹

- (3) The third problem raised by the Visitor's third remark relates to its first word: 'οἷον' (257B6). Two interpretations of it are possible. (3.1) The word 'οἷον' might introduce an analogy. In this case it should be rendered by 'as' or 'in the same way as'.²² (3.2) The word 'οἷον' might introduce an example: in this case it should be rendered by 'for instance' or 'for example'.²³ If 'οἷον' introduces an example, one may ask what it is an example of. Two solutions are possible. (3.2.1) The example introduced by 'οἷον' might be backward-looking. Its purpose would then be to clarify or justify the Visitor's second remark.²⁴ (3.2.2) The example introduced by 'οἷον' might be forward-looking. In this case, its purpose would be to justify what follows, in particular to support at least part of the general claim made by the Visitor's fourth remark: after all, the Visitor's fourth remark contains the word 'so' ('ὅρ', 257B9), which indicates that a conclusion is drawn.

I begin by addressing problem (3). Solution (3.2.1) encounters a difficulty. For suppose that, as solution (3.2.1) assumes, 'οἷον' were to introduce a backwards-looking example, i.e. an example whose intent is to clarify or justify the Visitor's second remark, according to which 'whenever we say "not being", it seems that we do not call something contrary to what is, but only different' (257B3–4). Then what we say about a thing when we apply 'not large' to it should be an example of what we say about a thing when we apply 'not being' to it. But the expression 'not large' does not contain 'to be', so what we say about a thing when we apply 'not large' to it cannot be an example of what we say about a thing when we apply 'not being' to it. This difficulty might be answered by pointing out that a thing can be called 'not large' only in the context of a sentence that contains 'to be', i.e. in the context of a sentence involving a phrase like

²⁰ Cf. Taylor (1961), 164; N. P. White (1993), 51; Brann *et al.* (1996), 68; Ambuel (2007), 233.

²¹ Cf. 219A9; 239E4; 244C7; 245A7; 249B11; 252C1; 254A3; 255A6; 258C12; 262B4; 263D9; LSJ *s.v.* 'πῶς' 1 b.

²² Cf. LSJ *s.v.* 'οἷος' v 2 a; *Sph.* 228A1; 253A1. Cornford (1935), 290 translates the occurrence of 'οἷον' at 257B6 by 'in the same way that'.

²³ Cf. LSJ *s.v.* 'οἷος' v 2 b; *Sph.* 218E3. For the translation of the occurrence of 'οἷον' at 257B6 by 'for example' cf. Fowler (1921), 417; Diès (1925), 371; Taylor (1961), 164; Brann *et al.* (1996), 68; Ambuel (2007), 233.

²⁴ Cf. Kostman (1973), 203; Marcos de Pinotti (1994), 155–6.

'is not large'. So – the retort goes – what we say about a thing when we apply 'not large' to it is after all an example of what we say about a thing when we use 'not being' with regard to it. This answer, however, seems to rely on a false assumption. For the verb 'to be' need not be present in sentences whereby a thing is called 'not large': a thing may be called 'not large' either in sentences containing no verb at all ('τὸ στάδιον μὴ μέγα' is perfectly good Greek) or in sentences with verbs other than 'to be' (consider 'δικαίως τὸ στάδιον μὴ μέγα καλοῖτ' ἔν'). In view of this difficulty, solution (3.2.1) ought to be discarded. This leaves solutions (3.1) and (3.2.2). It is hard to choose between them. I have some uneasiness with (3.1), according to which 'οἶον' introduces an analogy: introducing an analogy by means of a question (albeit a rhetorical one) is awkward. I therefore opt for (3.2.2): 'οἶον' introduces an example that is forward-looking, i.e. aiming to substantiate at least part of the general claim made by the Visitor's fourth remark.

I now go back to problem (2). Given that the correct solution of problem (3) is (3.2.2), the Visitor's third remark is the beginning of an argument. Since arguments are more naturally taken to provide justifications for claims than to provide clarifications for obscure formulations, the most natural solution of problem (2) is (2.2), according to which when Theaetetus asks the question 'Πῶς;' (257B5) what he is calling for is a justification of the Visitor's second remark.

Let me now summarize the results of my reflections on the Visitor's third remark. With his second remark (257B3–4) the Visitor claims that when we use 'not being' with regard to a thing we are not calling this thing contrary to what is but only different from it. By uttering the expression 'How so?' (257B5) Theaetetus calls for a justification of this claim. At least part of the reason why he requires such a justification is that earlier in the dialogue (at 240B5 and 240D6) he seemed to assume that what is not is the contrary of what is. The justification is reached by looking at the semantic behaviour of 'not' in expressions which do not contain 'to be' ('not large' is one such expression). These expressions are employed as examples (hence the use of 'οἶον' at 257B6) on the basis of which a general conclusion is drawn about the semantic behaviour of 'not'. This general conclusion may then be applied back to the original problem so as to justify the claim that when we use 'not being' with regard to a thing we are not calling this thing contrary to what is but only different from it. The argument in this passage therefore turns out to be very similar to the usual 'Socratic inductive arguments': to solve a difficult problem, one considers first an

easy similar case, then infers a general rule covering all cases, and finally applies this rule to the difficult original case. Arguments of this sort occur in several dialogues.²⁵

The Visitor's second remark (again). In his third remark, the Visitor addresses the question of what we say 'when we call something "not large"' (257B6). The question seems to be that of what it is that we say about a thing when we describe it by using the phrase 'not large', or, equivalently, what it is that we say about a thing when we predicate 'not large' of it. In the last subsection I argued that with his third remark the Visitor begins an argument whose purpose is to justify the claim he made with his second remark. Moreover, as I pointed out at the end of the penultimate subsection, the point made by the Visitor in his second remark is that when we use 'not being' with regard to a thing, we are not saying about this thing that it is contrary to what is, but that it is different from what is. In view of these results, the account of the point made by the Visitor in his second remark may be plausibly sharpened: the point made is that when we predicate 'not being' of a thing, we are not saying about this thing that it is contrary to what is, but that it is different from what is. This is a step forward in the interpretation of the Visitor's second remark, but it is not yet the full exegesis. This can only be given after a discussion of the Visitor's fourth remark.

The Visitor's fourth remark has a negative and a positive component. The negative component says something about what a negative particle does not mean: roughly, it does not mean contrariety. I shall offer a more precise account of the negative component after addressing the positive one, which states what a negative particle does mean. There are four main interpretations of these much-discussed lines (257B9–257C3).²⁶

- (1) According to the *Oxford interpretation*, so called because it is supported by many scholars connected with the University of Oxford, Plato commits himself to the claim that if a negative predicable²⁷ consisting of

²⁵ Cf. *Euthphr.* 10B1–10C12; *Grp.* 460B1–7; 476B3–476E3; Lewis (1976), 109; Gómez-Lobo (1977), 36.

²⁶ The exegeses of Plato's account of negation are recorded by Pelletier (1983), 38–54; Crivelli (1990), 41–58; Pelletier (1990), 45–93; Dixsaut (1991), 176–7.

²⁷ On predicables cf. above, n. 33 of Ch. 2. In English, a negative predicable is not always formed by prefixing a negative particle to an affirmative predicable: while the negative predicable corresponding to 'flying' is formed by prefixing 'not' (for 'not flying' consists of 'not' followed by 'flying'), the negative predicable corresponding to 'runs' is not formed by prefixing 'not' (for 'does not run' does not consist of 'not' followed by 'runs'). In Greek there are far more cases where the prefixing of a negative particle to an affirmative predicable yields the corresponding negative predicable.

a negative particle followed by a predicable is applied to an object, then what is said about this object is that every kind that holds of it is different from the kind signified by the predicable that follows the negative particle.²⁸ For instance, if the negative predicable 'not flying' is applied to Theaetetus, then what is said about Theaetetus is that every kind that holds of him is different from flying (because flying is the kind signified by 'flying', the predicable that follows the negative particle 'not').²⁹

- (2) According to the *incompatibility interpretation*, Plato commits himself to the claim that if a negative predicable consisting of a negative particle followed by a predicable is applied to an object, then what is said about this object is that some kind that holds of it is incompatible with the kind signified by the predicable that follows the negative particle (where incompatibility is a relation which obtains between two kinds only if they cannot both hold together of any object).³⁰ For instance, if the negative predicable 'not flying' is applied to Theaetetus, then what is said about Theaetetus is that some kind that holds of him is incompatible with flying.³¹
- (3) According to the *quasi-incompatibility interpretation*, Plato commits himself to the claim that if a negative predicable consisting of a negative

²⁸ I hope it is clear that the words 'the kind signified by the predicable that follows the negative particle' do not report (part of) the content of what is said about the object. If the negative predicable 'not flying' is applied to Theaetetus, then the account of negation attributed to Plato by the Oxford interpretation requires what is said about Theaetetus to be expressible by the phrase 'falling only under kinds different from flying', not by the phrase 'falling only under kinds different from the kind signified by the predicable that follows the negative particle'. Similar points hold for the presentations of the other three main interpretations.

²⁹ Cf. Ackrill (1964), 613; von Weizsäcker (1973), 235; Charlton (1995), 114–16. An account similar to that attributed to Plato by the Oxford interpretation is defended by Cook-Wilson (1926), 1 273. Keyt (1973), 297 and Gale (1976), 8–9 draw a parallel between the account of negation attributed to Plato by the Oxford interpretation and the views of the early Wittgenstein. The parallel, however, seems far-fetched.

Wiggins (1971), 288–94 maintains that the Oxford interpretation's account of negation is 'the most natural amendment' of what Plato actually says and perhaps 'is really what Plato meant all along'.

Bordt (1991), 527 favours a 'linguistic variant' of the Oxford interpretation: if a negative predicable consisting of a negative particle followed by a predicable is applied to an object, then what is said about this object is that every predicable that is true of it is different from the predicable that follows the negative particle.

Van Eck (1995), 43–4 attributes to Plato an account of negation close (perhaps identical) to that favoured by the Oxford interpretation, but he denies it is to be found at 257B9–257C3. In his view, Plato intends the account to be inferred from the analysis of false sentences at 262E11–263D5 and from the obvious point that a negative sentence is true just if the corresponding affirmative sentence is false.

³⁰ On incompatibility cf. below, text to nn. 43–46.

³¹ The supporters of the incompatibility interpretation are listed below in nn. 43, 45, and 46.

particle followed by a predicable is applied to an object, then what is said about this object is that some kind that holds of it is different from, but belonging to the same incompatibility range as, the kind signified by the predicable that follows the negative particle (where an incompatibility range is a set comprising all the kinds that are subordinate to some single kind and have the same level of generality). For instance, if the negative predicable ‘not flying’ is applied to Theaetetus, then what is said about Theaetetus is that some kind that holds of him is different from, but belonging to the same incompatibility range as, flying.³²

- (4) According to the *extensional interpretation*, Plato commits himself to the claim that if a negative predicable consisting of a negative particle followed by a predicable is applied to an object, then what is said about this object is that it is different from every object of which the predicable that follows the negative particle is true. For instance, if the negative predicable ‘not flying’ is applied to Theaetetus, then what is said about Theaetetus is that he is different from every flying object.³³

The Oxford interpretation. The Oxford interpretation fits Plato’s account of falsehood at 262E11–263D5.³⁴ For, this later passage appears to commit Plato to the claim that a predicable is false of an object just if every kind that holds of this object is different from the kind signified by the predicable. Since a negative predicable consisting of a negative particle followed by a predicable is true of an object just if the predicable following the negative particle is false of this object, it follows that a negative predicable consisting of a negative particle followed by a predicable is true of an object just if every kind that holds of this object is different from the kind signified by the predicable following the negative particle.

However, the Oxford interpretation cannot be plausibly read into 257B9–257C3. For, while the Oxford interpretation requires a universal quantifier (cf. ‘. . . every kind that holds . . .’), at the relevant point the text displays a particular quantifier: ‘The “not” prefixed to the names that follow indicates

³² Cf. Xenakis (1959), 34; Buchdal (1961), 164–5; Kamlah (1963), 43; Ryle (1967), 329; Philip (1968), 317–19; Pelletier (1990), 66, 77; Brown (2008), 456–7.

³³ Cf. Taylor (1926), 389; Dürr (1945), 187–8; Taylor (1961), 165; Toms (1962), 87; Frede (1967), 78–80; Bostock (1984), 115; Mignucci (1989), 273–4; Crivelli (1990), 44–8, 59–62; Denyer (1991), 137–9; Crivelli (1993), 72–3. The extensional interpretation is considered as one of several viable exegeses by Crombie (1963), 407–8.

³⁴ Cf. Silverman (2002), 191–2.

one of the things other than [. . .] whatever objects the names uttered after the negative are given to' (257B10–257C3).³⁵

Four attempts might be made to reconcile 257B9–257C3 with the Oxford interpretation:

- (1) The literal meaning of 257B9–257C3 is: the 'not' indicates that the object which is being spoken about is one of the things different from the kind signified by the words that follow, and the difference of an object x with respect to a kind P amounts to each of the kinds that hold of x being different from P . The crucial assumption on which this solution relies is implausible: why should the difference of an object x with respect to a kind P amount to each of the kinds that hold of x being different from P ?
- (2) The literal meaning of 257B9–257C3 is: the 'not' indicates that the object x which is being spoken about is, i.e. participates in, one of the things different from the kind P signified by the words that follow, and what x participates in and is different from P is the collection of all the kinds that hold of x . Such a reading is evidently forced.
- (3) The phrase 'τῶν ἄλλων τι' (257B10–257C1) is to be rendered by 'something different' (rather than 'one of the things different'). The literal meaning of 257B9–257C3 is: the 'not' indicates that the object which is being spoken about is, i.e. participates in, <only> something different from the kind signified by the words that follow. But 'only' is not in the text and cannot be plausibly supplied.
- (4) The phrases 'τῶν ἐπιόντων ὀνομάτων' (257C1–2) and 'τῶν πραγμάτων' (257C2) are to be construed exclusively with 'προτιθέμενα' (257C1).³⁶ The literal meaning of 257B9–257C3 is: the 'not' prefixed to the following words, or rather to the objects (*sc.* kinds) they signify, indicates that those objects are among the things different <from all the kinds that hold of the object which is being spoken about>. Here the thesis that characterizes the Oxford interpretation must be supplied almost completely by the reader.

The incompatibility interpretation. The incompatibility interpretation is attractive, for at least two reasons. One is its philosophical charm: it seems to explain negation by invoking only positive kinds. Negation is often felt to need explaining. It is perhaps easy to explain the meaning of an

³⁵ Cf. Crombie (1963), 407–8; Bostock (1984), 113; Ray (1984), 70; Crivelli (1990), 52; van Eck (1995), 26; Silverman (2002), 192.

³⁶ Cf. above, n. 7.

affirmative predicable by saying that it signifies a certain kind, e.g. to explain the meaning of the affirmative predicable 'white' by saying that 'white' signifies the kind whiteness (answers of this sort may be criticized from several points of view, but waive such criticisms). It is harder to explain the meaning of a negative predicable by saying that it means a kind, e.g. to explain the meaning of the negative predicable 'not white' by saying that it means the kind not-whiteness. For this explanation presupposes that not-whiteness is a kind. Such a presupposition is dubious. What characteristics are shared by emeralds, numbers, Buckingham Palace, and generosity? Still, they should all fall under not-whiteness, were there any such kind.³⁷ The incompatibility interpretation seems to enable one to explain the meaning of negative predicables without invoking kinds like not-whiteness: for example, one may say that the negative predicable 'not white' indicates the presence of at least one kind incompatible with whiteness, i.e. the presence of at least one of the kinds blackness, grayness, redness, etc.

The account of negation based on incompatibility is exposed to three objections. (1) The concept of incompatibility is 'negative' because it is to be defined by using negation. For, were one to define incompatibility, one should say that two kinds are incompatible just if it is not possible that they hold together of the same object (and they perhaps satisfy some further condition which need not be addressed here). This definition involves negation.³⁸ This objection can be rebutted by denying the assumption on which it relies: the concept of incompatibility is not 'negative' and is not to be defined by using negation. Rather, incompatibility is an undefinable primitive. (2) If incompatibility amounts to (a special kind of) impossibility of joint instantiation, one wonders about the nature of the impossibility invoked: is it 'logical', 'analytic', 'physical' impossibility, or what?³⁹ This objection cannot be answered by insisting that incompatibility is an undefinable primitive: even if it cannot be defined, incompatibility is surely equivalent to (a special kind of) impossibility of joint instantiation. The question about the nature of the impossibility involved remains. (3) The account of negation based on incompatibility does not seem universally applicable. For instance, although the negative predicable 'not white' is true of courage, it is hard to identify any kind incompatible with whiteness that holds of courage.⁴⁰ An advocate of the account of negation based

³⁷ Cf. Aristotle *apud* Alex. Aphr. in *Metaph.* 81, 1–5, a fragment of the now lost *On Ideas*.

³⁸ Cf. Wiggins (1971), 291; Gale (1971–2), 465–9; Gale (1976), 15, 18, 35; Ray (1984), 70; Silverman (2002), 192.

³⁹ Cf. Russell (1940), 81–3; Russell (1948), 139–40.

⁴⁰ Cf. A. N. Prior (1967), 459; Gale (1971–2), 463; Gale (1976), 37–41; Ray (1984), 71; Brown (2008), 458.

on incompatibility could reply either that the attribution of ‘not white’ to courage is meaningless,⁴¹ or that colourlessness is a kind that holds of courage and is incompatible with whiteness. Neither reply is promising. The first seems both *ad hoc* and false: if in conversation I use the sentence ‘Courage is not-white’, you may be surprised at first, but you understand perfectly well what I am saying. The inclination to describe my use of ‘Courage is not-white’ as meaningless is due to a confusion about the adjective ‘meaningless’, which can indicate both lack of purpose and lack of sense. The second reply threatens to reintroduce kinds as dubious as not-whiteness.

An analysis of negation based on incompatibility was proposed by Hegel. Hegel’s analysis probably influenced British idealists, and in particular Bernard Bosanquet, who was quoted by John Burnet regarding the *Sophist*. Burnet’s interpretation was then cited by A.E. Taylor. An exegetical tradition Hegel–Bosanquet–Burnet–Taylor can therefore be plausibly identified.⁴²

A second reason why the incompatibility interpretation attracts commentators is that it appears to fit the text. First, it seems to chime with the Visitor’s third remark and Theaetetus’ reaction to it. Theaetetus denies that ‘when we call something “not large” [. . .] we appear [. . .] to indicate the small by that expression any more than the equal’ (257B6–7). He could be indicating that when we call something ‘not large’, we mean that it is either small or equal. Since smallness and equality are probably all and only the kinds incompatible with largeness, this exchange seems to fit well with the theory attributed to Plato by the incompatibility interpretation.

Secondly, the incompatibility interpretation does not face the difficulty of the Oxford interpretation. When, in his fourth remark, the Visitor says that ‘the “not” prefixed to the names that follow indicates *one* of the things other than [. . .] whatever objects the names uttered after the negative are given to’ (257B10–257C3), he could be committing himself to the view that if a negative predicable consisting of a negative particle followed by a predicable is applied to an object, then what is said about this object is that *some* kind that holds of it is incompatible with the kind signified by the predicable that follows the negative particle.

⁴¹ Cf. Ryle (1929), 83–4, 89–90; A. N. Prior (1967), 459; Gale (1976), 15–16.

⁴² Cf. Hegel (1816), 321–2; Bosanquet (1888), 1289; Burnet (1914), 278; Taylor (1961), 63–4. Analyses of negation based on incompatibility are also endorsed by other philosophers and logicians, some of them among or influenced by the British idealists (cf. Bradley (1883), 1 117; Joseph (1916), 172; Mabbott (1929), 69–74), others outside their sphere (cf. Sigwart (1873), 1 177–9; W. E. Johnson (1921–4), 1 68–9; Ryle (1929), 85–8; Russell (1940), 81–3; Russell (1948), 139).

Three variants have been suggested of the incompatibility interpretation, according to the type of incompatibility involved:

- (1) A kind *F* is incompatible in an absolutely complementary way with a kind *K* just if (i) *F* and *K* cannot hold together of anything and (ii) at any time, necessarily either *F* or *K* holds of anything. For instance, whiteness and not-whiteness are incompatible in an absolutely complementary way. Commentators who favour this type of incompatibility are not worried by the problems about negative kinds I outlined earlier.⁴³
- (2) A kind *F* is incompatible in a categorically complementary way with a kind *K* just if (i) *F* is different from *K*, (ii) *F* and *K* cannot hold together of anything, and (iii) at any time, necessarily either *F* or *K* holds of anything of the appropriate category.⁴⁴ For instance, whiteness and being-of-a-colour-other-than-white are incompatible in a categorically complementary way: they cannot hold together of anything, but at any time at least one of them holds of anything of the appropriate category, i.e. of anything coloured. They are not incompatible in an absolutely complementary way because at any time the number two (which does not belong to the appropriate category) enjoys neither whiteness nor being-of-a-colour-other-than-white.⁴⁵
- (3) A kind *F* is non-exhaustively incompatible with a kind *K* just if (i) *F* is different from *K* and (ii) *F* and *K* cannot hold together of anything. For instance, whiteness and redness are incompatible in a non-exhaustive way. They are not incompatible either in an absolutely complementary way or in a categorically complementary way because neither whiteness nor redness holds now of this emerald (an object of the appropriate category).⁴⁶

The incompatibility interpretation faces a devastating textual difficulty: it presupposes that at some points in the *Sophist* the Greek word 'ἕτερον' expresses (not difference, as it does elsewhere, but) incompatibility.⁴⁷ So, despite its attractiveness, the incompatibility interpretation must be rejected.

The quasi-incompatibility interpretation. To avoid the textual difficulty of the incompatibility interpretation while retaining some of its strengths,

⁴³ Cf. Moravcsik (1962), 68–77; Szaif (1998), 439–41.

⁴⁴ If there are things of the appropriate category then condition (i) is redundant because it is entailed by (ii) and (iii).

⁴⁵ Cf. Kostman (1973), 201–6; Sayre (1976), 584–6; Sayre (1983), 230–4.

⁴⁶ Cf. Hamlyn (1955), 292 (not quite a formulation of the incompatibility interpretation); Gosling (1973), 226–7; Pelletier (1975), 143–6.

⁴⁷ Cf. Owen (1971), 232, 238; Wiggins (1971), 291; Lewis (1976), 101; Szaif (1998), 490–1.

some commentators propose the quasi-incompatibility interpretation, which is close to the incompatibility interpretation but is supposed to fit the text. For, according to the quasi-incompatibility interpretation, Plato analyses negation by appealing to kinds different from, but belonging to the same incompatibility range as, the kind signified by the words following the negative particle. The Greek word 'ἕτερον' therefore continues to express difference and does not shift to expressing incompatibility.⁴⁸

The quasi-incompatibility interpretation also faces an objection. The *Sophist* does not explicitly mention incompatibility ranges, which play a pivotal role in the quasi-incompatibility interpretation. Therefore the quasi-incompatibility interpretation also fails to match the text (no less than the incompatibility interpretation, upon which it was supposed to constitute an improvement precisely in matters of faithfulness to the text).⁴⁹

An advocate of the quasi-incompatibility interpretation might reply that the *Sophist* displays incompatibility ranges. For, the Visitor's third remark at 257B6–7 parades a complete incompatibility range: the one whose members are largeness, equality, and smallness. Moreover, an incompatibility range is partially exhibited in the account of true and false sentences at 262E13–263B13, where Plato mentions the kinds sitting and flying, which belong to the incompatibility range whose other members are standing, walking, running, etc.

This reply of the advocate of the quasi-incompatibility interpretation is unconvincing. One expects the Visitor's fourth remark, at 257B9–257C3, to contain a complete and accurate formulation of the semantics of negative predicables. But, if the quasi-incompatibility interpretation is right, the Visitor's fourth remark falls short of this. On the quasi-incompatibility interpretation, the passage explicitly says only that if a negative predicable is applied to an object, then what is said about this object is that some kind that holds of it is different from the kind signified by the predicable that follows the negative particle. The crucial point that difference is restricted to an incompatibility range does not surface in the formulation but must be supplied on the basis of an earlier example, where it is displayed.

The account of negation attributed to Plato by the quasi-incompatibility interpretation also faces one of the difficulties confronted by the incompatibility interpretation, but with less of an opportunity of a solution. Earlier⁵⁰ I observed that although the negative predicable 'not white' appears to be true of courage, it is hard to identify a kind that both holds of courage and

⁴⁸ An account of negation similar to the one attributed to Plato by the quasi-incompatibility interpretation is advocated by Ryle (1929), 85–8 (cf. above, n. 42).

⁴⁹ Cf. van Eck (1995), 26–7. ⁵⁰ Cf. above, n. 40 and text thereto.

is incompatible with whiteness. The best solution available to an advocate of the account of negation based on incompatibility was to claim that colourlessness is a kind that both holds of courage and is incompatible with whiteness. This solution is no longer affordable with the account of negation attributed to Plato by the quasi-incompatibility interpretation. For the kind colourlessness is not a member of the incompatibility range of which whiteness is a member: this incompatibility range comprises blackness, greyness, yellowness, whiteness, etc., i.e. only the colour-forms. In general, the class whose elements are the other members of the incompatibility range to which a kind *F* belongs is properly included in the class whose elements are the kinds incompatible with *F* (because all elements of the former class are kinds on the same 'level' as *F*, while the latter class has among its elements also kinds on different 'levels'). So, the account of negation attributed to Plato by the quasi-incompatibility interpretation is too narrow.⁵¹

The extensional interpretation. The extensional interpretation is close to Plato's words in the passage under consideration. For, at 257B10–257C3 Plato uses the sentence:

[α] The 'not' prefixed to the names that follow indicates one of the things other than whatever objects the names uttered after the negative are given to.

Sentence [α] may be paraphrased by:

[β] The 'not' prefixed to [the predicable consisting of] the names that follow indicates [that any object to which the negative predicable consisting of the 'not' and the following names is applied is] one of the things other than whatever objects the names uttered after the negative are given to [*sc.* different from all the objects denoted⁵² by the predicable consisting of the names that follow the negative particle].

Sentence [β] is a formulation of the position attributed to Plato by the extensional interpretation.

An objection might be raised against the extensional interpretation. When 'to be given' (κείσθαι) is used with regard to names and objects, it often expresses the original imposition of names to objects whereby the names' signification is established. This suggests that the 'objects the

⁵¹ Cf. Keyt (1994), 118; Silverman (2002), 192.

⁵² I use the verb 'to denote' and the noun 'denotation' for the relation that obtains between any predicable and the items it is true of (e.g. the predicable 'building' denotes Buckingham Palace and the Taj Mahal but neither you nor me): cf. Quine (1950), 80.

names uttered after the negative are given to' (257C2–3) are not the objects denoted by the names uttered after the negative particle, but the kind or kinds signified by those names. Since the extensional interpretation requires that the 'objects the names uttered after the negative are given to' (257C2–3) should be the objects denoted by those names, the extensional interpretation ought to be abandoned.⁵³

This objection is answered by highlighting two linguistic features of the passage under scrutiny which suggest that the 'objects the names uttered after the negative are given to' (257C2–3) are the objects denoted by those names – as befits the extensional interpretation. The first linguistic feature is that the relation of names to objects is expressed by means of the preposition 'περί' construed with the accusative of the expression referring to the objects (257C2). When 'περί' is construed with the accusative in formulations of this sort, it may be rendered with 'about'. This suggests that the semantic relation of names to objects involved in our passage is that of denotation: a predicable denotes what it is 'about'. Note that in the *Sophist* the preposition 'περί' construed with the accusative is also used for the relation of a kind to the items it holds of,⁵⁴ a relation that constitutes the ontological counterpart of denotation.⁵⁵

The second significant linguistic feature of the passage is the presence of the indefinite relative pronoun 'ἄττα' followed by 'ὅν' construed with the subjunctive (257C2), a formulation that expresses indeterminacy⁵⁶ and generality⁵⁷ (in my English translation I tried to bring this out by means of the locution 'whatever objects...'). This suggests that the Visitor is speaking of all of the possibly many objects to which the names uttered after a negative particle bear a certain semantic relation. And this, in turn, fits well with the semantic relation in question being that of denotation.

The objector could retort that the Visitor introduces not only many objects, but also many predicables (consider the plurals 'ὀνομάτων', 257C2, and 'ὀνόματα', 257C3). Specifically, the objector could retort that the Visitor means that negative predicables ('not beautiful', 'not just', etc.) consist of negative particles followed by predicables ('beautiful', 'just', etc.) and signify difference with respect to the objects (beauty, justice, etc.) to which the predicables following the negative particles ('beautiful',

⁵³ Cf. Ray (1984), 71; Dixsaut (1991), 191; Charlton (1995), 115.

⁵⁴ Cf. above, n. 187 of Ch. 4 and text thereto.

⁵⁵ At *Cra.* 397B7 'περί' followed by the accusative is to be linked not with the immediately preceding 'κείμενα' but with the earlier 'εὔρεϊν' (cf. *R.* 8. 544D3–4). To express the original imposition of names, Plato usually employs 'κείσθαι' construed with the dative: cf. *Cra.* 392B10, 392D8–9, 395C2, 395C3, 395E5–396A1, 396C3, 396C6, 413D2.

⁵⁶ Cf. Kühner and Gerth (1892–1904), II.2 424–6 (cf. *Cri.* 50E6; *Prt.* 348B8; *Grg.* 452E4; 525D2).

⁵⁷ Cf. *Lg.* 5. 736E6.

‘just’, etc.) bear a certain semantic relation, each one of these predicables (‘beautiful’, ‘just’, etc.) bearing this semantic relation to exactly one of these objects (‘beautiful’ to beauty, ‘just’ to justice, etc.), in which case the semantic relation in question would surely not be that of denotation (‘beautiful’ does not denote beauty but beautiful things, ‘just’ does not denote justice but just things, etc.). Finally, the objector could note that the indeterminacy expressed by the indefinite relative pronoun ‘ἄττα’ followed by ‘ἄν’ construed with the subjunctive (257C2) is compatible with the presence of a definite description, which in the case at hand would be ‘the objects to which the names uttered after the negative are given’: ‘The tallest philosopher, whoever that is, is over seven feet tall’ is a perfectly meaningful sentence. (The fact that ‘the objects to which the names uttered after the negative are given’ is a plural definite description while ‘the tallest philosopher’ is a singular one makes no difference with respect to the point at hand.)

This retort is answered by pointing out that it sits uneasily with the singular ‘one of the things other’ (‘τῶν ἄλλων τι’, 257B10–257C1) in the phrase ‘one of the things other than them [*sc.* the following names], or, rather, than whatever objects the names uttered after the negative are given to’ (257B10–257C3). For, were the Visitor making the point which the retort attributes to him, he should use the plural ‘things other’ (‘ἄλλα’) (or, perhaps, ‘things from among those that are other’, ‘τῶν ἄλλων ἄττα’), in a phrase like ‘things different from them [*sc.* the following names], or, rather, from whatever objects the names uttered after the negative are given to’: *different* ‘things other’ would surely be involved in the case of *different* negative predicables (‘not beautiful’, ‘not just’, etc.).

In my translation of 257B1–257C4, I rendered the form of ‘κεῖσθαι’ at 257C2 with a form of ‘to be given’. This rendering is warranted by the fact that ‘κεῖσθαι’ is used as a passive for ‘τιθέναι’ (‘to posit’, ‘to lay down’),⁵⁸ reflected by Plato’s moving freely between ‘κεῖσθαι’ and ‘τίθεσθαι’ (the middle of ‘τιθέναι’).⁵⁹ If a name is given to an object, the event is either the original imposition of that name to that object or the attribution of that name to that object on the occasion of a statement. In fact, Plato often uses ‘κεῖσθαι’ and ‘τιθέναι’ to express the original imposition of a name to an object.⁶⁰ But he also employs them to express the attribution of a name to an object on the occasion of a statement. For instance, in

⁵⁸ Cf. LSJ *s.v.* ‘κεῖμαι’ I 1.

⁵⁹ In a passage of the *Cratylus* Plato says that certain names ‘κεῖται’ (397B2) (‘are given’) on the basis of the ancestors, whereas people ‘τιθενται’ (397B4) (‘give’) others hoping that they will be appropriate.

⁶⁰ For ‘κεῖσθαι’ cf. above, n. 55; for ‘τιθέναι’ cf. *Cra.* 416B3.

the *Symposium* (189E2–5) he uses ‘κεῖσθαι’ to express the attribution of the name ‘androgynous’ intended as an insult. Again, in the *Cratylus* (431B6) he employs ‘τιθέναι’ to express the attribution of names and verbs to objects on the occasion of statements. Perhaps in our *Sophist* passage the use of ‘to be given’ (‘κεῖσθαι’) in connection with names and objects does not express the *original imposition* of names to objects whereby the signification of the names is established, but the *correct attribution* of names to whatever objects they denote: ‘whatever objects the names uttered after the negative are given to’ (257C2–3) are all the objects to which the predicable (consisting of one or more names) uttered after the negative particle is correctly attributed. The slip from *attribution* (which, of course, may be incorrect as well as correct) to *correct attribution* is easy and natural: consider Aristotle’s use of ‘λέγεσθαι’ (‘to be said’) and ‘κατηγορεῖσθαι’ (‘to be predicated’) to mean ‘to hold of’.⁶¹

The Visitor does have a reason for mentioning the possibility that what follows the negative particle ‘not’ could consist of more than one name: it will soon be clear that the formulations he is interested in include negative predicables consisting of a negative particle followed by at least two words, i.e. a form of ‘to be’ and some predicative complement (e.g. ‘is not large’ – recall that in Greek the negative particle is followed by what corresponds to ‘is’ which in turn is followed by what corresponds to ‘large’).

In view of the evidence presented in this subsection and in the last three, I opt for the extensional interpretation. Given that the extensional interpretation is correct as an exegesis of Plato’s words, is the account of negation attributed to Plato by the extensional interpretation adequate? One might challenge it on the ground that the concept of difference is ‘negative’ because it is to be defined by using negation. For, were one to define difference, one should say that two objects are different just if they are not identical. This definition involves negation.⁶² The objection is met by denying the assumption it relies on, namely by claiming that the concept of difference is not ‘negative’ and is not to be defined by using negation.⁶³ In particular, one will assert that difference is not to be defined by saying that two objects are different just if they are not identical. One might even take the further step of insisting that difference is a primitive concept that cannot be defined or analysed. One might adopt this strategy while endorsing the claim that two objects are different just if they are

⁶¹ Cf. Arist. *Cat.* 3, 1^b11; 1^b13; 1^b14; 5, 3^a26; 3^a27; etc.

⁶² Cf. Price (1929), 106; Gale (1971–2), 465–9; Gale (1976), 15, 18, 35, 36. A similar objection was raised for the incompatibility interpretation: cf. above, text to n. 38.

⁶³ Cf. Mabbott (1929), 79.

not identical, a claim to be treated as a truth (a true universally quantified biconditional) that is not a definition.

From the point of view of extension, the account of negation attributed to Plato by the extensional interpretation is perfectly adequate, at least with respect to the negation of predicables: the objects of which a negative predicable consisting of a negative particle followed by a predicable is true are all and only those different from every object of which the predicable following the negative particle is true.⁶⁴ Plato, and for that matter Aristotle, never seems to have considered the idea that a negative particle might govern (not a predicable, but) a whole sentence.

The Visitor's second remark (yet again). Return to the Visitor's second remark: 'Whenever we say "not being", it seems that we do not call something contrary to what is, but only different' (257B3–4). In my earlier discussion I reached the plausible result that the point made by the Visitor is that when we predicate 'not being' of an object, we are not saying about this object that it is contrary to what is, but that it is different from what is. Given that the extensional interpretation of Plato's account of negation is correct, this result may be sharpened by reading universal quantifiers behind the two occurrences of 'what is'. In other words, it may be inferred that in his second remark the Visitor states that when we predicate 'not being' of an object, we do not say about this object that it is contrary to everything that is, but that it is different from everything that is.

There remains one last, difficult question about the Visitor's second remark: does it involve the complete or the incomplete use of 'to be'?⁶⁵ The complete use can hardly play a role. Otherwise the Visitor would be considering what it is that we say about an object when we apply 'not being' to it according to the complete use of 'to be'. But, given the earlier arguments concerning the impossibility of 'saying what is not' (at 237B7–239C8), such an application of 'not being' should be off-limits. It may therefore be plausibly inferred that the Visitor's second remark involves the incomplete use of 'to be' and that the verb is employed elliptically (its complement is understood). If so, what is examined is the application of 'not being' involving the incomplete use of 'to be'. This result receives some confirmation from the example offered by the Visitor in his third remark (at 257B6–7). Even if the Visitor's third remark introduces an example that

⁶⁴ Cf. proposition [25] of the Appendix (which, however, states necessary and sufficient conditions not for a negative predicable to be true of an object, but for a kind not to hold of an object).

⁶⁵ On complete and incomplete uses of 'to be' cf. above, paragraph to n. 115 of Ch. 4.

is forward-looking, and therefore is not, strictly speaking, an example of what we say about something when we call it ‘not being’, it sets the tone for the passage. It indicates that the topic under discussion has to do with what we say about an object when we describe it by means of a negative phrase (like ‘not large’). Since the main way of describing an object by means of negative phrases is by negating ‘to be’ in its incomplete use (i.e. by using ‘not to be large’, ‘not to be beautiful’, etc.), it stands to reason that in his second remark the Visitor is focusing on the application of ‘not being’ that involves the incomplete use of ‘to be’.

One might be worried that there is no explicit warning that the incomplete use of ‘to be’ is elliptical. But such a lack of warning has an important parallel in at least one other passage, from the *Republic* (5. 478E1–479B9):

Apparently, then, it only remains for us to find what participates in both 478E
being and not-being [τοῦ εἶναι τε καὶ μὴ εἶναι] and cannot correctly be
called purely one or the other, in order that, if there is such a thing, we
can rightly call it the believable, thereby setting the extremes over the
extremes and the intermediate over the intermediate. Isn't that so?

It is.

Now that these points have been established, I want to address a question
to our friend who does not believe in the beautiful itself or any form 479A
of the beautiful itself that remains always the same in all respects, but
who does believe in the many beautiful things – the lover of sights who
wouldn't allow anyone to say that the beautiful itself is one or that the
just is one or any of the rest: ‘My dear fellow’, we shall say, ‘of all the
many beautiful things, is there one that will not also appear ugly? Or is
there one of those just things that will not also appear unjust? Or one of
those pious things that will not also appear impious?’

There isn't one, he said, for it is necessary that they appear beautiful in a 479B
way and also ugly, and the same with the other things you asked about.
What about the many doubles? Do they appear any the less halves than
doubles?

Not one.

So with large and small things, and light and heavy ones: will any one of
them be any more described as whatever we call it than as its opposite?

No, he said, each of them will always participate in both.

Is each of the many whatever one says it is, then, any more than it is not
that? [πρότερον οὐκ ἔστι μᾶλλον ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἕκαστον τῶν πολλῶν
τοῦτο ὃ ἂν τις φῆι αὐτὸ εἶναι;]

Here Plato sets out looking for something that both is and is not. He is satisfied when he finds something that both is so-and-so (e.g. beautiful) and is not so-and-so (e.g. beautiful). Apparently, the occurrences of ‘to be’

were to be regarded as incomplete from the start, but no warning was given that they were to be thus understood.⁶⁶

In conclusion, the Visitor's second remark may be understood as stating that when we predicate 'not being (a) ϕ ' of an object, we are not saying about this object that it is contrary to everything which is (a) ϕ , but that it is different from everything which is (a) ϕ (where ' ϕ ' is a schematic letter to be replaced with general terms).⁶⁷ This claim concerns what we say about an object when we predicate of it a negative predicable involving an incomplete use of 'to be'.

The Visitor's third remark (again). Having established a plausible interpretation of the Visitor's second and fourth remark, I return to the third. I take the Visitor's third remark ('For instance, when we call something "not large" do we then appear to you to indicate the small by that expression any more than the equal?', 257B6–7) and Theaetetus' reply ('How on earth?', 257B8) to make a purely negative claim. It is not being asserted that 'when we call something "not large", [...] by that expression' we are ranking that thing as being either small or equal; nor is it being asserted that 'when we call something "not large", [...] by that expression' we are either ranking that thing as small or ranking it as equal. Rather, the intended point is that 'when we call something "not large", [...] by that expression' we indicate neither the small nor the equal and therefore we neither rank the thing referred to as small nor rank it as equal.⁶⁸ This point is supported by a brief argument: since 'when we call something "not large"' we do not indicate 'the small by that expression any more than the equal', and since 'when we call something "not large"' we do not indicate the equal (an obvious fact which need not be mentioned), it follows that 'when we call something "not large"' we indicate neither the small nor the equal.

This purely negative interpretation of the Visitor's third remark and Theaetetus' reply fits well with the extensional interpretation of Plato's account of negation. For, if this interpretation is correct, the Visitor is committed to granting that 'when we call something "not large", [...] by that expression' we are ranking that thing as different from all the objects

⁶⁶ Cf. Vlastos (1965), 48–9; Brown (1994), 222; Malcolm (2006a), 286–7, 292.

⁶⁷ On general terms cf. above, n. 33 of Ch. 2. The first occurrence of 'is' in 'is contrary to everything that is (a) ϕ ' and the first in 'is different from everything that is (a) ϕ ' are occurrences of the 'is' of predication: this should assuage the worry, voiced by Charlton (1995), 115–16, that the extensional interpretation is committed to taking the sentence '... we do not call something contrary to what is, but only different' (257B3–4) as pairing a predication with an identification.

⁶⁸ Cf. Owen (1971), 232, 234; Lee (1972), 287–8; P. A. Johnson (1978), 153, 156; Dixsaut (1991), 180–2. I changed my mind with respect to the Visitor's third remark: for my earlier exegesis, see Crivelli (1990), 69–71.

denoted by ‘large’ – and, by doing this, we are neither ranking the thing in question as small nor ranking it as equal.

This purely negative claim contributes to support the negative component of the Visitor’s fourth remark, which is presented as an inference from what precedes: ‘So, when the negative is said to mean a contrary, we shall not agree, . . .’ (257B9–10). Were we to agree ‘when the negative is said to mean a contrary’, we should after all concede that ‘when we call something “not large”, [. . .] by that expression’ we are indicating the small and therefore we are ranking the thing referred to as small. The negative component of the Visitor’s fourth remark may therefore be taken to amount to the claim that if a negative predicable consisting of a negative particle followed by a predicable is predicated of an object, then what is said about this object is not that it is contrary to every object denoted by the predicable following the negative particle.

Note that earlier in the *Sophist* negative predicables were treated in the way which is now chastised. For, at 240B5 the Visitor asked: ‘By “not genuine” [μη ἀληθινόν] do you mean “contrary to the genuine” [ἐναντίον ἀληθοῦς]?’ Theaetetus replied affirmatively (240B6). Again, at 240D6–10 the two inquirers agreed that a false belief believes ‘the contraries of the things which are [τὰναντία τοῖς οὔσι]’ and therefore ‘believes the things which are not’. A similar treatment of negative predicables occurs in other dialogues. In the *Protagoras* (331A7–331B1) Socrates moves from ‘is not just’ and ‘is not pious’ to ‘is unjust’ and ‘is impious’. In the *Symposium* (201E6–202B5), when Socrates goes from the claim that love is neither beautiful nor good to the claim that it is ugly and bad, he is criticized by Diotima for not realizing that what is neither beautiful nor good can be in a condition intermediate between beauty and ugliness and between goodness and badness. Diotima’s criticism resembles the one voiced in the *Sophist* passage presently under scrutiny.⁶⁹ In some special cases in Greek a compound consisting of a negative particle and a verb does indeed signify the contrary of what is signified by the verb: ‘οὐ φημι’ means (not merely ‘I do not say’, but) ‘I deny’; ‘οὐκ ἐθέλω’ means (not merely ‘I am not willing’, but) ‘I am reluctant’; ‘οὐ κεύω’ means (not merely ‘I do not order’, but) ‘I forbid’; etc.⁷⁰

One aspect of the Visitor’s third remark remains unclear: how are the expressions ‘the small’ and ‘the equal’ used? Do they support an ‘ordinary’ or a ‘generalizing’ reading of the sentence where they occur?⁷¹ If they

⁶⁹ Cf. *Ly.* 216D5–7; *Prm.* 150D4–150E1; 160B6–160C5; 161C7–161E1. ⁷⁰ Cf. Moorhouse (1959), 6.

⁷¹ Cf. above, n. 53 of Ch. 4 and text thereto.

support an ‘ordinary’ reading, then by saying that ‘when we call something “not large” we do not indicate ‘the small by that expression any more than the equal’, the Visitor means that ‘when we call something “not large” we do not indicate smallness by that expression any more than equality. If instead they support a ‘generalizing’ reading, then by saying that ‘when we call something “not large” we do not indicate ‘the small by that expression any more than the equal’, the Visitor means that ‘when we call something “not large” we do not indicate small things by that expression any more than equal things. There is no need to choose among these alternatives: either yields the result that ‘when we call something “not large”’, we are neither ranking that thing as small nor ranking it as equal.

The outcome of Plato’s account of negation may be summarized in the following principles (throughout this subsection and the next, ‘ ϕ ’ is a schematic letter to be replaced with general terms):

- NC* It is not the case that for something not to be (a) ϕ is for it to be contrary to everything that is (a) ϕ .
- ND*⁷² For something not to be (a) ϕ is for it to be different from everything that is (a) ϕ .

What relevance do principles *NC* and *ND* have for the *Sophist’s* problems? The most plausible answer to this question relies on the assumption that in Plato’s view the incomplete use of ‘to be’ has an existential component: part of what one says about something by saying that it is (a) ϕ is that it exists. In other words:

- PE*⁷³ To be (a) ϕ is to exist in (a) ϕ ’s way.

Assume *PE* and the position rejected by *NC*, i.e. that for something not to be (a) ϕ is for it to be contrary to everything that is (a) ϕ . Suppose that *a* is not (a) ϕ . Then, by the position rejected by *NC*, *a* is contrary to everything that is (a) ϕ . Then *a* is in the condition that is contrary to that of being (a) ϕ , so that (by *PE*) *a* is in the condition that is contrary to that of existing in (a) ϕ ’s way. Then *a* does not exist. This is because the condition contrary to a given one is the one ‘polarly opposed’ to it, i.e. as much as possible removed from and incompatible with it, so that the condition contrary to that of existing in (a) ϕ ’s way is a condition of non-existence (just as the condition contrary to that of eating in a greedy way is one of not eating at all). Since *a* was arbitrarily chosen, it may be

⁷² ‘*NC*’ and ‘*ND*’ are acronyms for ‘Negation and Contrariety’ and ‘Negation and Difference’.

⁷³ ‘*PE*’ is an acronym for ‘Predication and Existence’.

inferred that whatever is not (a) ϕ does not exist. Thus, if the position rejected by *NC* were true then it would be the case that whatever is not (a) ϕ does not exist. So, the contribution of *NC* to the problems addressed in the *Sophist* is to help to block the inference from something's not being (a) ϕ to its non-existence.

The position formulated by *ND* does not license this unwelcome inference: given that for something not to be (a) ϕ is for it to be different from everything that is (a) ϕ , one cannot infer that whatever is not (a) ϕ does not exist. It is instructive to see where the inference breaks down. Suppose that *a* is not (a) ϕ . Then, by *ND*, *a* is different from everything that is (a) ϕ , so that (by *PE*) *a* is different from everything that exists in (a) ϕ 's way. From this, however, one cannot conclude that *a* does not exist (just as someone eating moderately is different from everyone eating in a greedy way).

Thus, the upshot of Plato's account of negation is the principle:

*NPNE*⁷⁴ If something is not (a) ϕ , it does not follow that it does not exist.

Principle *NPNE* helps with some of the *Sophist*'s earlier difficulties. First, it is the most effective antidote against a version of the paradox about images at 239C9–240C6, whose pivotal but fallacious move is the inference from 'An image of a cat is an image and is not a cat' to 'An image of a cat exists and does not exist'. *NPNE* enables one to block the inference's negative side (from 'is not a cat' to 'does not exist').⁷⁵ Secondly, *NPNE* enables one to resist one of the moves involved in some versions the paradox of falsehood at 240C7–241B4. For, in some of its versions, this paradox exerts its beguiling power on the basis of the assumption that from something's not being (a) ϕ it may be inferred that it does not exist. This is precisely what *NPNE* denies.⁷⁶ Moreover, *NPNE* will come to be of help later too,⁷⁷ albeit implicitly.

Predication and existence in Plato. My interpretation credits Plato with *PE*, the principle that to be (a) ϕ is to exist in (a) ϕ 's way. I already mentioned the difference between the complete and the incomplete uses of 'to be'.⁷⁸ (A form of) 'to be' in its complete use has no complement (not even implicit) and is often employed to make statements of existence. 'To be' in its incomplete use has a complement (which, however, may be implicit) and is often employed to make statements of predication. The complete and the incomplete uses of 'to be' are semantically close in that there is no change

⁷⁴ '*NPNE*' is an acronym for 'Negative Predication and Non-Existence'.

⁷⁵ Cf. above, text to n. 66 of Ch. 2. ⁷⁶ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 113 of Ch. 2.

⁷⁷ Cf. below, paragraph to n. 115 of Ch. 6. ⁷⁸ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 115 of Ch. 4.

in the verb's sense: the relation between 'Jim is', exemplifying the complete use of 'to be', and 'Jim is slow', exemplifying the verb's incomplete use, is analogous to that between 'Jim is running' and 'Jim is running slowly'. As a consequence, statements of predication have an existential component: part of the claim made by 'Jim is slow' is the claim made by 'Jim is', namely an existential claim. This is, basically, what *PE* says.

The attribution of *PE* to Plato is in substantial agreement with results of recent research on predication and existence in the Greek language and in ancient philosophical reflections thereupon. Lesley Brown has argued that the relation between 'Jim is' and 'Jim is slow' is analogous to that between 'Jane is teaching' and 'Jane is teaching French'.⁷⁹ Her view is now accepted by many scholars.⁸⁰ Here are some considerations supporting these results.

- (1) It is often hard to decide whether an occurrence of 'εἶναι' is a case of the incomplete use of the verb (linking a subject-expression with a complement, whereby the whole sentence expresses a predication) or of the complete use (applied to a complex subject-expression but without complement, not even implicit, whereby the whole sentence attributes existence). For instance, should 'ἔστι δίκαιος ἄνθρωπος' (cf. *Arist. Int.* 10, 19^b27) be rendered by 'A man is just' or 'A just man exists'? Since word order is syntactically irrelevant in Greek, the uncertainty becomes even more pressing. If the two ways of understanding the Greek sentence are logically equivalent, then the incomplete use of 'to be' does have an existential component.⁸¹
- (2) Plato sometimes places 'εἶναι' near the beginning of a sentence to make an existential claim, but then adds general terms without repeating the verb, so that the original occurrence of 'εἶναι' becomes predicative:

... οἱ θεοὺς μὲν ἀμφοτέροι ὁμολογοῦντες εἶναι, παραιτητοὺς δὲ ἄτερος, ὁ δὲ ἀμελεῖς τῶν σμικρῶν. (*Lg.* 10. 901C8–901D2)

... both admitting that gods are, the one claiming that they are venal, the other that they are without care for small things.⁸²

⁷⁹ Cf. Brown (1986), 458–62; Brown (1994), 226.

⁸⁰ Cf. Furth (1968), 112–16, 123; Juliá (1977), 40–1; W. J. Prior (1980), 209; Kahn (1981), 123; Szaif (1998), 346–56; Kahn (2002), 87; van Eck (2002), 70–1; Burnyeat (2003), 9–13; Hestir (2003), 6–7; Kahn (2004), 383–4, 393. Robinson (2001), 443 is unhappy with Brown's analogy because 'is teaching' in 'Jane is teaching' is dependent or parasitic on 'is teaching' in 'Jane is teaching French' (or 'Jane is teaching something') in a way in which 'is' in 'Jim is' is not on 'is' in 'Jim is slow' (or 'Jim is something'). I share Robinson's uneasiness: for this reason I change the analogy to one with 'Jim is running' and 'Jim is running slowly' (cf. above, text to n. 115 of Ch. 4).

⁸¹ Cf. Kahn (2004), 383.

⁸² This example is due to Lesley Brown, who communicated it by private correspondence to Myles Burnyeat (cf. Burnyeat (2003), 13) and Charles Kahn (cf. Kahn (2004), 385). There are further examples: *Smp.* 210E6–211A5 (cf. Kahn (1981), 108; Kahn (2002), 88); *Sph.* 259A6–8 (cf. Brown (1986), 461); *Lg.* 10. 887B7–8 (cf. Burnyeat (2003), 13).

Such formulations suggest that the complete and the incomplete use of 'εἶναι' are semantically close.⁸³

- (3) In *Sph.* 238E5–239A2 the Visitor recalls that what is not was earlier said 'to be inexpressible and unspeakable and unsayable' (238E5–6). He infers that what is not was thereby described as being (because it was said *to be* inexpressible etc.).⁸⁴ This remark suggests that part of what one says about something when one applies to it an instance of 'to be (a) φ' (with 'φ' replaced, for example, by 'unsayable') is that it is in that it exists.⁸⁵

An objection could be raised:⁸⁶ 'Were Plato to believe that the complete and incomplete uses of "to be" are semantically close, one would expect him to speak of a single kind, namely the kind being, corresponding to "to be" in both its complete and its incomplete use. But this is not what one finds in the *Sophist*: what corresponds to the incomplete use of "to be" (in the context of a predicative sentence) is not the kind being, but the relation of participation⁸⁷ (linking the entity signified by the subject-expression to the kind signified by the general term that complements "to be" within the predicate-expression).' This objection can be answered. In his discussion of dialectic Plato claims that certain kinds, the vowel-kinds, are responsible for the combination or division of other kinds.⁸⁸ The kind being may be plausibly identified as the vowel-kind responsible for the combination of other kinds.⁸⁹ On the plausible assumption that every case of participation is one of combination, it may be plausibly inferred that the kind being is an ingredient of every case of participation involving other kinds. Plato may well omit mentioning the kind being as corresponding to the incomplete use of 'to be', and speak of participation instead: in his discussion of dialectic he has made once and for all the point that the kind being is an ingredient of participation.

⁸³ Leigh (2008), 114 points out that *Lg.* 10. 901C8–901D2 could be interpreted in ways that do not require the semantic closeness of the uses of 'to be'. For, Plato perhaps intends the verb to be regarded as ambiguous. Alternatively, 'εἶναι' should perhaps not be taken up from near the sentence's beginning but understood afresh in its last part (Greek allows omission of the copula).

⁸⁴ Cf. above, subsection to n. 51 of Ch. 2.

⁸⁵ Cf. Brown (1994), 231. Leigh (2008), 108, 114 regards this argument as weak: the reason why describing what is not 'to be inexpressible and unspeakable and unsayable' (238E5–6) is inconsistent could be that only what exists can be a bearer of properties. On this alternative account of the Visitor's reasoning, the passage provides no evidence for the view that part of what one says about something when one applies to it an instance of 'to be (a) φ' is that it is. A drawback of this alternative account is that it recognizes no role for the 'εἶναι' of 238E6 (the point could have been made also without 'εἶναι', cf. 256A11–12).

⁸⁶ Cf. Leigh (2008), 119–20. ⁸⁷ Cf. 255E4–6; 256A3–256B4; Ackrill (1957), 82–3.

⁸⁸ Cf. 253B9–253C5; above, paragraph to n. 38 of Ch. 4.

⁸⁹ Cf. above, n. 38 of Ch. 4 and text thereto.

'Ordinary' and 'definitional' readings of negative sentences. According to principle *ND*, for something not to be (a) ϕ is for it to be different from everything that is (a) ϕ (throughout this subsection, ' σ ' and ' ϕ ' are schematic letters to be replaced, respectively, with names and general terms). This has an obvious implication for the truth conditions of negative sentences: ' σ is not (a) ϕ ' is true just if the entity signified by ' σ ' is different from everything of which 'is (a) ϕ ' is true.

These truth conditions may be sharpened in two ways that correspond to the 'ordinary' and 'definitional' readings of sentences: simply import these readings into the 'is (a) ϕ ' constituent (by imagining it embedded in a sentence whose two readings are then considered). Factoring in the existential component of 'is (a) ϕ ',⁹⁰ the result is: if ' ϕ ' signifies a kind, then ' σ is not (a) ϕ ' is true on its 'ordinary' reading just if the entity signified by ' σ ' is different from everything that exists while instantiating the kind signified by ' ϕ '; if both ' σ ' and ' ϕ ' signify kinds, then ' σ is not (a) ϕ ' is true on its 'definitional' reading just if the kind signified by ' σ ' is different from every kind that exists while being identical to the kind signified by ' ϕ '. This result is adequate in so far as it matches the truth conditions by which the two readings of sentences were originally introduced. These were: if ' ϕ ' signifies a kind, then ' σ is not (a) ϕ ' is true on its 'ordinary' reading just if the entity signified by ' σ ' does not instantiate the kind signified by ' ϕ '; if both ' σ ' and ' ϕ ' signify kinds, then ' σ is not (a) ϕ ' is true on its 'definitional' reading just if the kind signified by ' σ ' is different from the kind signified by ' ϕ '.⁹¹ Plato therefore has a general account of negation that covers negative sentences understood according to both their 'definitional' and their 'ordinary' reading.⁹²

5.2 NEGATIVE KINDS

Every kind has a complement. Here is what follows the exchange about negative predicables:

VIS. Τόδε δὲ διανοηθῶμεν, εἰ καὶ σοὶ συνδοκεῖ. 257C5
 ΤΗΤ. Τὸ ποῖον;
 VIS. Ἡ θατέρου μοι φύσις φαίνεται κατακεκερματί-
 σθαι καθάπερ ἐπιστήμη.
 ΤΗΤ. Πῶς;

⁹⁰ Cf. above, subsection to n. 78.

⁹¹ As I pointed out earlier (cf. above, n. 69 of Ch. 4), the truth conditions originally introduced were curtailed in that they ignored the existential component of 'is (a) ϕ '.

⁹² Cf. above, paragraph to n. 10.

- VIS. Μία μὲν ἐστὶ που καὶ ἐκείνη, τὸ δ' ἐπὶ τῷ γιγνώ- C10
 μενον μέρος αὐτῆς ἕκαστον ἀφορισθὲν ἐπωνυμίαν ἴσχει
 τινὰ ἑαυτῆς ἰδίαν· διὸ πολλὰ τέχνηαι τ' εἰσὶ λεγόμεναι καὶ 257D1
 ἐπιστῆμαι.
 ΤΗΤ. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν.
 VIS. Οὐκοῦν καὶ τὰ τῆς θατέρου φύσεως μόρια μιᾶς D5
 οὔσης ταῦτὸν πέπονθε τοῦτο.
 ΤΗΤ. Τάχ' ἄν· ἀλλὰ πῆ δὴ λέγωμεν;
 VIS. Ἔστι τῷ καλῷ τι θατέρου μόριον ἀντιτιθέμενον;
 ΤΗΤ. Ἔστιν.
 VIS. Τοῦτ' οὖν ἀνώνυμον ἐροῦμεν ἢ τιν' ἔχον ἐπωνυ- D10
 μίαν;
 ΤΗΤ. Ἐχον· ὃ γὰρ μὴ καλὸν ἕκαστοτε φθεγγό-
 μεθα, τοῦτο οὐκ ἄλλου τινὸς ἕτερόν ἐστιν ἢ τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ D13
 φύσεως.
 VIS. And here, if you agree, is a point for us to consider. 257C
 ΤΗΤ. Namely?
 VIS. It seems to me that the nature of the different is parcelled out in the
 same way as knowledge.
 ΤΗΤ. How so?
 VIS. Knowledge is also surely one, but each part of it, which comes to be 257D
 over something and is marked off, is given a name proper to itself.
 Hence we speak of many arts and knowledges.
 ΤΗΤ. Certainly.
 VIS. And the same happens to the parts of the nature of the different,
 which is one.
 ΤΗΤ. Perhaps. But could we say how?
 VIS. Is there some part of the different contrasted with the beautiful?
 ΤΗΤ. There is.
 VIS. Shall we say it is nameless, or that it has some denomination?
 ΤΗΤ. It has one: for what on any occasion we express by 'not beautiful',
 this is difference of nothing other than the nature of the beautiful.

The Visitor's first remark ('And here, if you agree, is a point for us to consider') heralds a new topic:⁹³ negative kinds.

The phrase 'negative kind', a helpful label, is disturbingly vague. Let me then be more precise: the position put forward by Plato in 257C5–257D13 is that for every kind there is another kind that is its complement, namely a kind that holds of all and only the things of which the given kind does not hold.

Say that a kind *matches* a predicable just if it holds of all and only the things denoted by the predicable (e.g. the kind beauty matches the

⁹³ Cf. Lee (1972), 268–9; Ray (1984), 72.

predicable ‘beautiful’). Then, if a kind K (e.g. beauty) matches a predicable (e.g. ‘beautiful’), the complement of K matches the negative predicable obtained by prefixing a negative particle to the original predicable (e.g. ‘not beautiful’). Since he accepts that some predicable has a matching kind, Plato is committed to acknowledging that *some* negative predicable has a matching kind (e.g. he must grant that the negative predicable ‘not beautiful’ has a matching kind). In this sense, Plato is committed to negative kinds.

Plato is not, however, committed to the view that *every* negative predicable has a matching kind. Were he to endorse it, he would be inconsistent. For, suppose he endorsed the view in question. Consider the negative predicable ‘not holding of itself’, which denotes all and only the things that do not hold of themselves. Then Plato would be committed to accepting a kind that matches ‘not holding of itself’, i.e. a kind that holds of all and only the things denoted by ‘not holding of itself’, i.e. a kind that holds of all and only the things that do not hold of themselves. Let R be such a kind. Then R does not hold of itself: for, were R to hold of itself, it would not hold of itself. Since R does not hold of itself, it does hold of itself. Therefore R both does and does not hold of itself. As a consequence, Plato cannot accept a kind that matches ‘holding of itself’, the predicable that denotes all and only the things that hold of themselves.⁹⁴

The analogy between parts of difference and parts of knowledge. To establish that for every kind there is another that is its complement, Plato describes the complement of a given kind in terms of its bearing certain relations to the kind difference and (of course) the kind of which it is the complement. Specifically, he draws an analogy between the kinds difference and knowledge: as specific knowledges (e.g. literacy) are parts of knowledge, so specific complements of kinds (e.g. not-beauty) are parts of difference.⁹⁵ There are two relevant aspects to this analogy.

⁹⁴ For the technical development of issues arising from this paragraph, see propositions [30]–[32] of the Appendix.

⁹⁵ The parts of difference have been variously interpreted. There are two main families of interpretations: (1) ‘set-theoretical’ interpretations, according to which the parts of difference are sets of kinds; (2) ‘intensional’ interpretations, according to which the parts of difference are kinds. Two ‘set-theoretical’ interpretations have been put forward: (1a) for every kind K , not- K is the set of the kinds different from K (cf. Cornford (1935), 293; Cherniss (1944), 263–4; Owen (1971), 238–40; Guthrie (1962–81), v 153); (1b) for every kind K , not- K is the set of the kinds incompatible with K (cf. Hamlyn (1955), 292; Philip (1968), 317–20; Seligman (1974), 82). There are three ‘intensional’ interpretations: (2a) for every kind K , not- K is the kind difference-from- K (cf. Lacey (1959), 48; Bluck (1963), 165–7; Lewis (1976), 103–4, 113–14); (2b) for every kind K , not- K is a kind that holds of all and only the objects of which some kind incompatible with K holds (cf. Kostman (1973), 205; Sayre (1976), 584–5; Sayre (1983), 230, 231–4); (2c) for every kind K , not- K is a kind that holds of

The first concerns the ontological relations of a kind's complement to difference and the kind of which it is the complement. As a specific knowledge is marked off from knowledge and comes to be over a certain kind in that it is knowledge of all things that fall under that kind (e.g. literacy is marked off from knowledge and comes to be over the kind letter in that it is knowledge of all things that fall under the kind letter – for literacy is knowledge of all letters, cf. 252E9–253A12),⁹⁶ so the complement of a kind is marked off from difference and comes to be over a certain kind in that it is difference from all things that fall under that kind (e.g. the complement of beauty is marked off from difference and comes to be over beauty in that it is difference from all things that fall under beauty – for the complement of beauty is difference from all beautiful things).⁹⁷ There are two parallel 'movements': the movement of 'coming to be over' a certain kind (e.g. letter or beauty) and that of 'being marked off' a certain kind (knowledge or difference). The two 'movements' are different 'simultaneous' components of the same 'process'.⁹⁸

The second relevant aspect of Plato's analogy concerns linguistic formulation. As specific knowledges marked off from knowledge have special names derived from those of the kinds they are 'over' (cf. 'γράμμα'–'γραμματική', 'πόλις'–'πολιτική'),⁹⁹ so complements of kinds marked off from difference have special names derived from those of the kinds they are 'over' (cf. 'beauty'–'not-beauty').¹⁰⁰

all and only the objects that are different from all the objects of which *K* holds (cf. Frede (1967), 86–9; Crivelli (1990), 73–5). Interpretation (2c) fits best with the extensional interpretation of Plato's account of negation at 257B1–257C4.

⁹⁶ Similarly, music is knowledge of sounds (cf. 253B1–5 and Lee (1972), 271–2). In the *Theaetetus* (147B5–10) the art of cobbling is defined as knowledge of shoes (at 146D7–9 it had been introduced as knowledge of the *production* of shoes). For the fragmentation of knowledge cf. *Ion* 537C5–538B6; *Chrm.* 165C4–166C6; *R.* 4. 438C6–438D10; 5. 477C1–477D9. In the *Ion* passage Plato often speaks of a single knowledge as being of many things: cf. *Ion* 537C6–7; 537C8; 537D2; 537D5–6; 537E1–2; 537E6–7; 538A2–4; 538A6–7; 538B5–6.

⁹⁷ Cf. Lee (1972), 269–76, 278–9; Szaif (1998), 438.

⁹⁸ Cf. 257E2–4; Lee (1972), 279–80; Silverman (2002), 194, 195. The process presented in Plato's analogy resembles what modern logicians would describe as the saturation of a free variable of an open formula by means of a quantifier. Take a formula $A(x, y)$ containing free only x and y : it signifies a two-place relation. Take another formula $B(y)$ containing free only y : it signifies a kind (i.e. a one-place relation). Construct a new formula, $\forall y (B(y) \rightarrow A(x, y))$. This new formula contains only x free and therefore signifies a kind, namely the kind that holds of whatever bears the two-place relation signified by $A(x, y)$ to everything which the kind signified by $B(y)$ holds of. For instance, if $A(x, y)$ signifies knowledge and $B(y)$ signifies the kind letter, the formula $\forall y (B(y) \rightarrow A(x, y))$ signifies the kind that holds of whatever has knowledge of everything which letter holds of; if instead $A(x, y)$ signifies difference and $B(y)$ signifies beauty, the formula $\forall y (B(y) \rightarrow A(x, y))$ signifies the kind that holds of whatever is different from everything which beauty holds of.

⁹⁹ Cf. *Plt.* 279E5–280A2; M. L. Gill (2010), 190. ¹⁰⁰ Cf. Lewis (1976), 114; Crivelli (1990), 74–5.

Two difficulties raised by Plato's language in 257DII–I3:

- (1) The following Greek sentence occurs at 257DII–I3: ‘ὄ... μὴ καλὸν ἐκάστοτε φθεγγόμεθα, τοῦτο οὐκ ἄλλου τινὸς ἕτερόν ἐστιν ἢ τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ φύσεως’. The most natural and usual way of understanding it is embodied in the following translation: ‘What on any occasion we express by “not beautiful”, this is difference [or: different] from nothing other than the nature of the beautiful’. According to the last subsection’s interpretation, at this point Plato should assert that what on any occasion we express by ‘not beautiful’ is difference from all beautiful things. But the Greek sentence at 257DII–I3, if understood in the most natural and usual way, appears not to make this point. Specifically, the phrase ‘the nature of the beautiful’ does not seem to introduce all beautiful things, but beauty itself.¹⁰¹
- (2) The most natural and usual way of understanding the Greek sentence at 257DII–I3 raises a further difficulty. It appears to require that what we express by ‘not beautiful’ be difference from the nature of the beautiful *and only from it*. This claim cannot be squared with the last subsection’s interpretation.¹⁰²

First solution. There are two solutions of the last subsection’s difficulties. The first does not modify the most natural and usual way of understanding the Greek sentence at 257DII–I3.

As for the first difficulty, recall the distinction between ‘ordinary’ and ‘generalizing’ readings of sentences containing abstract noun-phrases.¹⁰³ I introduced this distinction by focusing on sentences whose subject-expression is an abstract noun-phrase: on its ‘ordinary’ reading, ‘σ φς’ is true just if the kind signified by ‘σ’ instantiates the kind signified by ‘φ’; on its ‘generalizing’ reading, ‘σ φς’ is true just if everything that instantiates the kind signified by ‘σ’ instantiates the kind signified by ‘φ’ (where ‘σ’ and ‘φ’ are schematic letters to be replaced, respectively, with an abstract noun-phrase and a verb-phrase that signify kinds). The distinction of readings is available (with straightforward modifications) also for sentences containing an abstract noun-phrase that is not their subject-expression. Now, retain the most natural and usual way of understanding the Greek sentence at 257DII–I3. Its translation is: ‘What on any occasion we express by “not beautiful”, this is difference from nothing other than the nature of the

¹⁰¹ Cf. Detel (1972), 91; Kostman (1973), 200; Lewis (1976), 114; Ketchum (1978), 60; van Eck (1995), 27; Szaif (1998), 439–40.

¹⁰² Cf. Kostman (1973), 198; Ketchum (1978), 45; van Eck (2000), 64.

¹⁰³ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 53 of Ch. 4.

beautiful'. Since 'the nature of the beautiful' is an abstract noun-phrase, this sentence has both an 'ordinary' and a 'generalizing' reading. On its 'generalizing' reading, it is equivalent to 'What on any occasion we express by "not beautiful", this is difference from nothing other than everything that instantiates beauty', which in turn is equivalent to 'What on any occasion we express by "not beautiful", this is difference from nothing other than all beautiful things'.¹⁰⁴

This interpretation of the sentence at 257D11–13 has parallels in Plato's works:

- [α] 'Shan't we also say that what exceeds the nature of the moderate [τὴν τοῦ μετρίου φύσιν] and what is exceeded by it really come to be either in speeches or in actions?' (*Plt.* 283E3–5). Here 'the nature of the moderate' means 'moderate things'.
- [β] 'The most extreme case of all is when the nature of the marrow [ἡ τοῦ μυελοῦ φύσις] becomes diseased because of some deficiency or excess' (*Ti.* 84C3–5). Here 'the nature of the marrow' means 'instances of marrow' or 'bits of marrow'.
- [γ] '... the nature of the wing [ἡ τοῦ πτεροῦ φύσις], by which the soul is lifted, is nourished by this' (*Phdr.* 248C1–2). Here 'the nature of the wing' means 'wings'.
- [δ] '... the nature of the kinds [ἡ τῶν γενῶν φύσις] has reciprocal communion' (*Sph.* 257A9). Here 'the nature of the kinds' means 'kinds'.¹⁰⁵

One might wonder why at 257D12–13 Plato employs 'the nature of the beautiful' if he means 'all beautiful things'. The most plausible explanation appeals to the fact that 257D11–13 is at the beginning of an argument for the claim that the things denoted by a negative predicable like 'not beautiful' and 'not being' are unified by a single nature: it is not by chance that Plato later speaks of 'the nature of a part of the different' (258A11) and

¹⁰⁴ Several commentators say that in Plato's Greek, expressions constructed around 'ἡ φύσις' governing a noun-phrase or an adjectival phrase in the genitive are often periphrastic: cf. Ast (1835–8), *s.v.* 'φύσις' (III 522–3); LSJ *s.v.* 'φύσις' II 5; des Places (1970), *s.v.* 'φύσις' 4^o (II 559). Accordingly, some believe that 'τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ φύσεως' at *Sph.* 257D12–13 is also periphrastic and equivalent to 'τοῦ καλοῦ', which they then unpack as 'all beautiful things': cf. Frede (1967), 88; Owen (1971), 238. My interpretation reaches the same result through, perhaps, a different path: it regards 'τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ φύσεως' as an abstract noun-phrase and then adopts the 'generalizing' reading of the whole sentence. It remains unclear whether the view that expressions constructed around 'ἡ φύσις' have a periphrastic use coincides with the view that they can induce 'generalizing' readings of sentences.

¹⁰⁵ Further examples: *Smp.* 186B4; 191A5; *Phd.* 79B9–10; *R.* 4. 429D6; 9. 589B4; *Phdr.* 251B2–3; *Plt.* 267B5; 283E3; *Ti.* 55B5; 62C3–4; 75D3–4; 84C6; *Phlb.* 25E7–8; 26E6. This should answer the doubt raised by Lewis (1976), 114 by saying that he has found 'no parallel in which sense requires that "ἡ τοῦ X φύσις" (with singular "τοῦ X") must be reconstructed unambiguously as a universally quantified plural'.

boasts that ‘not-being firmly has its own nature’ (258B11). This conclusion, which amounts to the claim that there are kinds that match negative predicables, is far from trivial: it is not obvious that the things denoted by a negative predicable are unified by a single nature. At the beginning of Plato’s argument, to which 257D11–13 belongs, it is worthwhile to hint at a contrast between the things denoted by ‘not beautiful’, of which it is still unclear whether they are unified by a single nature, and the things denoted by ‘beautiful’, which (for Plato) are obviously unified by a single nature. The hint is given by the expression ‘the nature of the beautiful’: the sentence containing it says something about all beautiful things while alluding to their being unified by a single nature.

As for the second difficulty, the phrase ‘nothing other than’ need not entail that what we express by ‘not beautiful’ is difference from the nature of the beautiful *and only from it*: it can be understood as focusing the reader’s attention on the nature of the beautiful, i.e. all beautiful things.¹⁰⁶

This first solution of the difficulties faces an objection. At several points in the *Sophist* Plato uses sentences that contain expressions constructed around ‘ἡ φύσις’ governing a noun-phrase or an adjectival phrase in the genitive and understands them as referring to kinds without bringing in what instantiates them: cf. 255D9, 256D12–256E1, 257C7, 257D4, 258A7–8, 258A11, 258D7.¹⁰⁷ This objection may be strengthened. In the *Sophist*, the noun ‘φύσις’ is a hallmark of the ‘definitional’ reading of sentences.¹⁰⁸ It would be odd if all of a sudden it were employed to speak of all things that fall under a kind. This objection, although not undefeatable, is serious enough to prompt a search for an alternative solution.

Second solution. There is a second solution of the difficulties mentioned in the penultimate subsection.¹⁰⁹ It involves a different way of understanding the Greek sentence at 257D11–13, embodied in the following translation: ‘What on any occasion we express by “not beautiful”, this is difference [ἕτερον]¹¹⁰ of nothing other than the nature of the beautiful [οὐκ ἄλλου τινὸς . . . ἢ τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ φύσεως]’. On this interpretation, the expression ‘the nature of the beautiful’ introduces (not beautiful things, but) the kind beauty. However, beauty is not that *from* which something is different,

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *Chrm.* 167B11–167C1; 168D3–4; *Men.* 84C11–84D1; *Phd.* 64C4–5; *Sph.* 247E4; Frede (1967), 88; Lee (1972), 275; Lewis (1976), 113; Crivelli (1990), 48.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Kostman (1973), 200; Ketchum (1978), 60; van Eck (1995), 27; Szaif (1998), 439–40.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. above, n. 92 of Ch. 4 and text thereto. ¹⁰⁹ The basic intuition here is due to Scott Liddle.

¹¹⁰ Cf. above, n. 149 of Ch. 4 and text thereto.

but that *with* which the kind difference is linked so as to give rise to a special part of itself (the way in which difference is linked with beauty is not explicitly formulated in the sentence under consideration: it is left to the reader to realize that it amounts to difference from everything that falls under beauty). The phrase ‘ἕτερον . . . τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ φύσεως’ (257D12–13) is to be rendered by ‘difference of the nature of the beautiful’ or even by ‘beauty’s difference’: it refers to the part of difference generated by difference’s link with beauty. The genitive ‘τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ φύσεως’ (257D12–13) is an ‘adnominal’ or ‘definitory’ genitive: it marks off a special case of the kind denoted by the substantive it modifies (as in ‘light of day’ when contrasted with ‘light of a candle’, or ‘time of joy’ when contrasted with ‘time of sorrow’).¹¹¹ This enables one to take on board the point that raised the second difficulty, namely that ‘nothing other than’ expresses uniqueness: there is exactly one thing, namely beauty, with which difference is connected so as to generate its complement.

The second solution faces an objection: ‘Shortly after the passage under consideration, Plato states that the part of difference corresponding to being “does not mean ἐναντίον ἐκείνω, but only ἕτερον ἐκείνου” (258B3–4). If the second solution is right, one would expect “ἕτερον ἐκείνου” to be paired with “ἐναντίον ἐκείνου” (“adnominal” or “definitory” genitives in both cases). However, one finds “ἐναντίον ἐκείνω” instead of “ἐναντίον ἐκείνου”. This objection may be answered. The phrase ‘ἐναντίον ἐκείνου’ is unavailable because no theory of the ‘parts of contrariety’ has been introduced which would have justified it; on the other hand, ‘ἕτερον ἐκείνου’ clearly echoes ‘ἕτερον . . . τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ φύσεως’ (257D12–13) from the earlier passage where the theory of the parts of difference was introduced.

Other considerations speak for the second solution. First, Theaetetus’ remark about ‘what on any occasion we express by “not beautiful”’ (257D11–12) is offered as an answer to the Visitor’s question (257D9–10) whether the part of difference contrasted with the beautiful is nameless or has a denomination. This requires that Theaetetus’ remark show what the name of this part of difference is; and this, in turn, suggests that what we express by ‘not beautiful’ is itself the part of difference generated in connection with beauty, i.e. the difference of beauty.¹¹² Secondly, in a passage from the *Ion* (537C5–538B6) where he also discusses knowledge, Plato insists that knowledges differ in so far as the things they are about are of different kinds.

¹¹¹ Cf. Smyth (1920), 313; Allen (1997), 171.

¹¹² I owe this point to Lesley Brown. Cf. Lee (1972), 273, 275; van Eck (1995), 32; Silverman (2002), 193.

This suggests that each specific knowledge be associated with exactly one kind. Such a view is vindicated by the second solution's acceptance of the uniqueness of the kind with respect to which any part of difference is generated. These strengths induce me to opt for the second solution of the difficulties raised by the Greek sentence at 257D11–13.

The contrast between a kind and its complement. Plato uses the verb 'to be contrasted' (ἀντιτίθεσθαι, 257D7, 257E3, 258E2, *Plt.* 263D6) and the noun 'contrast' (ἀντιθεσις, 257E6, 258B1) to describe the relation between a part of difference (e.g. not-beauty) and the kind over which it comes to be (e.g. beauty). This contrast probably amounts to disjointedness: nothing falls under both kinds. For, were anything to fall under both, it would be different from itself. For instance, suppose something were to fall under both the part of difference that is not-beauty and beauty: since the part of difference in question is difference from all things that fall under beauty, the hypothesized thing would be different from all things that fall under beauty, and therefore from itself.

A clash with the Statesman? There is tension between what Plato appears to say in this part of the *Sophist*, namely that some kinds match negative predicables, and what he appears to say in the *Statesman* (262A3–264B6, 265A1–5), namely that no kinds match negative predicables. Some commentators suppose that Plato changed his mind between the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*.¹¹³ Others assume that this part of the *Sophist* does not commit Plato to kinds that match negative predicables.¹¹⁴ This route, however, is unpromising because Plato explicitly affirms (258C2–4, 258D5–7, 260B7–9) that not-being, the part of difference contrasted with being, is a kind:¹¹⁵ how could he consistently withhold a parallel claim about the parts of difference contrasted with kinds besides being?

The positions of the *Sophist* and the *Statesman* can, however, be reconciled. In the *Statesman* Plato is not concerned with the existence of kinds matching negative predicables, but with the correctness of divisions. He prescribes that in divisions one should avoid isolating a 'small' species by contrasting it with its remainder within the genus: for instance, one should not divide animal into man and beast. The problem Plato has in mind might be that the remainder of a small species within a genus straddles

¹¹³ Cf. Frede (1967), 93–4. ¹¹⁴ Cf. Dixsaut (1991), 196–7, 198; Fine (1993), 115; Berman (1996), 36.

¹¹⁵ Cf. O'Brien (1991a), 290; O'Brien (1995), 71.

across the genus in a way that is incompatible with a correct classification. Graphically:

| | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----|
| footed-domestic-animal | | | |
| biped | | quadruped | |
| man | bird | cat | dog |
| man | footed-domestic-animal-other-than-men | | |

The table's first three rows display a correct classification. The genus footed-domestic-animal is divided into biped and quadruped, which are then divided further: biped into man and bird, quadruped into cat and dog. The table's fourth row shows the result of isolating the small species man within the genus footed-domestic-animal: the remainder of this small species within the genus, namely footed-domestic-animal-other-than-men, straddles across the genus footed-domestic-animal in a way that bars it from belonging to the classification displayed in the first three rows. For, where would the division between man and footed-domestic-animal-other-than-men fit within that classification? Neither above the division into biped and quadruped (because biped lies partly outside both man and footed-domestic-animal-other-than-men) nor below it (because footed-domestic-animal-other-than-men lies partly outside both biped and quadruped). True, the same genus can be divided in more than one way;¹¹⁶ but it should not happen that the same kind is reached by two different and mutually incompatible divisional routes (otherwise the same kind would have different definitions corresponding to these mutually incompatible divisional routes). Given that the division displayed in the first three lines is correct, the fourth line cannot belong to a correct division. For this reason footed-domestic-animal-other-than-men is not a *species* of footed-domestic-animal, but is merely a *part* of it. For all the *Statesman* says, the remainder of a small species within a genus may well be a kind, one that is a part but not a species of the genus. So, if this interpretation of it is correct, the passage from the *Statesman* does not clash with the *Sophist's* acceptance of kinds matching negative predicables.¹¹⁷ One advantage of this interpretation of the *Statesman* passage is that it accounts for Plato's insistence that one should avoid isolating *small* species within genera (cf. *Plt.* 262A9, 262B6, 265A3), which suggests that the problem addressed does not concern whether there are kinds matching certain predicables, but whether a certain kind may be a species in a division.

¹¹⁶ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 18 of Ch. 1. ¹¹⁷ Cf. Szaif (1998), 441.

Aristotle (*Metaph.* A 9, 990^b13–14; M 4, 1079^a9–10; *Alex. Aphr. in Metaph.* 80, 15–81,7, from the lost *On Ideas*) argues that if the Platonic ‘One Over Many’ argument for forms were sound, it would establish the existence of forms matching negative expressions. He then contends that such a result should be unpalatable for the Platonists. Nothing, however, guarantees that Aristotle’s views on what should or should not be acceptable to a Platonist were shared by Plato himself.

5.3 THE BEING OF NOT-BEING

Negative kinds are. In 257D14–258C6 Plato finally offers his proof that not-being is:

| | |
|---|--------|
| VIS. ἴθι νυν τόδε μοι λέγε. | 257D14 |
| ΤΗΤ. Τὸ ποῖον; | 257E1 |
| VIS. Ἄλλο τι τῶν ὄντων τινὸς ἐνὸς γένους ἀφο- ρισθέν, ¹¹⁸ καὶ πρὸς τι τῶν ὄντων αὐτὸ πάλιν ἀντιτεθέν, οὕτω συμβέβηκεν εἶναι τὸ μὴ καλόν; | |
| ΤΗΤ. Οὕτως. | E5 |
| VIS. Ὅντος δὴ πρὸς ὃν ἀντίθεσις, ὡς ἔοικ’, εἶναι τις συμβαίνει τὸ μὴ καλόν. | |
| ΤΗΤ. Ὅρθότατα. | |
| VIS. Τί οὖν; κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἄρα μᾶλλον μὲν τὸ καλὸν ἡμῖν ἐστὶ τῶν ὄντων, ἦττον δὲ τὸ μὴ καλόν; | E10 |
| ΤΗΤ. Οὐδέν. | |
| VIS. Ὅμοίως ἄρα τὸ μὴ μέγα καὶ τὸ μέγα αὐτὸ εἶναι λεκτέον; | 258A1 |
| ΤΗΤ. Ὅμοίως. | |
| VIS. Οὐκοῦν καὶ τὸ μὴ δίκαιον τῶν δίκαιων κατὰ ταῦτα θετέον πρὸς τὸ μηδέν τι μᾶλλον εἶναι θάτερον θατέρου; | A5 |
| ΤΗΤ. Τί μήν; | |
| VIS. Καὶ τᾶλλα δὴ ταύτη λέξομεν, ἐπεὶπερ ἡ θατέρου φύσις ἐφάνη τῶν ὄντων οὔσα, ἐκείνης δὲ οὔσης ἀνάγκη δὴ καὶ τὰ μόρια αὐτῆς μηδενὸς ἦττον ὄντα τιθέναι. | |
| ΤΗΤ. Πῶς γὰρ οὐ; | A10 |
| VIS. Οὐκοῦν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἡ τῆς θατέρου μορίου φύσεως καὶ τῆς τοῦ ὄντος πρὸς ἄλληλα ἀντικειμένων ἀντίθεσις οὐδὲν ἦττον, εἰ θέμις εἰπεῖν, αὐτοῦ τοῦ ὄντος οὐσία ἐστίν, οὐκ ἐναντίον ἐκείνῳ σημαίνουσα ἀλλὰ τοσοῦτον μόνον, ἕτερον ἐκείνου. | 258B1 |

¹¹⁸ I read ‘τινὸς ἐνὸς γένους ἀφορισθέν’ with T and most eds. Robinson reads ‘τινὸς ἐνὸς γένους μέρος ἀφορισθέν’. The verb ‘ἀφορίζω’ may be construed with the accusative and the genitive to mean ‘to separate out within’: cf. *Hp.Ma.* 298D7–8.

- THT. Σαφέστατά γε. B5
- VIS. Τίν' οὖν αὐτὴν προσείπωμεν;
- THT. Δῆλον ὅτι τὸ μὴ ὄν, ὃ διὰ τὸν σοφιστὴν ἐζη-
τοῦμεν, αὐτὸ ἔστι τοῦτο.
- VIS. Πότερον οὖν, ὡσπερ εἶπες, ἔστιν οὐδενὸς τῶν
ἄλλων οὐσίας ἐλλειπόμενον, καὶ δεῖ θαρροῦντα ἤδη λέγειν B10
ὅτι τὸ μὴ ὄν βεβαίως ἔστι τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν ἔχον, ὡσπερ τὸ
μέγα ἦν μέγα καὶ τὸ καλὸν ἦν καλὸν καὶ τὸ μὴ μέγα <μὴ
μέγα> καὶ τὸ μὴ καλὸν <μὴ καλόν>,¹¹⁹ οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν 258C1
κατὰ ταύτῃ ἦν τε καὶ ἔστι μὴ ὄν, ἐνάριθμον τῶν πολλῶν
ὄντων εἶδος ἓν; ἢ τίνα ἔτι πρὸς αὐτό, ὧ Θεαίτητε, ἀπιστίαν
ἔχομεν; C5
- THT. Οὐδεμίαν. C6
- VIS. Then tell me this. 257D
- THT. What? 257E
- VIS. Is it not the case that¹²⁰ by being marked off from a certain single
kind among those which are, and besides by being contrasted with
one of those which are – in this way the not-beautiful turns out to
be?
- THT. Yes.
- VIS. So, as it seems, the not-beautiful is a contrast of a being with respect
to a being.
- THT. Right.
- VIS. And, according to this argument, shall we hold that the beautiful is
to a higher degree one of the beings, whereas the not-beautiful is
one to a lesser degree?
- THT. Not at all.
- VIS. Therefore we must say that the not-large and the large itself are to 258A
the same degree?
- THT. To the same degree.
- VIS. And we must also put the not-just on the same footing as the just
with respect to the fact that neither of them is to a higher degree
than the other?
- THT. Certainly.
- VIS. And we shall say the same of all the rest, because it turned out that
the nature of the different is to be ranked among beings and, since
it is, we must necessarily hold that its parts also are no less than
anything else.
- THT. Of course.

¹¹⁹ The emendations are due to Böckh (1806), 150.

¹²⁰ Taking 'ἄλλο τι' as the Latin 'nonne': cf. Lee (1972), 278. For a different rendering cf. Owen (1971), 239.

VIS. So, it seems, the contrast of the nature of a part of the different¹²¹ and that of being,¹²² which are mutually opposed, is, if it be permissible to say so, a being no less than being itself and it does not mean contrariety to it, but only difference of it. 258B

THY. That is quite clear.

VIS. How shall we call it?

THY. Clearly this is precisely not-being, which we were seeking for the sake of the sophist.

VIS. Therefore, as you say, it is not inferior to any of the others in being? Must we now be bold to say that not-being firmly has¹²³ its own nature – just as the large was large and the beautiful was beautiful and the not-large not-large and the not-beautiful not-beautiful, so also not-being in the same way was and is a not-being, a single kind to be reckoned among the many which are? Or have we any further doubts about it, Theaetetus? 258C

THY. None at all.

The Visitor's initial remark ('Then tell me this', 257D14) indicates a new topic: the being of kinds that match negative expressions. This portion of text leads to the culmination of Plato's argument: the claim that not-being is.

Being as non-emptiness. What does Plato mean when he uses the verb 'to be' in sentences like 'Not-beauty is' or 'Not-justice is'? He might mean that certain kinds are non-empty: for a kind to be is to be non-empty, i.e. to hold of at least one thing. This is a possible way of understanding the use of 'to be' applied to kinds: one can say 'Nastiness is' to mean that there are nasty people, i.e. that nastiness is a non-empty kind.¹²⁴

Whatever its attractiveness, this interpretation of the use of 'to be' applied to kinds must be rejected because it saddles Plato with a fallacious argument. For, suppose the interpretation were correct. Then, at 258A7–10, Plato would be arguing that since difference is, i.e. is non-empty, then all its

¹²¹ The phrase 'τῆς θατέρου μορίου φύσεως' can only be rendered by 'of the nature of a part of the different'. Some translators render it by 'of a part of the nature of the different' (cf. Cornford (1935), 291; Ambuel (2007), 234).

¹²² The words 'that of being' ('τῆς τοῦ ὄντος', 258B1) can stand both for 'the nature of being' ('τῆς τοῦ ὄντος <φύσεως>', cf. Fowler (1921), 419) and for 'the nature of a part of being' ('τῆς τοῦ ὄντος <μορίου φύσεως>', cf. N. P. White (1993), 52). Pace O'Brien (1991a), 314–17, O'Brien (1995), 112–16, and van Eck (2002), 78, the second solution cannot be ruled out on purely linguistic grounds.

¹²³ The construction 'ἔστι... ἔχον' is common in Plato: cf. *Men.* 82B10–82C3; *Phdr.* 245E7; *Sph.* 252A8; *Plt.* 287E4; *Lg.* 5. 743A1; 10. 896A5. There is no warrant for reading 'ἔστι... ἔχον' ('is by having', cf. Frede (1967), 44).

¹²⁴ I defended this exegesis in Crivelli (1990), 75.

parts also are, i.e. are non-empty. This is a poor argument. The non-emptiness of difference is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the non-emptiness of its parts. To make it into a sufficient condition, something must be added: the kind with which the part of difference is contrasted should not hold of everything. For let K be a kind that holds of everything. Consider the part of difference contrasted with K : difference from everything of which K holds. Suppose this part of difference were to hold of something, say a . Then a would be different from everything of which K holds. But, since it holds of everything, K would hold also of a , so that a would be different from itself, which is impossible. The part of difference in question will then hold of nothing, i.e. will be empty, so that it will not be.

Being as definability. A more plausible interpretation of what Plato means when he uses the verb 'to be' in sentences like 'Not-beauty is' or 'Not-justice is' is that being for a kind consists in having a nature, i.e. in being something that can (at least in principle) be defined.¹²⁵ This assumption provides Plato with a good argument for the conclusion that the kinds in question 'are'. For, consider the process whereby the parts of difference are generated: the part of difference corresponding to a kind K is generated from difference by isolating within it the part that is difference from everything falling under K . This ensures that the parts of difference have a nature, which they inherit from difference itself and from the kind with respect to which the part is isolated. Since not-beauty and not-justice are parts of difference, it follows that they have a nature. Thus, they 'are'.

The result thus established, that kinds like not-beauty and not-justice 'are' in that they have a nature, is far from trivial. The major reason philosophers have for rejecting such kinds is that the things one might suppose to fall under them have nothing in common, i.e. share no common nature.¹²⁶ Plato's account of these kinds as parts of difference answers this worry: given any kind K , the things that do not fall under K do share a nature, namely difference from everything that falls under K .

The argument for the being of not-being. After considering not-beauty and not-justice, namely the parts of difference corresponding to the kinds beauty and justice, Plato examines not-being, namely the part of difference corresponding to the kind being. The argument about the parts of

¹²⁵ Cf. Frede (1967), 44–7; Lee (1972), 276–7; Roberts (1986), 234; Szaif (1998), 442.

¹²⁶ Cf. above, n. 37 and text thereto.

difference recalls that about negative predicables: to solve a difficult problem, Plato considers first an easier similar case, then infers a general rule covering all cases, and finally applies this rule to the difficult original case.¹²⁷

Just as not-beauty, namely the part of difference corresponding to the kind beauty, is difference from everything falling under beauty, so also not-being, namely the part of difference corresponding to the kind being, is difference from everything falling under being. But the not-being thus characterized can hardly be a part of difference corresponding to the kind being taken on its own: were this the case, Plato would be reintroducing a type of not-being which he had long declared off-limits. What Plato has in mind must be not-being-(a)- ϕ , characterized as difference from everything falling under being-(a)- ϕ , i.e. difference from everything that is (a) ϕ , i.e. difference from everything that exists in (a) ϕ 's way (here and in the rest of this subsection, ' ϕ ' is a schematic letter to be replaced with general terms). There are two ways in which Plato's words at 258AII–258B4 may be plausibly taken to convey this point. First, Plato might be helping himself to an incomplete but elliptical use of 'to be': as I pointed out earlier,¹²⁸ he followed a procedure of this sort at 257BI–257C4. Secondly, when he speaks of 'the contrast of the nature of a part of the different and that of being' (258AII–258BI), Plato might be thinking of a contrast between the nature of a part of the different and the nature of a part of being,¹²⁹ where the parts of being are kinds like being-beautiful and being-just.

Just as not-beauty and not-justice are beings in that each of them has a definite nature, so also not-being-(a)- ϕ is a being in that it has its definite nature. This conclusion constitutes the final refutation of Parmenides' prohibition of mixing being with not-being. At 257AI–I2 it was established that, in a way, being is not: being is not in so far as it is not the other kinds because it is different from them. Now, at 258AII–258C6, the converse result is established, namely that, in a way, not-being is: not-being is in so far as (each of the kinds covered by) not-being-(a)- ϕ has a definite nature.

Not-being-(a)- ϕ is not a single kind, but a collection of indefinitely many kinds, which include not-being-beautiful, not-being-large, etc. It therefore comes as no surprise that Plato summarizes his position as follows:

¹²⁷ Cf. above, n. 25 and text thereto. Not-being is *analogous* to not-beauty, not-justice, etc. Some commentators favour a different exegesis, whereby not-being is a *generalization* over not-beauty, not-justice, etc. and therefore coincides with difference: cf. e.g. Diès (1909), 7; Diès (1925), 279; Fraccaroli (1934), 59–60; Cherniss (1944), 264; Ross (1951), 115.

¹²⁸ Cf. above, subsection to n. 66. ¹²⁹ Cf. above, n. 122.

- VIS. Ἡμεῖς δέ γε οὐ μόνον τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν ἀπεδείξαμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ εἶδος ὃ τυγχάνει ὄν τοῦ μὴ ὄντος ἀπεφηνάμεθα: τὴν γὰρ θατέρου φύσιν ἀποδείξαντες οὖσαν τε καὶ κατακεκερματισμένην ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ ὄντα πρὸς ἄλληλα, τὸ πρὸς τὸ ὄν ἐκάστου¹³⁰ μόνιον αὐτῆς ἀντιτιθέμενον ἔτολήσαμεν εἰπεῖν ὡς αὐτὸ τοῦτό ἐστιν ὄντως τὸ μὴ ὄν. E3
- VIS. However we showed¹³¹ not only that not-beings are, but also the kind that happens to be of not-being: for, after demonstrating that the nature of the different is and is parcelled out over all beings in relation to one another, the part of it contrasted with the being of each thing, precisely this we have dared to say is really not-being. 258D
258E

The phrase ‘the being of each thing’ may be understood as containing an ‘adnominal’ or ‘definitory’ genitive, which marks off specifications of the kind being.¹³² Just as ‘the being of beauty’ would denote being with respect to beauty (i.e. being-beautiful), and ‘the being of largeness’ would denote being with respect to largeness (i.e. being-large), so also ‘the being of each thing’ denotes each specification of the kind being, namely each being with respect to a kind.

The following remark also fits well with my view that not-being is not-being-(a)-φ, a collection of indefinitely many kinds:

- VIS. Τὸ μὲν δὴ μὴ ὄν ἡμῖν ἔν τι τῶν ἄλλων γένος ὄν ἀνεφάνη, κατὰ πάντα τὰ ὄντα διεσπαρμένον. 260B7
B8
- VIS. Not-being appeared to us to be a single kind among the others, disseminated among all beings. 260B

The claim that not-being is a kind ‘disseminated among all beings’ (260B8) chimes with its being a collection of indefinitely many kinds, each of which is isolated within the kind difference by the latter’s coming to be over a specification of the kind being, generated, in turn, by the link of the kind

¹³⁰ At 258E2 I read ‘ἐκάστου’ with the main MSS and early eds.: cf. Stephanus (1578), 258; Fischer (1774), 81. In two passages of his *Commentary on Aristotle’s Physics* (135, 26 and 238, 26) Simplicius quotes *Sph.* 258E2. In the first, the MSS of Simplicius read ‘ἐκάστου’, in the second they report ‘ἐκαστον’. The Aldine edition of Simplicius swaps the readings: in the first passage it reads ‘ἐκαστον’, in the second ‘ἐκάστου’. Recent eds., from Heindorf (1810), 422 onwards, print ‘ἐκαστον’. The reading ‘ἐκάστου’ has been recently defended by several commentators: cf. Anscombe (1966), 415; Owen (1971), 239–40; O’Brien (1991a), 287–9; Cordero (1993), 184, 270; O’Brien (1993), 14; O’Brien (1995), 67–70; van Eck (2002), 75–6; Fronterotta (2007), 454–5; Centrone (2008), 207–9. The phrase ‘τὸ ὄν ἐκάστου’ returns at *Ep.* 7. 343A1, but its meaning there is obscure.

¹³¹ Cf. 258AII–258B4.

¹³² Cf. above, n. III and text thereto. According to van Eck (2002), 79, ‘the being of each is the being each thing participates in’, namely the kind being. But, had Plato intended to make this point, he would have used ‘τὸ ὄν πάντων’ rather than ‘τὸ ὄν ἐκάστου’.

being with a specific kind. For instance, one member of this collection is not-being-beautiful, which is isolated within the kind difference by its coming to be over a specification of being, namely being-beautiful, generated in turn by the link of the kind being with a certain kind, namely beauty.

Why not-being-beautiful alongside not-beauty? One might be inclined to protest that there is no difference between not-beauty and not-being-beautiful: exactly the same things fall under both because the things that are different from everything that falls under beauty are precisely those that are different from everything that falls under being-beautiful. So why does Plato speak of not-being-beautiful as if it were distinct from not-beauty?¹³³

Plato's reason has probably to do with the misunderstanding of not-being-beautiful to which the thinkers he is addressing fall prey. The thinkers in question are those who believe that 'whenever we say "not being", [. . .] we [. . .] call something contrary to what is' (257B3–4). They are committed to the view that not-being-beautiful is empty. For, according to them, if something were to fall under not-being-beautiful, then it would be contrary to everything that falls under being-beautiful, and it would therefore be bound not to exist (because it would be in the condition polarly opposed to that of existing while falling under beauty). The position of these thinkers regarding not-beauty is quite different. They are not committed to saying that not-beauty is empty. For, according to them, what falls under not-beauty is what is contrary to everything that falls under beauty. Ugly things fall under this kind.

Plato's account, based on difference rather than contrariety, does not require not-being-beautiful to be empty. There are things different from everything that falls under being-beautiful, i.e. things different from everything that exists while falling under beauty. So the distinction between not-beauty and not-being-beautiful is important for Plato because his opponents took them, erroneously, to have different extensions.

¹³³ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 200 of Ch. 4.

Sentences, false sentences, and false belief

Can sentences and beliefs be false? Once the puzzle of not-being has been cracked, the affirmative answer seems irrefragable. But the sophist will raise one more objection: to say, or believe, a falsehood is to say, or believe, what is not; but saying, or believing, what is not is still as impossible and puzzling as it was at the beginning of the discussion that constitutes the *Sophist's* core. Plato's riposte is to explain saying or believing 'what is not' in a way that clearly shows it to be possible. Such an explanation is the target of the last portion of the discussion that constitutes the *Sophist's* core (259D9–264B5). It divides into three parts, to which the present chapter's three sections correspond.

First, Plato offers an account of sentences (259D9–262E10). Its intent is to show that speaking is a two-pronged activity: whoever speaks says one thing about one thing. Secondly, Plato offers an account of false sentences incorporating the view that whoever speaks falsely says what is not (262E11–263D5). This builds on the result just established: since whoever speaks says one thing about one thing, whoever speaks falsely *says what is not* by *saying* about something *what is not* about it. This is unproblematic because what is not about something is what is different from everything that is about it. Thirdly, Plato offers an account of thought as inner silent conversation (263D6–264B5). This enables him to extend his results from speech to thought.

6.1 SENTENCES

The need for an examination of sentences. The Visitor and Theaetetus agree they must determine 'what a sentence is' (260A7–8). In other words, they must define sentence (cf. 263C2). Theaetetus wonders why (260B3–4). The Visitor explains (260B5–261C10) that since to say, or believe, falsehoods is to say, or believe, what is not, the sophist could still adopt a last defence based on denying that not-being combines with sentences and beliefs: by

defining sentence and belief it will be possible to show that not-being combines with them.

At first blush, the sophist's last defence seems desperate and silly. An account of not-being in terms of difference has been offered; one has been hearing all along that to say, or believe, falsehoods is to say, or believe, what is not. Why on earth should one doubt that not-being combines with sentences and beliefs?

Words, names, and verbs. The two inquirers begin their examination of sentences by considering their constituents:

- VIS. Φέρε δῆ, καθάπερ περὶ τῶν εἰδῶν καὶ τῶν γραμμάτων ἐλέγομεν, περὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων πάλιν ὡσαύτως ἐπισκευώμεθα. φαίνεται γάρ πη ταύτη τὸ νῦν ζητούμενον. 261DI
- THE. Τὸ ποῖον οὖν δὴ περὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων ὑπακουστέον; D5
- VIS. Εἴτε πάντα ἀλλήλοις συναρμόττει εἴτε μηδέν, εἴτε τὰ μὲν ἐθέλει, τὰ δὲ μή.
- THE. Δῆλον τοῦτό γε, ὅτι τὰ μὲν ἐθέλει, τὰ δ' οὐ.
- VIS. Τὸ τοιόνδε λέγεις ἴσως, ὅτι τὰ μὲν ἐφεξῆς λεγόμενα καὶ δηλοῦντά τι συναρμόττει, τὰ δὲ τῆ συνεχεῖα μηδὲν σημαίνοντα ἀναρμοστεῖ. 261EI
- THE. Πῶς τί τοῦτ' εἶπες;
- VIS. Ὅπερ ὠήθην ὑπολαβόντα σε προσομολογεῖν. ἔστι γὰρ ἡμῖν που τῶν τῆ φωνῆ περὶ τὴν οὐσίαν δηλωμάτων διττὸν γένος. E5
- THE. Πῶς;
- VIS. Τὸ μὲν ὀνόματα, τὸ δὲ ῥήματα κληθέν. 262AI
- THE. Εἰπέτε ἑκάτερον.
- VIS. Τὸ μὲν ἐπὶ ταῖς πράξεσιν ὃν δῆλωμα ῥῆμά που λέγομεν.
- THE. Ναί. A5
- VIS. Τὸ δὲ γ' ἐπ' αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἐκείνας πράττουσι σημείον τῆς φωνῆς ἐπιτεθὲν ὄνομα.
- THE. Κομιδῆ μὲν οὖν. A8
- VIS. Come, then, let us reflect about names again in the same way as we spoke about kinds and letters. For this is how the object of the present inquiry reveals itself. 261D
- THE. What is it about names that we must attend to?
- VIS. Whether they all fit with one another, or none do, or some are willing and some are not.
- THE. This at least is clear, that some are willing and some are not.
- VIS. You mean perhaps this, that some of them, when spoken in succession, also fit together and indicate something, while some do not fit together and signify nothing by their succession. 261E

THY. What do you mean by this?

VIS. What I thought you assumed when you agreed. For we have, I suppose, a double kind of vocal indicators of being.

THY. How so?

VIS. One is called 'names', the other 'verbs'. 262A

THY. Explain both.

VIS. The one which is an indicator of actions we call, I think, 'verb'.

THY. Yes.

VIS. The other, the vocal sign given to those who perform actions, we call 'name'.

THY. Certainly.

The Visitor asks whether all words fit with one another, or none do, or some do and some do not (261D1–7). Theaetetus immediately avers the last alternative: some words fit with one another and some do not (261D8). The sequel of the conversation (261D9–261E4), however, shows that Theaetetus has misunderstood the question. Clarification is needed.

The Visitor distinguishes (261E4–262A8) two kinds of words, or 'vocal indicators of being' (261E5): verbs (ῥήματα) and names (ὀνόματα) (261E4–262A1). Verbs signify actions (262A3–5, 262B5–6, 262E13–14). Names signify 'those who perform actions' (262A6–8, 262B10–262C1), later implicitly identified with objects (262E13–14).¹ I pause for a few remarks.

- (1) The fact that the discussion of types of names begins with a misunderstanding on Theaetetus' part probably indicates that the views presented are a novelty.²
- (2) The noun 'ὄνομα' has a narrow and a broad use. On its narrow use, whereby it is best rendered by 'name', 'ὄνομα' denotes the vocal indicators that signify objects. On its broad use, whereby it might be rendered by 'word', it denotes all vocal indicators (including those that signify actions and those that signify objects).³ The broad use matches the dialogues: Plato applies 'ὄνομα' to proper nouns like 'Cratylus' (*Cra.* 383B2–3), common nouns like 'man' (*Cra.* 399C1, cf. *Sph.* 251A6 with 251B1), adjectives like 'bad' (*Cra.* 416A1–2, cf. 417C7–8; 433E8; *Prt.* 355B4–355C1; *Men.* 87B7–87C1; *Alc.* 2 140C8–140D2; *Sph.* 251A6 with 251B2; *Phlb.* 37E6–7; *Lg.* 8. 842E6; 10. 895E2), demonstrative pronouns

¹ The expressions used to describe the relation of words to what they stand for are the nouns 'indicator' ('δηλωμα', 261E5, 262A3) and 'sign' ('σημειον', 262A6, 262D9) and the verb 'to signify' ('σημαίνειν', 262B6). Are the characterizations of verbs and names as signifying (respectively) actions and objects definitions? Some commentators (e.g. Cornford (1935), 303, 308) think they are; Hoekstra and Scheppers (2003), 69–70 argue that they are not.

² Cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 172; Hoekstra and Scheppers (2003), 63–4.

³ Cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 172; Stough (1990), 370; Denyer (1991), 148–9; Hoekstra and Scheppers (2003), 66; Brown (2008), 452.

like 'this' (*Ti.* 50A1–2, cf. 49E1–2), numerals like 'one' (*Prm.* 149C8–149D1, cf. *Cra.* 435B7–8), participles like 'flowing' (*Cra.* 421C4–6), and infinitives like 'to grow' (*Cra.* 414A8–414B2, cf. 424A8–9; *Phd.* 71B6–9; *Sph.* 226B2–6).⁴

- (3) The distinction between actions and objects is unclear. Is it an exhaustive ontological classification, so that every being is an action just if it is not an object? Or are actions objects of a special type?
- (4) The word 'action' may be used both for particular actions (cf. 'My action caused distress') and for action-types (cf. 'Humans cannot perform the action of flying'). Are the actions signified by verbs particulars or types? If they were particulars, the verb 'sits' would signify all particular actions of sitting that have taken or will take place, including the one performed by me now while I am writing this and those performed by others at the same time. This is, however, hard to square with some points of the *Sophist*. (4.1) At 262E13–14 the Visitor announces: 'I shall speak a sentence to you by putting an object together with an action by means of a name and a verb.' These words suggest that in 'Theaetetus is sitting' and like sentences the speaker combines exactly one object with exactly one action. With which particular action of flying would Theaetetus be combined by someone uttering 'Theaetetus is flying'? (4.2) The cross-reference at 263B11–12 seems to require that verbs signify kinds.⁵ I therefore think that the actions signified by verbs within sentences are not particular actions, but action-types. In particular, I assume that the action signified by any verb within any sentence is a kind (one of a special sort, like the kinds understanding, sitting, and flying).⁶
- (5) The distinction between verbs and names is also unclear. Is it contrasting the lexical categories of verbs and names, or the grammatical categories of predicate-expressions and subject-expressions? Both alternatives face difficulties. For, arguably, not every verb signifies an action (consider 'is carried', to which in Greek corresponds a single word, 'φέρεται'); and not every predicate-expression signifies an action (consider 'is tall').⁷

Naming and saying. After distinguishing verbs from names, the two inquirers discuss sentences:

⁴ Cf. Oehler (1962), 57; Hoekstra and Scheppers (2003), 57; Crivelli (2008), 222. At *Sph.* 237C2 (cf. 250D7) Plato even uses 'ὄνομα' for the phrase 'μὴ ὄν'.

⁵ On this cross-reference cf. below, subsection to n. III.

⁶ Cf. Cornford (1935), 314–5; Szaif (1998), 472; Davidson (2005), 81; O'Brien (2005), 139; Thomas (2008), 647.

⁷ Cf. Xenakis (1957), 168; Galligan (1983), 272; Stough (1990), 370.

- VIS. Οὐκοῦν ἐξ ὀνομάτων μὲν μόνων συνεχῶς λεγο- 262A9
μένων οὐκ ἔστι ποτὲ λόγος, οὐδ' αὖ ῥημάτων χωρὶς ὀνο- A10
μάτων λεχθέντων.
THT. Ταῦτ' οὐκ ἔμαθον.
- VIS. Δῆλον γὰρ ὡς πρὸς ἕτερόν τι βλέπων ἄρτι συνωμο- BI
λόγεις· ἐπεὶ τοῦτ' αὐτὸ ἐβουλόμην εἰπεῖν, ὅτι συνεχῶς ᾧδε
λεγόμενα ταῦτα οὐκ ἔστι λόγος.
THT. Πῶς;
- VIS. Οἷον βαδίζει τρέχει καθεύδει, καὶ τᾶλλα B5
ὅσα πράξεις σημαίνει ῥήματα, κἂν πάντα τις ἐφεξῆς αὐτ'
εἴπη, λόγον οὐδὲν τι μᾶλλον ἀπεργάζεται.
THT. Πῶς γάρ;
- VIS. Οὐκοῦν καὶ πάλιν ὅταν λέγηται λέων ἔλαφος B10
ἵππος, ὅσα τε ὀνόματα τῶν τὰς πράξεις αὐτῶν πραττόντων
ὀνομάσθη, καὶ κατὰ ταύτην διήτην συνεχῆσαν οὐδεὶς πω 262C1
συνέστη λόγος· οὐδεμίαν γὰρ οὔτε οὕτως οὔτ' ἐκείνως
πρᾶξιν οὐδ' ἀπραξίαν οὐδὲ οὐσίαν ὄντος οὐδὲ μὴ ὄντος
δηλοῖ τὰ φωνηθέντα, πρὶν ἂν τις τοῖς ὀνόμασι τὰ ῥήματα
κεράσῃ. τότε δ' ἤρμωσέν τε καὶ λόγος ἐγένετο εὐθύς ἢ C5
πρώτῃ συμπλοκῇ, σχεδὸν τῶν λόγων ὁ πρῶτός τε καὶ
σμικρότατος.
THT. Πῶς ἄρ' ᾧδε λέγεις;
- VIS. Ὅταν εἴπη τις ἄνθρωπος μαθάνει, λόγον C10
εἶναι φῆς τοῦτον ἐλάχιστόν τε καὶ πρώτον;
THT. Ἐγώ γε. 262D1
- VIS. Δηλοῖ γὰρ ἤδη πού τότε περὶ τῶν ὄντων ἢ γιγνο-
μένων ἢ γεγονότων ἢ μελλόντων, καὶ οὐκ ὀνομάζει μόνον
ἀλλὰ τι περαίνει, συμπλέκων τὰ ῥήματα τοῖς ὀνόμασι. διὸ
λέγειν τε αὐτὸν ἀλλ' οὐ μόνον ὀνομάζειν εἴπομεν, καὶ διή D5
καὶ τῷ πλέγματι τούτῳ τὸ ὄνομα ἐφθεγγάμεθα λόγον.
THT. Ὅρθῶς.
- VIS. Οὔτω δὴ καθάπερ τὰ πράγματα τὰ μὲν ἀλλήλοις
ἤρμωσεν, τὰ δ' οὐ, καὶ περὶ τὰ τῆς φωνῆς αὐτῶν σημεῖα τὰ μὲν
οὐχ ἀρμόττει, τὰ δὲ ἀρμόττοντα αὐτῶν λόγον ἀπηργά- 262E1
σατο.
THT. Παντάπασι μὲν οὖν.
- VIS. Ἐτι δὴ σμικρόν τόδε.
THT. Τὸ ποῖον; E5
- VIS. Λόγον ἀναγκαῖον, ὅτανπερ ἦ, τινὸς εἶναι λόγον, μὴ
δὲ τινὸς ἀδύνατον.
THT. Οὔτως.
- VIS. Οὐκοῦν καὶ ποιόν τινα αὐτὸν εἶναι δεῖ;
THT. Πῶς δ' οὐ; E10
- VIS. Now, a sentence never consists of names alone spoken in succession, 262A
nor yet of verbs spoken without names.

THT. This I do not understand.

VIS. Clearly you had something else in view when you agreed just now. 262B
For this is what I wanted to say, that these [*sc.* verbs and names]
spoken in succession in this way are not a sentence.

THT. In what way?

VIS. For instance, ‘walks runs sleeps’, and the other verbs, however many
signify actions, even if one speaks them all in a row, do not, for all
that, produce a sentence.

THT. How could they?

VIS. Again, when ‘lion stag horse’ is spoken, and however many names
of those who perform actions are pronounced, no sentence is ever 262C
composed by this succession as well. For neither in this way nor in
that do the utterances indicate any action or inaction or being of
what is or of what is not, until one blends verbs with names. Then
they fit and the first interweaving becomes immediately a sentence,
perhaps the first and smallest of sentences.

THT. What do you mean?

VIS. When someone says ‘Man understands’, do you say that this is a
shortest and primary sentence?

THT. I do. 262D

VIS. For he⁸ already indicates something about the things which are or
are coming to be or have come to be or are to come,⁹ and, by inter-
weaving verbs with names, does not merely name but accomplishes
something. For this reason we say that he does not merely name but
says something, and we gave the name ‘sentence’ to this weaving.¹⁰

THT. Right.

VIS. Thus, as some objects fit with one another and others do not, so,
also with vocal signs, some do not fit, but those of them that fit 262E
produce a sentence.

THT. By all means.

VIS. One further small point.

THT. Which?

VIS. It is necessary that a sentence, whenever there is one, be a sentence
of something.¹¹ It is impossible for it not to be of something.

⁸ Taking ‘τις’ (supplied from 262C9) as the grammatical subject of ‘δηλοῖ’ (262D2), ‘οὐκ ὀνομάζει’ (262D3), and ‘τι περσίνει’ (262D4): cf. Matthews (1972), 256–7; Nuchelmans (1973), 15; Brann *et al.* (1996), 75; Hoekstra and Scheppers (2003), 68; Cavini (2009), 11. Others take instead ‘λόγος’ (supplied from 262C9) as the grammatical subject: cf. Cornford (1935), 305; Duerlinger (2005), 134; Centrone (2008), 225; Gaskin (2008), 1.

⁹ Cf. *R.* 3, 392D3.

¹⁰ Cf. LSJ *s.v.* ‘φθέγγομαι’ 11. The etymological connection between ‘λέγειν’ (262D5) (‘says something’) and ‘λόγος’ (262D6) (‘sentence’) is lost in the translation. It would be preserved by ‘speaks’ and ‘speech’. But rendering ‘λέγειν’ by ‘to speak’ has its own disadvantages because ‘λέγειν’ in Greek has grammatical constructions to which nothing corresponds with ‘to speak’ in English: problems would arise, for instance, with the translation of 263B4–5.

¹¹ ‘Of something’ translates the simple genitive ‘τινός’. Sentences about Theaetetus are described by Theaetetus himself as ‘mine’ (cf. 263A6, 263A10) and by the Visitor as ‘yours’ (cf. 263C7).

THT. Yes.

VIS. Therefore it must also be of a certain quality.

THT. How could it not?

If both names and verbs are involved, then, when spoken in succession, they also ‘fit together and indicate something’ (261D9–261E1); but words of only one kind ‘do not fit together and signify nothing by their succession’ (261E1–2). Specifically, when words of only one kind are uttered successively, the resulting string is not a sentence (262A9–11): if only verbs are uttered, the resulting string is not a sentence (e.g. ‘walks runs sleeps’ is not a sentence) (262B2–8); if only names are uttered, the resulting string again fails to be a sentence (e.g. ‘lion stag horse’ is not a sentence) (262B9–262C2).¹² Only if verbs are uttered together with names do the words fit with one another and constitute a sentence (262C4–6). For example, an utterance of ‘Man understands’ is a sentence (262C9–262D1) and it is obtained by uttering the verb ‘understands’ together with the name ‘man’.

The Visitor and Theaetetus agree that one name and one verb make up a sentence that is shortest and primary (262C5–262D1, 263C1–4). This presupposes that there are longer and non-primary sentences, which do not consist of merely one name and one verb. These other sentences are not described. The use of ‘primary’ suggests that these other sentences are composed of primary ones (whose components are not sentences, but names and verbs), much in the same way as, according to the *Cratylus* (422A1–422E1), derivative names are composed of primary ones (whose components are not names, but syllables and, ultimately, letters). Sentences concern not only the present, but also the past and the future (262D2–3).

The Visitor remarks that when only names or only verbs are uttered in succession, in neither way ‘do the utterances indicate any action or inaction or being of what is or of what is not, until one blends verbs with names’ (262C2–5). He might be implying that only within sentences do verbs and names signify, respectively, actions and objects.¹³

The Visitor says that a speaker uttering a primary sentence, i.e. a sentence composed of one name and one verb, ‘by interweaving verbs with names, does not merely name but accomplishes something’ (262D3–4).¹⁴ he or

¹² Plato’s example of a string of Greek names has three members: it is ‘λέων ἔλαφος ἵππος’ (‘lion stag horse’). A string of two members, like ‘λέων ἔλαφος’ (‘lion stag’), could have been regarded as a sentence (because ‘εἶναι’ can be omitted in Greek).

¹³ Cf. 261D9–261E1 (with below, text to n. 24); Demos (1964), 608; Sedley (2003), 61.

¹⁴ Cf. *Cra.* 425A2–3. For the phrase ‘τι περραίνειν’ cf. *Gr.* 472B8; *Smp.* 217C1–2; *R.* 4. 426A2; *Tht.* 180A6–7.

she realizes a speech act.¹⁵ The Visitor adds that in uttering a primary sentence, a speaker ‘does not merely name but says something’ (262D5). Naming and saying are therefore different. No explanation of what they are is offered. The two inquirers then agree (262E4–8) that every sentence must be ‘of’ something. Their later observations (262E13–263A11, 263C1–I2) on the primary sentences introduced as examples, ‘Theaetetus is sitting’ and ‘Theaetetus is flying’, show that the entity a primary sentence is ‘of’ is the object signified by its name (it then becomes clear that the sentence is not only ‘of’ but also ‘about’ this object). Faced with these data, let me indulge in some speculation.

- (1) When they come to defining sentence, the Visitor and Theaetetus do not apply the method of division but describe sentences of the simplest kind. The Socrates of Plato’s early dialogues would have denied that this is a definition.
- (2) What does a speaker uttering a primary sentence name? Does he or she name both the object signified by the primary sentence’s name and the action signified by its verb?¹⁶ Or only the object?¹⁷ The Visitor and Theaetetus do not address this problem, but the etymological link between ‘ὀνομάζειν’ (‘to name’) and ‘ὄνομα’ (‘name’) suggests that the last alternative is right:¹⁸ a speaker uttering a primary sentence names only the object signified by its name.¹⁹
- (3) Granted that this result is correct, a further point may be plausibly inferred: in a primary sentence, the name is what mainly contributes to the speaker’s performing the speech act of naming whereas the verb

¹⁵ Cf. Xenakis (1957), 168–9; Nuchelmans (1973), 15–17; Swiggers (1984), 16; Stough (1990), 371, 379. Others (e.g. Bröcker (1964), 469; Derbolav (1972), 174; Galligan (1983), 270; Rudebusch (1990), 601–2) understand the Visitor as claiming that a speaker uttering a primary sentence τι περὶ οὐτι by *limiting* something: such a speaker limits both the object signified by the name (by specifying what action it is performing) and the action signified by the verb (by specifying which object is performing it).

¹⁶ Cf. Galligan (1983), 270, 278; Swiggers (1984), 16.

¹⁷ Cf. Owen (1971), 263; Denyer (1991), 151.

¹⁸ The etymological link of ‘ὀνομάζειν’ to ‘ὄνομα’ mirrors that of ‘λέγειν’ to ‘λόγος’, which Plato explicitly notices (cf. 262D4–6 with n. 10 above).

¹⁹ It is less likely that ‘ὀνομάζειν’ is connected to ‘ὄνομα’ in its broad usage (in which case a speaker producing a primary sentence would probably name both the object signified by the name and the action signified by the verb): for the wide usage of ‘ὄνομα’ appears only at the beginning of the linguistic section (at 261D2 and 261D4) and is superseded by the narrow usage.

Hoekstra and Scheppers (2003), 65 assume that what is named is words. In their view, when Plato contrasts ὀνομάζειν with λέγειν, he is distinguishing the sheer concatenation of words from the concatenation of words that constitutes a meaningful unit. True, the verb ‘ὀνομάζειν’ can take ‘ὄνομα’ as its object (cf. *Hp.Ma.* 288D2 and, for the passive construction, *Sph.* 262B10–262C1 and *R.* 5. 470B4). But it is unlikely that such a usage should be intended in the present *Sophist* passage because the Visitor has characterized names as signs of entities of a certain sort (cf. 262A6–7).

is what mainly contributes to the speaker's performing the speech act of saying.²⁰

- (4) The intimate connection of the verb with the speech act of saying is also suggested by the verb's name, 'ῥῆμα'. The name 'ῥῆμα' is constructed with the suffix -μα from one of the several roots for verbs expressing the activity of saying. A name constructed with the suffix -μα can indicate either the *result* of the activity expressed by the verb (cf. 'ποίημα', which indicates the result of the activity of producing, expressed by 'ποιέω') or the *means* which enables the carrying out of that activity (cf. 'δήλωμα', which indicates the means which enables the carrying out of the activity of indicating, expressed by 'δηλόω'). Similarly, 'ῥῆμα' could indicate the means which enables the carrying out of the activity of saying.²¹
- (5) Given that a speaker uttering a primary sentence names only the object signified by its name, and given that the entity a primary sentence is about is the object signified by its name, it follows that a speaker uttering a primary sentence names only the entity the primary sentence is about. On the plausible assumption that a speaker uttering a primary sentence *refers* only to the entity the primary sentence is about, a further inference can be plausibly drawn: a speaker uttering a primary sentence names what he or she refers to. This suggests that for a speaker who utters a primary sentence to name an entity is to refer to it.²²
- (6) Plato is probably committed to claiming that utterances of strings of words that look like singular predicative sentences with empty subject-expressions (e.g. utterances of 'Pegasus is flying') are not truth-evaluable sentences. Some modern philosophers of language explicitly endorse this claim.²³
- (7) Does Plato believe that a primary sentence signifies something? One passage might be taken to commit him to such a view: at 261D9–261E1 he says that verbs and names 'when spoken in succession, also fit together and indicate something'. However, Plato here might simply mean that when they are uttered successively, a name and a verb signify something (each one an entity of the appropriate sort).²⁴ No passage

²⁰ Cf. Frede (1992), 413–14. Other commentators deny that for Plato there is a difference between the semantic functions of names and verbs (apart from their signifying entities of different sorts): cf. Stough (1990), 370–1; Gaskin (2008), 204.

²¹ Cf. Hoekstra and Scheppers (2003), 66–7. ²² Cf. Davidson (2005), 85.

²³ Cf. Frege (1892b), 32–3; Strawson (1950), 330–1; Rudebusch (1991), 522–3.

²⁴ Cf. above, n. 13 and text thereto.

in the *Sophist* unequivocally commits Plato to the view that a primary sentence signifies something.²⁵

- (8) The Visitor says that a speaker uttering a primary sentence ‘by interweaving verbs with names [...] accomplishes something’ (262D4). In other dialogues, in political contexts, Plato makes it clear that the weaving metaphor introduces a difference of roles.²⁶ The warp and the woof play different roles in weaving, and they do so thanks to their different natures (the warp is strong and firm while the woof is softer). Similarly, the items to which the warp and the woof metaphorically correspond play different roles. This suggests that for Plato verbs and names perform different functions.²⁷
- (9) When he says that a speaker utters a primary sentence ‘by putting an object together with an action [συνθεῖς πρᾶγμα πράξει] by means of a name and a verb’ (262E13–I4), the Visitor is not committing himself to the view that by uttering a primary sentence a speaker performs an act of saying on a single composite thing which he or she puts together from the object and the action signified by (respectively) the primary sentence’s name and verb. The Visitor has good reasons for keeping clear of such a view, which would be exposed to difficulties similar to those raised by the arguments about the impossibility of saying what is not at 237B7–239C8.²⁸ The Visitor is putting forward a weaker view, namely that the utterance of a primary sentence by a speaker coincides with an event in which the object and the action signified by (respectively) the primary sentence’s name and verb are both involved.

Uttering a sentence can be instructively compared with playing the violin. In playing the violin, a violinist puts together two entities (namely a violin and a bow) by performing a single act in which each of the two entities involved is employed in a distinctive way. The event is properly described by saying that the violinist *plays* the violin *with* the bow. The violinist could not be properly said to construct or create a composite entity whose components are a violin and a bow. Similarly, in uttering a sentence, a speaker puts together two entities (namely an action and an object) by performing a single act in which each of the two entities involved is employed in a distinctive

²⁵ At 262D2 Plato says that someone uttering ‘Man understands’ ‘indicates something [δηλοῖ]: the verb ‘δηλοῦν’, connected with the noun ‘δηλωμα’, elsewhere used for names and verbs (cf. above, n. 1), is applied to a speaker, not to a linguistic expression.

²⁶ Cf. *Pl.* 309A8–309B7; *Lg.* 5. 734E6–735A4.

²⁷ Cf. Cavini (2009), 20–3. ²⁸ Cf. below, paragraph to n. 105.

way. The situation is properly described by saying that the speaker *says* the action signified by the verb *about* the object signified by the name. The speaker could not be properly said to construct or create a composite entity whose components are an object and an action.

- (10) In the *Cratylus*, in connection with a version of the falsehood paradox (*Cra.* 429C6–430A5), Socrates and Cratylus agree (430A6–431C3) both that one can assign²⁹ linguistic expressions (names, verbs, and sentences) to objects, and that such assignments³⁰ can be either correct, and therefore true, or incorrect, and therefore false. This *Cratylus* account may perhaps be fitted to the situation of the *Sophist* by substituting actions for linguistic expressions. The result is: when in uttering a primary sentence a speaker brings about an event (a speech act of saying) in which the object and the action signified by (respectively) the primary sentence's name and verb are both involved, the event in question is a case of *assigning* the action signified by the primary sentence's verb to the object signified by the primary sentence's name.³¹
- (11) An utterance of 'man understanding' consists of two parts that signify the kinds man and understanding.³² An utterance of 'Man understands' also consists of two parts that signify the kinds man and understanding. What is the difference between these two utterances? In general, how do strings of names differ from sentences? The Visitor declares (262B9–262C2) that strings of names are not sentences, but he does not say much to explain how they differ (his remarks at 262C2–7 are obscure).

Plato perhaps merely recorded the fact that strings of names are not sentences and did not address the question of how they differ (either because he did not think of it or because he was unable to answer it). However, since some philosophers and commentators raise the problem of how this question could be answered within the *Sophist's* linguistic theory,³³ I shall venture a reply that goes beyond what Plato actually says but is consistent with, perhaps even suggested by, remarks in the *Sophist* and other dialogues.

- (12) In the context of sentences, verbs signify actions and names signify objects. The contributions made by a verb and a name to a sentence

²⁹ The verbs are 'δικανέμειν' (430B7, 430E1), 'προσφέρειν' (430B8), and 'ἀποδιδόναι' (431B4).

³⁰ The nouns are 'διανομή' (430D3, 431B1), 'δόσις' (430D6), and 'ἐπιφορά' (430D6).

³¹ Cf. Cherniss (1957b), 19; Ackrill (1966), 53–4.

³² Waive the objection that words signify only in the context of sentences (cf. above, n. 13 and text thereto).

³³ Cf. Denyer (1991), 164–7; Davidson (2005), 82–3, 85–6; Cavini (2009), 9–18.

of which they are components cannot however be identified with their signifying (respectively) an action and an object: otherwise the sentence 'Man understands' would be equivalent to the string of names 'man understanding'.³⁴ Although the contributions made by a verb and a name to a sentence cannot be identified with their signifying an action and an object, it is nevertheless consistent to claim that the verb's contribution involves signifying an action.³⁵

- (13) In his discussion of primary sentences Plato mentions the speaker who utters a primary sentence.³⁶ In the *Euthydemus* (284B5–284C2), in the context of a version of the falsehood paradox, he describes saying as an action (πράττειν) and a production (ποιεῖν) performed by a speaker (cf. *Crat.* 387B8–387C5). Plato perhaps thinks of primary sentences as connected with (or even identical to) events of saying that involve speakers. In the case of a primary sentence, a single event occurs that concerns three entities: a speaker, an action, and an object. Specifically, in the case of a primary sentence an event occurs which consists in the three-place relation of saying obtaining between a speaker, an action (signified by the verb in the primary sentence uttered by the speaker), and an object (signified by the name therein). Let me go back to the analogy introduced earlier. There is nothing mysterious when violinists hold the violin with their left hand, hold the bow with their right hand, and apply the bow to the violin so as to generate sounds of a certain sort. Similarly, there is nothing mysterious when a speaker picks out an object with a name, picks out an action with a verb, and puts the object together with the action so as to say something. In the first case, the three-place relation of playing obtains between a violinist, a bow, and a violin; in the second, the three-place relation of saying obtains between a speaker, an action, and an object. A sentence is something unitary because it is associated with such a single event.³⁷ Truth and falsehood might be expressed by adverbs that modify the verb used to describe the event (cf. 'x says y about z truthfully' and 'x says y about z falsely').³⁸

³⁴ Cf. Denyer (1991), 164–7; Davidson (2005), 82–3, 85–6.

³⁵ Cf. Davies (1981), 108–9; Burge (2007), 590–5. ³⁶ Cf. above, n. 8.

³⁷ The conception of the unity of sentences developed here resembles views maintained at one point by Russell: cf. Russell (1910b), 153–6; Russell (1912), 72–4; Davidson (2005), 106–7, 147; Bestor (1978), 30–5. It also recalls Wittgenstein's idea, taken up by Nick Denyer, that the unity of sentences is guaranteed by their being facts: cf. Wittgenstein (1922), 2.14, 2.15, 3.14 (with Gaskin (2008), 327); Denyer (1991), 254–5.

³⁸ In the *Cratylus* Plato employs the adverbial phrase 'not correctly' ('μὴ ὀρθῶς', 430E1, 431B3) to modify verbs rendered by 'to assign' (cf. above, n. 29 and text thereto).

It might be objected that a speaker who utters a list of names, by uttering for instance ‘man understanding’, also does so in the context of a single event. Why is this not an event of saying? Why does an event of saying occur when a speaker utters ‘Man understands’, but not when he or she utters ‘man understanding’?

Vocal indicators of different sorts are needed because the three-place relation of saying that obtains between speaker, action, and object is (if I may say so) ‘non-symmetric in its last two positions’: a speaker uttering the words ‘Man understands’ assigns understanding to man; he or she does not assign man to understanding. The speaker says the entity signified by the verb (an action) about the entity signified by the name (an object); it is not the case that the speaker says the entity signified by the name about the entity signified by the verb. An utterance of ‘man understanding’ would leave it unclear what the speaker is saying about what. For this reason English and many other languages require vocal indicators of different types as components of sentences, and therefore disqualify strings of names from being sentences. One could imagine a language where the order of utterance does the trick, in which case one of the two ‘names’ would become a ‘verb’ thanks to its position (and if someone who is just beginning to learn English rushes in and shouts the string of names ‘house fire’, it will be clear that he means that the house is on fire). The difference between an utterance of ‘man understanding’ and one of ‘Man understands’ is that in view of the rules governing English only the second is apt to be involved in an event whereby a speaker says one entity (an action) about one entity (an object). The difference in role between verbs and names alluded to by the weaving metaphor³⁹ might have to do with their being differently used by speakers uttering sentences.

6.2 FALSE SENTENCES

True and false sentences. The Visitor and Theaetetus agree that a sentence must be ‘of a certain quality’. The qualities they have in mind are truth and falsehood (*Sph.* 262E9–10, 263A12–263B3, cf. *Phlb.* 37B10–37C2). Nothing the two inquirers say commits them to the view that every sentence is either true or false (they are not tacitly restricting sentences to declarative sentences).⁴⁰ Plato occasionally contrasts the qualities of a thing with what

³⁹ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 26. ⁴⁰ Cf. Dorter (1994), 163.

it is, i.e. its essence.⁴¹ Therefore, by agreeing that truth and falsehood are qualities of sentences, the Visitor and Theaetetus are probably hinting that neither truth nor falsehood is essential to sentences as such (some sentences are true and not false, others false and not true).⁴²

Two examples are given: the true sentence ‘Theaetetus is sitting’ and the false sentence ‘Theaetetus is flying’.⁴³ Here is the relevant passage:

| | |
|---|--------|
| VIS. Προσέχωμεν δὴ τὸν νοῦν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς. | 262E11 |
| THET. Δεῖ γοῦν. | |
| VIS. Λέξω τοίνυν σοι λόγον συνθεῖς πρᾶγμα πρᾶξει δι’ ὀνόματος καὶ ῥήματος· ὅτου δ’ ἂν ὁ λόγος ᾖ, σύ μοι φράζειν. | E15 |
| THET. Ταῦτ’ ἔσται κατὰ δύναμιν. | 263A1 |
| VIS. Θεαίτητος κάθηται. μὴν μὴ μακρὸς ὁ λόγος; | |
| THET. Οὐκ, ἀλλὰ μέτριος. | |
| VIS. Σὸν ἔργον δὴ φράζειν περὶ οὗ τ’ ἔστι καὶ ὅτου. | A5 |
| THET. Δηλον ὅτι περὶ ἐμοῦ τε καὶ ἐμός. | |
| VIS. Τί δὲ ὅδ’ αὖ; | |
| THET. Ποῖος; | |
| VIS. Θεαίτητος – ᾧ νῦν ἐγὼ διαλέγομαι – πέτεται. | |
| THET. Καὶ τοῦτον οὐδ’ ἂν εἷς ἄλλως εἶποι πλήν ἐμόν τε καὶ περὶ ἐμοῦ. | A10 |
| VIS. Ποῖον δὲ γέ τινα φαμεν ἀναγκαῖον ἕκαστον εἶναι τῶν λόγων. | |
| THET. Ναί. | 263B1 |
| VIS. Τούτων δὴ ποῖόν τινα ἐκάτερον φατέον εἶναι; | |
| THET. Τὸν μὲν ψευδῆ που, τὸν δὲ ἀληθῆ. | |
| VIS. Λέγει δὲ αὐτῶν ὁ μὲν ἀληθῆς τὰ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν περὶ σοῦ. | B5 |
| THET. Τί μήν; | |
| VIS. Ὅ δὲ δὴ ψευδῆς ἕτερα τῶν ὄντων. | |
| THET. Ναί. | |
| VIS. Τὰ μὴ ὄντ’ ἄρα ὡς ὄντα λέγει. | |
| THET. Σχεδόν. | B10 |
| VIS. Ὅντων ⁴⁴ δὲ γε ὄντα ἕτερα περὶ σοῦ. πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ ἔφαμεν ὄντα περὶ ἕκαστον εἶναι που, πολλὰ δὲ οὐκ ὄντα. | |

⁴¹ Cf. *Men.* 71A1–71B8; 86D8–86E1; 87B3; *Gr.* 448E6–7; *Th.* 152D3–4; 152D6.

⁴² Cf. Frede (1992), 417.

⁴³ ‘Is sitting’ and ‘is flying’ render ‘κάθηται’ (263A2) and ‘πέτεται’ (263A9) (‘sits’ and ‘flies’ would convey the wrong sense). The thought of a flying man was perhaps mentioned by Gorgias as an example of a false thought (cf. *S.E. M.* 7. 79). By choosing ‘Theaetetus is flying’ Plato might be alluding to Gorgias (cf. Untersteiner (1949), 196).

⁴⁴ The main MSS read ‘ὄντως’ (cf. Robinson (1999), 159); one late MS (Ven. 186) has the correction ‘ὄντος’ above the line. Cornarius (1561), 159, 194 suggested the emendation ‘ὄντων’ (cf. Fischer

- ΤΗΤ. Κομιδῆ μὲν οὔν.
 VIS. Ὅν ὕστερον δὴ λόγον εἶρηκα περὶ σοῦ, πρῶτον
 μέν, ἔξ ὧν ὠρισάμεθα τί ποτ' ἔστι λόγος, ἀναγκαιότατον
 αὐτὸν ἓνα τῶν βραχυτάτων εἶναι. 263CI
 ΤΗΤ. Νυνδὴ γοῦν ταύτη συνωμολογήσαμεν.
 VIS. Ἐπειτα δέ γε τινός. C5
 ΤΗΤ. Οὕτως.
 VIS. Εἰ δὲ μὴ ἔστιν σός, οὐκ ἄλλου γε οὐδενός.
 ΤΗΤ. Πῶς γάρ;
 VIS. Μηδενός <δέ> γε ὧν οὐδ' ἂν λόγος εἴη τὸ παράπαν·
 ἀπεφήναμεν γάρ ὅτι τῶν ἀδυνάτων ἦν λόγον ὄντα μηδενός
 εἶναι λόγον. CIO
 ΤΗΤ. Ὅρθότατα.
 VIS. Περί δὴ τοῦ⁴⁵ λεγόμενα, <λεγόμενα>⁴⁶ μέντοι θάτερα
 ὡς τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα, παντάπασιν ἔοικεν ἢ
 τοιαύτη σύνθεσις ἔκ τε ῥημάτων γιγνομένη καὶ ὀνομάτων
 ὄντως τε καὶ ἀληθῶς γίγνεσθαι λόγος ψευδής.
 ΤΗΤ. Ἀληθέστατα μὲν οὔν. D5
 VIS. Now let us fix our attention on ourselves. 262E
 ΤΗΤ. We will.
 VIS. I shall speak a sentence to you by putting an object together with
 an action by means of a name and a verb. You tell me what the
 sentence is of.
 ΤΗΤ. I shall do my best. 263A
 VIS. 'Theaetetus is sitting' – not a lengthy sentence, is it?
 ΤΗΤ. No, of a just length.
 VIS. Now your job is to say what it is about and what of.
 ΤΗΤ. Clearly it is about me and mine.
 VIS. And this one?
 ΤΗΤ. Which one?

(1771), 32). Deichgräber (apud Frede (1967), 34) suggests 'ὡς δέ γε ἕτερα περὶ σοῦ'. Frede (1992), 421 and 424 mentions two other possible emendations: '<τῶν> ὄντων δέ γε ὄντα ἕτερα περὶ σοῦ' and 'ὄντως δέ γε ὄντα ἕτερα <τῶν ὄντων> περὶ σοῦ' (the last also in Robinson (1999), 159).

In Crivelli (1990), 82, 93 I chose the reading 'ὄντως', also adopted by Frede (1967), 58; Kostman (1973), 192, 209; Rijlaarsdam (1978), 209; de Rijk (1986), 206–7; Cassin and Narcy (1989), 91–2; Cordero (1993), 275; Szaif (1998), 475–8; and Centrone (2008), 227–9. The criticisms of O'Brien (1991a), 317–28, O'Brien (1995), 117–30, and O'Brien (1999), 36–7 made me change my mind. I now find it more plausible to adopt Cornarius's emendation 'ὄντων', printed by Stephanus (1578), 263 and all the later eds. I consulted. At 240B7 one main MS (W) reads 'ὄντως' where two others (B and D, the two representatives of the family β) have 'ὄντων': scribal hesitation between 'ὄντως' and 'ὄντων' is therefore explicitly attested.

⁴⁵ Reading 'του' instead of the uniformly attested 'σοῦ' (cf. *Grg.* 457D1; *Phd.* 91A4; *R.* 10. 598C7; *Plt.* 285E3; *Lg.* 11. 935D7; 936A3). The emendation, proposed by Kassel (1961), 126, makes 263D1–5 into a description of all false sentences. According to the text handed down by the tradition, 263D1–5 would be a description of false sentences about Theaetetus: a class of dubious interest.

⁴⁶ The emendation is due to Badham (1865), xxxvii.

- VIS. 'Theaetetus – with whom I am now speaking – is flying'.⁴⁷
 THY. This one also can only be described as mine and about me.
 VIS. Besides we say that it is necessary for each of the sentences to be of a certain quality.
 THY. Yes. 263B
 VIS. Of what quality then must one say each of these is?
 THY. One is, somehow, false, the other true.⁴⁸
 VIS. And the true one says the things which are to be about you.
 THY. Certainly.
 VIS. The false one instead <says> things different from the things which are <to be about you>.
 THY. Yes.
 VIS. It therefore says the things which are not as things which are <about you>.
 THY. I suppose so.
 VIS. But <it says> things which are different from things which are about you. For, in a way,⁴⁹ we said that about each there are many things which are and many which are not.
 THY. Exactly.
 VIS. The sentence I spoke about you later, in the first place, according to our definition of what sentence is, is itself most necessarily one of the shortest. 263C
 THY. So we agreed just now.
 VIS. Moreover, it must be of something.
 THY. Yes.
 VIS. And if it is not yours, it is of nothing else.
 THY. Certainly.
 VIS. And if it were of nothing, it would not be a sentence at all, for we declared⁵⁰ that it was impossible for there to be a sentence which was a sentence of nothing.
 THY. Quite correct.
 VIS. So, things said about something, but different things said as identical, and things which are not as things which are – such a combination coming to be from verbs and names by all means seems really and truly to become a false sentence.⁵¹ 263D
 THY. Most truly.

⁴⁷ The second sample sentence is described as being 'one of the shortest' (263C3). Hence it must consist of only one name and one verb. Therefore it cannot be the whole 'Theaetetus with whom I am now speaking is flying', but 'Theaetetus is flying'.

⁴⁸ Cf. *R.* 2. 376E11–12.

⁴⁹ I construe 'που' (263B12) with 'εφραμεν' (263B12) (cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 176) and I take it to express a qualification (cf. LSJ *s.v.* 'που' II). Alternatively, 'που' (263B12) could be construed with 'ειναι' (263B12) or 'περι εκαστου ειναι' (263B12) (cf. Movia (1991), 440; O'Brien (1991a), 296; O'Brien (1995), 79–80).

⁵⁰ Cf. 262E6–8.

⁵¹ The expression '... really and truly... a false sentence' playfully juxtaposes 'truly' and 'false'. At *Th.* 189C5–189D4 Socrates chastised Theaetetus for a similar formulation.

Shortly before embarking on defining sentence, the Visitor remarks that 'to attempt to separate everything from everything is exceedingly out of tune and typical of someone alien to the philosophic Muse' (259D9–259E2). He explains this remark by saying that 'to detach each thing from all things is the most complete destruction of all sentences' (259E4–5). He then justifies this claim by recalling that 'sentences have come to us thanks to the reciprocal interweaving of kinds' (259E5–6). He goes on to say that they 'had been right to fight against people of this sort and to oblige them to allow one thing to mix with a different one' (260A1–3).

The Visitor's last statement probably refers back to the refutation of the first of three alternatives concerning the combination of kinds: the refutation of the claim that no distinct kinds blend (251E8–252D1).⁵² Those who 'detach each thing from all things' (259E5) claim that no distinct kinds enjoy any ontological relations of any sort required for the truth of any affirmative predicative sentence about them.⁵³ Their position leads them to 'the most complete destruction of all sentences' (259E4), or, to be more precise, of all affirmative predicative sentences concerning kinds where the kind signified by the predicate-expression is distinct from the one signified by the subject-expression (the restriction to these sentences may be understood on the basis of the fact that kinds are being talked about). This consequence was laid bare by the Visitor and Theaetetus in the course of their refutation of the position in question: its advocates were shown to be committed to rejecting all earlier ontological theories (251E10–252B7) and to be unable consistently to state their own view (252B8–252D1). The refutation of this position led to the conclusion that there is a 'reciprocal interweaving of kinds' (259E5–6), i.e. that distinct kinds enjoy relations that warrant the truth of affirmative predicative sentences about them. In this sense the Visitor can say that 'sentences have come to us thanks to the reciprocal interweaving of kinds' (259E5–6).⁵⁴

In the passage translated above, the Visitor announces that he will utter a sentence 'by putting an object together with an action by means of a name and a verb' (262E13–14). It may be plausibly assumed that if a speaker utters a primary sentence by putting an object, signified by a name,

⁵² The 'ἔξῃν' at 260A2 echoes the 'ἔῶντες' at 252B9 and 251B9.

⁵³ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 97 of Ch. 4.

⁵⁴ Plato's remarks at 259E4–7 generated an exegetical controversy (cf. Moravcsik (1962), 60; Frede (1967), 43–4; Malcolm (1967), 143–4; Ray (1984), 83–6). Commentators understood 259E4–7 as saying that any speaker uttering any sentence interweaves at least two kinds; they then found it hard to fit this to the sample sentences 'Theaetetus is sitting' and 'Theaetetus is flying' (each of which appears to involve only one kind). An excellent critical account of this debate is in Clarke (1994), 35–50.

together with an action, signified by a verb, the action is always a kind⁵⁵ whereas the object can be anything (e.g. a kind like the kind man, signified by the name 'man' within 'Man understands', or a perceptible particular like the boy Theaetetus, signified by the name 'Theaetetus' within 'Theaetetus is sitting' and 'Theaetetus is flying'). It may also be plausibly assumed that some occurrences of 'to be' followed by 'about' are examples of the converse use of 'to be' and therefore express the relation which in modern philosophical jargon is expressed by 'to hold of'.⁵⁶

The true 'Theaetetus is sitting'. As for true sentences, the following account is suggested: a sentence composed of a name *n* and a verb *v* is true just if the action signified by *v* holds of the object signified by *n*. For example, 'Theaetetus is sitting' is true just if the kind sitting, the action signified by the verb 'is sitting', holds of Theaetetus, the object signified by the name 'Theaetetus'.

The false 'Theaetetus is flying': the main interpretations. The account of false sentences is controversial. The most authoritative exegeses are four.⁵⁷

- (i) According to the *Oxford interpretation*, a sentence composed of a name *n* and a verb *v* is false just if the action signified by *v* is different from everything that holds of the object signified by *n*. For instance, 'Theaetetus is flying' is false just if the kind flying, the action signified by the verb 'is flying', is different from everything that holds of Theaetetus, the object signified by the name 'Theaetetus'.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 5.

⁵⁶ Cf. above, subsection to n. 184 of Ch. 4; Frede (1967), 52–5, 94–5; Kostman (1973), 194; Frede (1992), 418; Hestir (2003), 8–10.

⁵⁷ Classifications of the interpretations of Plato's account of false sentences are also in Keyt (1973), 293–5; Crivelli (1990), 81–91; Crivelli (2008), 237–8.

⁵⁸ Cf. Peipers (1883), 173–7; Ross (1951), 116; Peck (1962), 61–2; Runciman (1962), 115–8; Crombie (1963), 401, 497; Frede (1967), 58, 95; Owen (1971), 237–8, 260; Wiggins (1971), 294–5; Detel (1972), 104–5; Gosling (1973), 216, 217–18, 220; von Weizsäcker (1973), 237–8; Bondeson (1974), 45; Ferg (1976), 340–1; P. A. Johnson (1978), 151; McDowell (1982), 126–7; Galligan (1983), 273–4; Ray (1984), 88–92; de Rijk (1986), 206; Rudebusch (1990), 602–3; Frede (1992), 419, 420; N. P. White (1993), xxviii–xxix, xxx–xxxii; van Eck (1995), 39–40, 41–2; Silverman (2002), 204–5; Hestir (2003), 5; Thomas (2008), 650.

Some commentators (cf. Heindorf (1810), 435–6; Hackforth (1945a), 57–8; Cherniss (1957b), 18; Gulley (1962), 155; Sprute (1962), 56; Bröcker (1964), 469–70; Findlay (1974), 269–70; Guthrie (1962–81), v 156; W. J. Prior (1985), 145; Mojsisch (1986a), 45; O'Brien (1991a), 293, 295–8, 319–25; O'Brien (1995), 75, 79–84, 119–26; O'Brien (1999), 35–6, 38, 40; Miller (2004), 360; O'Brien (2005), 139, 141–3, 145; Fronterotta (2007), 485–6) do not employ, at points of their expositions where one would expect it, an expression like 'everything' (or 'each thing', or 'anything', or 'all things'). They resort instead to formulations roughly like 'A sentence composed of a name *n* and a verb *v* is false just if the action signified by *v* is different from the things that hold of [or: what holds of] the object signified by *n*'. I take these commentators to subscribe to the Oxford interpretation.

- (2) According to the *incompatibility interpretation*, a sentence composed of a name n and a verb v is false just if the action signified by v is incompatible with some kind that holds of the object signified by n .⁵⁹ For instance, ‘Theaetetus is flying’ is false just if the kind flying is incompatible with some kind that holds of Theaetetus.⁶⁰
- (3) According to the *quasi-incompatibility interpretation*, a sentence composed of a name n and a verb v is false just if the action signified by v is different from, but belonging to the same incompatibility range as, some kind that holds of the object signified by n . For instance, ‘Theaetetus is flying’ is false just if the kind flying is different from, but belonging to the same incompatibility range as, some kind that holds of Theaetetus.⁶¹
- (4) According to the *extensional interpretation*, a sentence composed of a name n and a verb v is false just if the object signified by n is different from everything of which the action signified by v holds. For instance, ‘Theaetetus is flying’ is false just if Theaetetus is different from everything of which the kind flying holds.⁶²

The incompatibility interpretation may be ruled out because it implausibly presupposes that at some points in the *Sophist* the Greek word ‘ἕτερον’ expresses (not difference, as it does elsewhere in the dialogue, but) incompatibility.⁶³ The quasi-incompatibility interpretation does not fare much better: the *Sophist* does not explicitly mention incompatibility ranges, which play a pivotal role in this exegesis.⁶⁴ The extensional

⁵⁹ On incompatibility cf. above, text to nn. 43–46 of Ch. 5.

⁶⁰ Cf. Burnet (1914), 288–9; Arangio-Ruiz (1951), 263; Taylor (1961), 67–8; Kamlah (1963), 25–6; Schipper (1965), 242; Lorenz and Mittelstrass (1966), 141–4; Kostman (1973), 195–6; Seligman (1974), 110–12; Graeser (1975), 49–51; Graeser (1983), 166; Movia (1991), 457–8; Dorter (1994), 163; Fattal (2009), 76–80.

Supporters of the incompatibility interpretation disagree on which kind holding of Theaetetus is regarded as incompatible with flying: some indicate the kind sitting (cf. Burnet (1914), 288–9; Taylor (1961), 67–8; Kamlah (1963), 25–6; Lorenz and Mittelstrass (1966), 142; Seligman (1974), 111), others the kind man (cf. Stenzel (1940), 127–8; Graeser (1975), 50; Adorno (1986), 54–5; Fattal (1991), 154; Fattal (2009), 79–80), yet others both (cf. Movia (1991), 457–8). Some advocates of the second solution refer to *Plt.* 264E3–11, where the rearing of dry-land animals is divided into those of winged animals and pedestrian animals: the kind man, being subordinate to the kind pedestrian-animal, is incompatible with the kind winged-animal, i.e. flying-animal.

Sayre (1976), 584–6 (cf. Matthews (1972), 26–7; Sayre (1983), 236–8) proposes a refinement of the incompatibility interpretation: a sentence composed of a name n and a verb v is true just if every kind holding of the object signified by n is compatible with the action signified by v ; a sentence composed of a name n and a verb v is false just if every kind holding of the object signified by n is compatible with the restricted complement of the action signified by v ; for every kind F , the restricted complement of F is a kind K such that for every object x , K holds of x just if some kind incompatible with F holds of x .

⁶¹ Cf. Ferejohn (1989), 258–62; Szaif (1998), 489–99, 505, 507, 508–9; Brown (2008), 456–8.

⁶² Cf. Mignucci (1989), 275–7; Crivelli (1990), 91–5; Crivelli (1993), 73–4.

⁶³ Cf. above, text to n. 47 of Ch. 5. ⁶⁴ Cf. above, subsection to n. 48 of Ch. 5.

interpretation sits uneasily with the above passage (although, as I argued elsewhere, a reconciliation is possible).⁶⁵ This leaves the Oxford interpretation, which moreover has the advantage of fitting well with the earlier account of not-being based on difference. For, earlier I argued that Plato's account of not-being based on difference commits him to principle *ND*:⁶⁶ for something not to be (a) ϕ is for it to be different from everything that is (a) ϕ (where ' ϕ ' is a schematic letter to be replaced with general terms). This immediately entails that for flying not to be about Theaetetus is for flying to be different from everything that is about Theaetetus (just substitute 'about Theaetetus' for ' ϕ ' and instantiate with flying).⁶⁷

The false 'Theaetetus is flying': other interpretations. Some commentators commit Plato to an account of falsehood whereby a sentence composed of a name *n* and a verb *v* is false just if the action signified by *v* is different from the object signified by *n*.⁶⁸ Now, if sitting, the action signified by the verb 'is sitting', is different from Theaetetus, the object signified by the name 'Theaetetus', then exegeses of this sort are committed to regarding 'Theaetetus is sitting' as false. To steer clear of this absurd result, one must deny that sitting is different from Theaetetus. One may achieve this by assuming that an action is different from an object only if it is not a part of that object and that sitting is a part of Theaetetus.⁶⁹ The main problem with this line is that although Plato does occasionally employ 'different' so as to imply 'not a part of',⁷⁰ such a usage is not independently attested in the *Sophist*.

Other commentators credit Plato with an account of falsehood whereby a sentence composed of a name *n* and a verb *v* is false just if the action signified by *v* is different from the condition which the object signified by *n* is in.⁷¹ Now, is the kind sitting different from the condition Theaetetus is in? If it is, then the account of falsehood under consideration requires 'Theaetetus is sitting' to be false. If instead the kind sitting is not different from the condition Theaetetus is in, then an explanation is called for of what it is for an action to be different from the condition an object is in: after all, sitting is not identical to the condition Theaetetus is in, so one's first inclination is to say that it is different. The most plausible explanation is that for an action to be different from the condition an object is in is for it to be different from every kind that is a component of that condition. On this explanation, sitting is not different from the condition Theaetetus

⁶⁵ Cf. Crivelli (1993), 73–4.

⁶⁶ Cf. above, text to n. 72 of Ch. 5. ⁶⁷ Cf. Frede (1967), 80; Frede (1992), 420.

⁶⁸ Cf. Cassin (1991), 312; Sasso (1991), 204; Casertano (1996), 201; Glasmeyer (2003), 104.

⁶⁹ Cf. Cassin (1991), 312. ⁷⁰ Cf. *Prm.* 146B2–5. ⁷¹ Cf. Palumbo (1994), 257–8.

is in because it is not different from every kind that is a component of that condition: for sitting itself is a kind that is a component of the condition. Then, since for an action to be different from the condition an object is in is for it to be different from every kind that is a component of that condition, i.e. from every kind that holds of the object, interpretations of the sort under consideration coincide with the Oxford interpretation.

Yet other commentators commit Plato to an account of falsehood whereby a sentence composed of a name *n* and a verb *v* is false just if what the whole sentence says is different from the facts that obtain with respect to the object signified by *n*.⁷² This exegesis has three drawbacks. First, it attributes a central role to the concept of ‘what a whole sentence says’. But this concept is foreign to Plato’s philosophy of language. Secondly, it takes difference to be a relation obtaining between what a whole sentence says and facts. This seems to require difference to be something like dissimilarity, while in the *Sophist* difference seems to obtain between all and only non-identical things. Thirdly, the account of falsehood attributed to Plato by this exegesis is embarrassingly vague.⁷³

According to some interpreters,⁷⁴ Plato does not specify necessary and sufficient conditions for falsehood. He only indicates that a true sentence can be made into a false one by replacing its verb with one that signifies an action that is different from the one signified by the verb replaced: e.g. the true sentence ‘Theaetetus is sitting’ can be transformed into a false sentence by replacing its verb, ‘is sitting’, with one, like ‘is flying’, which signifies a different action. Plato’s aim is simply to describe a sense in which a false sentence ‘says what is not’: a false sentence generated by the procedure just described ‘says what is not’ because the action it says about the object it names is different from an action that is about that object. The problem with this exegesis is that the procedure described can transform a true sentence not only into a false one, but also into a true one. Start with the true sentence ‘Theaetetus is sitting’. Replace its verb, ‘is sitting’, with one, ‘is breathing’, which signifies a different action: the result is another true sentence, ‘Theaetetus is breathing’. By following the line of thought suggested by the exegesis under scrutiny, namely that Plato’s intent is to describe a sense in which a false sentence ‘says what is not’, the awkward result is reached that every true sentence also ‘says what is not’.

⁷² Cf. Campbell (1867), *Sph.* 176; Apelt (1897), 17, 186, 193; Apelt (1914), 149–50; Heidegger (1924–5), 604–5.

⁷³ In Crivelli (1990), 83–6 I explored ways in which accounts of falsehood of the sort under scrutiny could be made precise.

⁷⁴ Cf. Bluck (1957), 185; Andic and Brown (1973), 28; Rijlaarsdam (1978), 209–10; Jordan (1984), 128.

Five remarks made by the Visitor on the sample sentences (at 263B4–5, 263B7, 263B9, 263BII, and 263DI–4) are fraught with exegetical problems. The main difficulty is that some of these remarks contain plural noun-phrases that are constructed around participles and begin with the definite article. According to one use of the definite article, the ‘generic use’, plural noun-phrases of this sort are equivalent to universally quantified phrases.⁷⁵ Some but not all of these occurrences of plural noun-phrases within the Visitor’s five remarks can be plausibly regarded as equivalent to universally quantified phrases.⁷⁶

The Visitor’s first remark is:

[ρΙ] And the true one says the things which are to be about you. (263B4–5)

Sentence [ρΙ] is my rendering of ‘λέγει δὲ αὐτῶν ὁ μὲν ἀληθῆς τὰ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν περὶ σοῦ’ (263B4–5). I take ‘τὰ ὄντα’ as the grammatical object of ‘λέγει’ and I regard ‘ὡς’ as a declarative conjunction introducing what ‘Theaetetus is sitting’ λέγει about τὰ ὄντα.⁷⁷ An interpretation of this sort is adopted by several translators and commentators.⁷⁸ Most,⁷⁹ however, regard ‘ὡς’ as comparative, thereby offering something like: ‘And the true one says the things which are as they are about you’. There is no substantial difference between the two translations because ‘... says the things which are as they are about you’ is logically equivalent to ‘... says the things which are to be about you’ (if the things in question are about you, to say them as they are is to say them to be about you). Plato uses ‘ὡς’ in formulae about truth also elsewhere. Some passages (*Cra.* 385B7–8 and *R.* 5. 477B10–11) are ambiguous in the same way as *Sph.* 263B4–5; others (*Euthd.* 284C7–284D7, *R.* 5. 478A6, and *Prm.* 161E4–5) require ‘ὡς’ to be

⁷⁵ Cf. Kühner and Gerth (1892–1904), II.1 594; Smyth (1920), 288.

⁷⁶ One might be tempted to argue against treating the plural noun-phrases in question as equivalent to universally quantified phrases by noting that ‘Theaetetus is flying’, which consists of exactly one name and exactly one verb, is described as ‘coming to be from verbs and names [ἐκ τε ῥημάτων γιγνομένη καὶ ὀνομάτων]’ (263D3) (the argument relies on the received text, with ‘σοῦ’ at 263DI, but cf. n. 45 above). Note, however, that the passage mentioned does not contain articles and is therefore not a close parallel for the plural noun-phrases in Plato’s discussion of falsehood: what is most important about the plural noun-phrases in question is not their being plural, but their containing articles.

⁷⁷ A similar construction occurs at 258E7. Cf. LSJ *s.v.* ‘λέγω’ (B) III 2.

⁷⁸ Cf. Wagner (1856), 159; Apelt (1897), 193; Apelt (1914), 118; Kamlah (1963), 25; Benardete (1984), 61; Meinhardt (1990), 175; Duerlinger (2005), 135; Centrone (2008), 227.

⁷⁹ Cf. Ficino (1484), 364; Cornarius (1561), 159; Fowler (1921), 439; Diès (1925), 382; Martini (1931), 274; Fraccaroli (1934), 204; Cornford (1935), 310; Arangio-Ruiz (1951), 255; Taylor (1961), 175; Warrington (1961), 217; Zadro (1971), 251; Cambiano (1981), 475; Cavini (1982), 142; Roggerone (1990), 173; Mazzarelli (1991), 305; Vitali (1992), 145; Cordero (1993), 195; N. P. White (1993), 58–9; Brann *et al.* (1996), 76; Bianchini (1997), 138; Giardini (1997), 613; Ambuel (2007), 240; Fronterotta (2007), 483.

comparative.⁸⁰ So, the external evidence supports taking the ‘ὥς’ at *Sph.* 263B4 as comparative. In the *Sophist* itself, however, ‘ὥς’ reappears shortly after 263B4 with an undoubtedly declarative effect. Consider 263B9: ‘... it says the things which are not as [ὥς] things which are <about you>’.⁸¹ And 263D1–4: ‘Things said about something, but different things said as [ὥς] identical, and things which are not as [ὥς] things which are – such a combination [...] seems really and truly to become a false sentence’.⁸² Another consideration in favour of regarding the ‘ὥς’ at 263B4 as declarative is that such a treatment chimes with the account of falsehood at 240D6–241A2.⁸³ I think that evidence internal to the *Sophist* outweighs that from different dialogues. I therefore opt for considering the ‘ὥς’ at 263B4 as declarative.

In [ρ1] the verb ‘to say’ (‘λέγειν’) is applied to a sentence (to ‘Theaetetus is sitting’).⁸⁴ This is a change with respect to Plato’s earlier account of sentences: there the verb ‘to say’ (‘λέγειν’) was applied (not to a sentence, but) to a speaker.⁸⁵

In [ρ1] the phrase ‘about you’ (‘περὶ σοῦ’) is probably to be construed in common with ‘says’ (‘λέγει’, cf. 263A5, 263A10–11, 263C1, and 263D1) and ‘things which are’ (‘ὄντα’, cf. 263B11–12).⁸⁶ Since ‘εἶναι’ prefers ‘περὶ’ and the accusative,⁸⁷ ‘ὄντα περὶ σέ’ would be standard. But ‘λέγειν’ prefers ‘περὶ’ and the genitive, so that ‘λέγει περὶ σοῦ’ is standard. One of the two constructions had to give way: the one involving the accusative did.⁸⁸ Granted that in [ρ1] ‘about you’ is construed in common with ‘says’ and ‘things which are’, a first step towards a plausible paraphrase of [ρ1] is:

[*] The sentence ‘Theaetetus is sitting’ says about Theaetetus the things which are about Theaetetus to be.

⁸⁰ Cf. *Ap.* 38A7; *Chrm.* 161A10; *Euthd.* 281E1–2; 285E9–286A3; *Hp.Ma.* 282A4; 284E8–9; 300B3; *Hp.Mi.* 367A5; *Men.* 78C1–2; 79A2; 96C2; 99B10; *Smp.* 201C7; *Phd.* 68C4; 73A8–9; 102D3–4; 114D1–2; *Cra.* 384C8–9; 423A7; 440A5; *R.* 5. 474B2; *Prm.* 128E5–6; 161E4; *Lg.* 10. 893E5; Anon. *Dissoi Logoi* 4. 2. I think that in the two ambiguous passages also ‘ὥς’ is comparative: only if ‘ὥς’ is comparative is the account at *Cra.* 385B7–8 sufficiently general (cf. Derbolav (1972), 175; Lafrance (1984), 73; Notomi (1999), 188); the comparative reading of ‘ὥς’ in *R.* 5. 477B10–11 is favoured by the parallel at 478A6 (cf. Kahn (1981), 113, 131). At *Sph.* 255D8 Theaetetus uses the comparative sentence ‘λέγεις καθάπερ ἔχει’ (‘It is just as you say’) to endorse the Visitor’s preceding remark.

⁸¹ Cf. *X. An.* 4. 4, 15 (translated above, text to n. 99 of Ch. 2).

⁸² Cf. Frede (1967), 52, 57; Detel (1972), 100–1; Keyt (1973), 288–91; Rijlaarsdam (1978), 207–10; Jordan (1984), 128; Frede (1992), 418; Szaif (1998), 467.

⁸³ Cf. Szaif (1998), 467; Hestir (2003), 3–4.

⁸⁴ Cf. 263B9; 240E10–241A1. ⁸⁵ Cf. 262D5; above, n. 8.

⁸⁶ Some commentators construe ‘about you’ only with ‘says’ (cf. Rijlaarsdam (1978), 209), others with ‘things which are’ and possibly also with ‘to be’ (cf. Frede (1992), 418), others with both ‘says’ and ‘to be’ (cf. Szaif (1998), 467–8), yet others with all of ‘says’, ‘things which are’, and ‘to be’ (cf. Robinson (1999), 159).

⁸⁷ Cf. above, n. 188 of Ch. 4. ⁸⁸ Cf. Robinson (1999), 159.

Note that it would be inappropriate to repeat (or understand) ‘about Theaetetus’ after ‘to be’: such an occurrence of ‘about Theaetetus’ would duplicate the one construed with ‘says’.

If the occurrence of the definite article ‘the’ in the plural noun-phrase ‘the things which are about Theaetetus’ within [*] were a case of the ‘generic use’ of the definite article,⁸⁹ [*] should be paraphrased by:

[?] $\forall x$ (x is about Theaetetus \rightarrow the sentence ‘Theaetetus is sitting’ says about Theaetetus x to be).

But [?] is wrong: ‘Theaetetus is sitting’ does not attribute to Theaetetus all things that are about him. What is needed is:

[$\pi 1$] $\exists x$ (x is about Theaetetus & the sentence ‘Theaetetus is sitting’ says about Theaetetus x to be).

One must therefore avoid regarding the occurrence of the definite article ‘the’ in the plural noun-phrase ‘the things which are about Theaetetus’ within [*] as a case of its ‘generic use’. But, if this occurrence of ‘the’ is not to be considered a case of the ‘generic use’, how is it to be understood? The most plausible explanation is that the occurrence of the definite article ‘the’ in the plural noun-phrase ‘the things which are about Theaetetus’ within [*] is a vestige of and an allusion to a standard formula for the description of truth. For in [*] the plural noun-phrase ‘the things which are about Theaetetus’ is the object of the verb ‘to say’ in the larger phrase ‘... says... the things which are about Theaetetus’. This larger phrase recalls a description of truth that occurs frequently in Plato: ‘to speak truly’ is ‘to say the things which are’.⁹⁰ Being a vestige of and an allusion to such a formula, the occurrence of ‘the’ in the plural noun-phrase ‘the things which are about Theaetetus’ within [*] need not be considered a case of the ‘generic use’ of the definite article.⁹¹ It will emerge that Plato at this point has good reasons for alluding to the standard formula for the description of truth.⁹² The effect Plato wants to convey could be brought out by adding quotation marks: ‘And the true one “says the things which are” to be about you’.⁹³

⁸⁹ Cf. above, n. 75 and text thereto. ⁹⁰ Cf. above, n. 95 of Ch. 2.

⁹¹ Cf. Szaif (1998), 468. ⁹² Cf. below, paragraph to n. 110.

⁹³ Frede (1992), 419–20 suggests a different paraphrase of [$\pi 1$], which in effect amounts to: ‘ $\forall x \forall y$ (x is a true sentence about you & x says y to be about you $\rightarrow y$ is one of the things which are about you)’. My only reservation with this paraphrase is that it speaks of all true sentences about Theaetetus while [$\pi 1$] seems to speak of one particular such sentence (i.e. ‘Theaetetus is sitting’).

The Visitor's second remark is:

[ρ2] The false one instead <says> things different from the things which are <to be about you>. (263B7)

The expressions 'says' ('λέγει') and 'to be about you' ('ὡς ἔστιν περὶ σοῦ') are supplied from [ρ1]. As in the case of [ρ1], 'about you' is to be construed in common with 'says' and 'things which are'. The following is therefore a first step towards a plausible paraphrase of [ρ2]:

[#] The sentence 'Theaetetus is flying' says about Theaetetus things different from the things which are about Theaetetus to be.

Looking at [#] inspires the following paraphrase of [ρ2]:

[π2] $\exists x$ (the sentence 'Theaetetus is flying' says about Theaetetus x to be & $\forall y$ (y is about Theaetetus $\rightarrow x$ is different from y)).

In [π2] the symbols ' $\forall y$ ' correspond to the definite article 'the' within the phrase 'the things which are about Theaetetus' occurring in [#]: the occurrence of 'the' in the plural noun-phrase 'the things which are about Theaetetus' within [#] is to be considered a case of the 'generic use' of the definite article. Note that this occurrence of the definite article is neither a vestige of nor an allusion to a standard formula for truth or falsehood: in [#] the plural noun-phrase 'the things which are about Theaetetus' is not the object of 'to say' or any other verb of saying or thinking. The symbols ' $\exists x$ ' at the beginning of [π2] correspond to the absence of the definite article 'the' in front of the expression 'things different' in [#].

The Visitor's third remark is:

[ρ3] It therefore says the things which are not as things which are <about you>. (263B9)

As in the case of [ρ2], the phrase 'about you' is supplied from [ρ1] and is to be construed in common with 'says' and 'things which are not'. So, ignoring the 'therefore', a first step towards a plausible paraphrase of [ρ3] is:

[+] The sentence 'Theaetetus is flying' says about Theaetetus the things which are not about Theaetetus as things which are.

The omitted 'therefore' signals that 'things which are not about you' is inferred from 'things different from the things which are about you' in [ρ2]: the inference relies on principle *ND*.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Cf. above, text to n. 67; text to n. 72 of Ch. 5.

More work is needed with [+]. The assumption that the ‘as’ introduces the way in which the false sentence says about Theaetetus the things which are not about him⁹⁵ yields the following second step towards a plausible paraphrase of [ρ3]:

[++] The sentence ‘Theaetetus is flying’ says about Theaetetus the things which are not about Theaetetus to be.

If the occurrence of the definite article ‘the’ in the plural noun-phrase ‘the things which are not about Theaetetus’ within [++] were a case of the ‘generic use’ of the definite article, then [++] should be paraphrased by:

[??] $\forall x$ (x is not about Theaetetus \rightarrow the sentence ‘Theaetetus is flying’ says about Theaetetus x to be).

But [??] is obviously wrong: it is clearly not the case that ‘Theaetetus is flying’ attributes to Theaetetus all the actions that are not about him. What is needed is:

[π3] $\exists x$ (x is not about Theaetetus & the sentence ‘Theaetetus is flying’ says about Theaetetus x to be).

One must therefore avoid regarding the occurrence of the definite article ‘the’ in the plural noun-phrase ‘the things which are not about Theaetetus’ within [++] as an instance of the ‘generic use’ of the definite article. As in the case of [*], one must ask what the role of the definite article at this point is. The most plausible explanation is that the occurrence of the definite article ‘the’ in the plural noun-phrase ‘the things which are not about Theaetetus’ within [++] is a vestige of and an allusion to a standard formula for the description of falsehood. For in [++] the plural noun-phrase ‘the things which are not about Theaetetus’ is the object of the verb ‘to say’ in the larger phrase ‘... says ... the things which are not about Theaetetus’. This larger phrase recalls a description of falsehood that occurs frequently in Plato: ‘to speak falsely’ is ‘to say the things which are not’.⁹⁶ Being a vestige of and an allusion to such a formula, the occurrence of ‘the’ in the plural noun-phrase ‘the things which are not about Theaetetus’ within [++] need not be regarded as a case of the ‘generic use’ of the definite article.⁹⁷ It will emerge that Plato at this point has good reasons for alluding to the standard formula for the description of falsehood.⁹⁸ The

⁹⁵ Cf. LSJ *s.v.* ‘ὥς’ C 1 2; *s.v.* ‘λέγω’ (B) III 2; A. A. 672; Pl. *R.* 5. 463B14–464C1; *Spb.* 263D1–2; *Plt.* 293E4–5; *Ti.* 50B3. Analogous constructions of ‘ὥς’ with verbs different from ‘λέγειν’ occur in the *Sophist*: cf. 219A5–6; 225C2–3; 238B1; 239A8–9; 249B2–3; 255B8–9; 255C1.

⁹⁶ Cf. *Spb.* 260C3–4; above, n. 93 of Ch. 2. ⁹⁷ Cf. Szaif (1998), 468.

⁹⁸ Cf. below, paragraph to n. 110.

effect Plato wants to convey could be brought out by inserting quotation marks: ‘It therefore “says the things which are not” as things which are <about you>’. [π3] follows from [π2] because they both begin with the quantifier ‘∃’.

The Visitor’s fourth remark is:

[ρ4] But <it says> things which are different from things which are about you. (263B11)

‘It says’ is supplied on the basis of [ρ3]. As in earlier cases, ‘about you’ is construed in common with ‘says’ and ‘things which are’. [ρ4] does not add a new thesis. Its main contribution is to clarify an obscure point of the earlier remarks by specifying that the ‘things which are’ mentioned in [ρ2] are ‘things which are about you’ (the somewhat unusual construction of ‘ὄντων’ with ‘περί’ and the genitive is probably due to the influence of the understood ‘λέγει’).

The plural noun-phrase ‘things which are about you’ contains no definite article. So, were one to paraphrase [ρ4], one should refrain from using the symbol ‘∀’. But, as I said, the purpose of [ρ4] is merely to clarify an obscure point of [ρ2], not to repeat what it said.

The Visitor’s fifth remark is:

[ρ5] Things said about something, but different things said as identical, and things which are not as things which are – such a combination coming to be from verbs and names by all means seems really and truly to become a false sentence. (263D1–4)

Remark [ρ5] makes two points. The first is that false sentences say about something ‘different things [. . .] as identical’ (263D1–2), the second that they say about something ‘things which are not as things which are’ (263D2). Consider the first point: a false sentence says about something ‘different things [. . .] as identical’ (263D1–2). Things different from what? Things different from *things which are about the thing the sentence is about* (cf. [ρ4]), or things different from *the thing the sentence is about*?

The first answer, adopted by several commentators,⁹⁹ faces two difficulties. First, it leads one to expect that the full description of a false sentence hinted at in the present passage is that a false sentence says about something things different from things which are about that thing as if they

⁹⁹ Cf. van Eck (2002), 63; Brown (2008), 457–8. Since these commentators do not accept Kassel’s emendation (cf. above, n. 45), they take the passage to be still describing what happens in ‘Theaetetus is flying’.

were identical to *things which are* ('about that thing' may be omitted at the end because it would be redundant). This can be an acceptable description of false sentences only if it is understood as a claim to the effect that a false sentence says about something things different from *all* things which are about that thing as if they were identical to *some* things which are. But the supplementation of two different quantifiers, 'all' and 'some', is unnatural.¹⁰⁰ The second difficulty for the first answer, according to which a false sentence says about something things different from things which are about that thing as identical, is that one wonders why identity is brought back on the scene. So far identity had been kept out of the account of falsehood: why does it reappear now?

These difficulties, and especially the second, induce me to prefer the second answer, according to which a false sentence says about something things different from it as identical. This description recalls that of the mistakes which dialectic enables one to avoid: for the Visitor had declared that dialectic is able 'not to regard as different an identical kind nor as identical one that is different' (253D1–2, cf. 259D2–3). This suggests that Plato is describing here the falsehood of affirmative sentences about kinds understood according to their 'definitional' reading. Earlier I stipulated that if both 'σ' and 'φ' signify kinds, then the sentence 'σ is (a) φ' is true on its 'definitional' reading just if the kind signified by 'σ' is identical to the kind signified by 'φ' (where 'σ' and 'φ' are schematic letters to be replaced, respectively, with a name and a general term).¹⁰¹ Given that this assumption is correct, Plato is right to say that affirmative sentences about kinds, understood according to their 'definitional' reading, are false just if they involve 'different things said as identical' (263D1–2).

The second point made by [ρ5] is that a false sentence says about something 'things which are not as things which are' (263D2). On the basis of remarks [ρ1]–[ρ4], it may be plausibly assumed that 'about that thing' is to be supplied after 'things which are not', so that the false sentence is described as saying about something things which are not about that thing as being. The position of remarks [ρ2]–[ρ4] is presupposed: for a kind not to be about something is for it to be different from everything that is about that thing. This amounts to a description of falsehood that covers sentences understood according to their 'ordinary' reading.

Essences and criteria. An objection is sometimes raised against the Oxford interpretation of Plato's account of falsehood: according to the Oxford

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Szaif (1998), 491–4; Brown (2008), 455–6. These commentators regard this difficulty as a reason for rejecting the Oxford interpretation in favour of the quasi-incompatibility interpretation.

¹⁰¹ Cf. above, paragraph to n. 68 of Ch. 4.

interpretation, a sentence composed of a name *n* and a verb *v* is false just if the action signified by *v* is different from everything that holds of the object signified by *n*; so, in order to discover that a sentence composed of a name *n* and a verb *v* is false, one should perform the unfeasible task of examining all of the (perhaps infinitely many) things that hold of the object signified by *n*.¹⁰²

This objection depends on a confusion between ‘criterion’ and ‘essence’. Their difference may be grasped by realizing that the need for a ‘criterion’ for *x* often arises because the ‘essence’ of *x* cannot be easily checked. The Oxford interpretation credits Plato with a specification of the ‘essence’ of falsehood, not of a ‘criterion’ for its discovery.¹⁰³

Falsehood and not-being. The idea that to speak falsely is to say what is not resurfaces – but, thanks to the definition of sentence and the account of not-being in terms of difference, it is now innocuous. The venom is taken out in two steps.¹⁰⁴

The first step of Plato’s solution is to state that a false sentence *says what is not* in that it *says* about an object *what is not* about it. This first step relies on the definition of sentence. At last it becomes clear why a definition of sentence was needed in order to be able to accept that not-being combines with sentences: the sophist’s last defence was not as silly as it appeared. The sophist wanted an explanation of how not-being combines with sentences in false speech. He was hoping that the explanation would entail that whoever speaks falsely performs a speech act directed to something which ‘is not’ in that it does not exist. He would then have pointed out that a speech act cannot be directed to something which ‘is not’ in that it does not exist, and he would have concluded that speaking falsely is impossible. The central claim of Plato’s definition of sentence is that a speech act performed by uttering a primary sentence is directed to two things, one of which (the action signified by the verb) is said about the other (the object signified by the name). Plato thereby rejects the claim that a speech act performed by uttering a primary sentence is directed to a single thing. Had Plato endorsed this claim which he in fact rejects, he would probably have felt obliged to concede that whoever speaks falsely by uttering a primary sentence performs a speech act directed to something which ‘is not’ in that it does not exist. For, Plato would probably have felt obliged to concede that the single thing to which a speech act performed by uttering

¹⁰² Cf. Wiehl (1968), 263–4; Pelletier (1983), 46–7.

¹⁰³ Cf. Russell (1910b), 149; Ray (1984), 92; Crivelli (1990), 87; Movia (1991), 455–6.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Heindorf (1810), 435–6; Gullely (1962), 155; Demos (1964), 605–6; Guthrie (1962–81), v 156; Denyer (1991), 146–7; N. P. White (1993), xxviii–xxix; Szaif (1998), 411; Ambuel (2007), 164.

a primary sentence is directed is a 'predicative complex' consisting of the object and the action signified by the primary sentence's name and verb, and such a 'predicative complex' would have been such as to exist just if the speech act was an episode of true speech. For instance, the speech act performed by uttering 'Theaetetus is sitting' would have been directed to sitting-Theaetetus, and the speech act would have been an episode of true speech just if sitting-Theaetetus exists; analogously, the speech act performed by uttering 'Theaetetus is flying' would have been directed to flying-Theaetetus, and the speech act would have been an episode of true speech just if flying-Theaetetus exists.¹⁰⁵ By subscribing to this view, Plato would have committed himself to accepting that whoever speaks falsely by uttering a primary sentence performs a speech act directed to something which 'is not' in that it does not exist. To be sure, Plato would not have been compelled to endorse the conception of the nature of the unique thing to which a speech act is directed which I have just outlined. He could have adopted an alternative conception, which is in fact the most widespread in modern philosophy of language (I am ignoring issues of historical plausibility). According to this alternative conception, a speech act performed by uttering any sentence is directed to a single proposition. Propositions are immaterial mind-independent entities and are the primary bearers of truth and falsehood: some of them are true, others false. Their existence does not depend on their being true: some of them exist despite being false. Any speech act performed by uttering a sentence is directed to a single proposition: if the proposition is true, then the speech act is an episode of true speech; if the proposition is false, then the speech act is an episode of false speech.¹⁰⁶ According to this conception, a speech act performed by uttering the sentence 'Theaetetus is flying' is directed to the false proposition that-Theaetetus-is-flying, which exists even though the speech act is an episode of false speech. This conception has many strengths: for instance, it allows a simple explanation of what is meant by sentences like 'You and I are saying the same thing'. But it also has costs which Plato would have had good reason to regard as unacceptable: it populates the ontology with countless new entities and it acknowledges mind-independent falsehoods, contrary to the intuition that there could be no falsehood if there were no minds to make mistakes.¹⁰⁷ As I said, Plato offers a definition of sentence whereby he rejects the claim that a speech act performed by uttering a primary sentence is directed to a single thing.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Owen (1971), 245; Matthen (1983), 126; above, paragraph to n. 110 of Ch. 2.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Frege (1918–19a), 60–1; Frege (1918–19b), 145.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Russell (1910b), 151–2; Russell (1912), 72; Denyer (1991), 146–7.

By rejecting this claim, Plato gets rid of a motivation for holding that whoever speaks falsely by uttering a primary sentence performs a speech act directed to something which 'is not' in that it does not exist. This move therefore contributes to clearing the way for denying that whoever speaks falsely by uttering a primary sentence performs a speech act directed to something which 'is not' in that it does not exist, and therefore for denying that whoever speaks falsely performs a speech act directed to something which 'is not' in that it does not exist. I pointed out that the central claim of Plato's definition of sentence is that a speech act performed by uttering a primary sentence is directed to two things, one of which (the action signified by the verb) is said about the other (the object signified by the name). Accordingly, a false primary sentence *says what is not* in that it *says* about an object *what is not* about it.

The second step of Plato's solution capitalizes on the idea that a false primary sentence *says what is not* in that it *says* about an object *what is not* about it. To say about something what is not about it is simply to say about that thing what is different from everything that is about it. If something is different from everything that is about a thing, it does not follow that it does not exist. This second step of Plato's solution relies on the account of not-being in terms of difference. It brings to completion an explanation of how not-being combines with sentences in false speech, an explanation which does not entail that whoever speaks falsely performs a speech act directed to something which 'is not' in that it does not exist.

It also becomes clear why Plato adopts the somewhat artificial jargon of the converse use of 'to be'. It is because he wants to retain a link between his innocuous talk of 'saying what is not about . . .' (which brings in the converse use of 'to be') and the troublesome 'saying what is not' (which involves the complete use of 'to be').

One might object: 'Couldn't Plato have achieved his goal by retaining the less counter-intuitive direct use of "to be"? After all, the Greek language enables one to describe false sentences by using the verb "to say" that takes as its object a form of "to be" in its direct use: the Greek sentence corresponding to the English "A false sentence says what is not so-and-so (e.g. flying) as being so-and-so (e.g. flying)" is perfectly natural.'¹⁰⁸

This objection is answered by pointing out that the suggested description of false sentences involving a direct use of 'to be' loses the connection between falsehood and not-being, which is instead preserved by employing the converse use of 'to be'. Just as the troublesome 'saying what is not' may

¹⁰⁸ Cf. above, n. 95.

be felt as meaning ‘saying what is not true’, so also the innocuous ‘saying what is not about . . .’ may be felt as meaning ‘saying what is not true of . . .’.¹⁰⁹ The link would have been lost if the analysis of false sentences had been formulated by means of the direct use of ‘to be’: the occurrence of ‘says what is not’ within ‘A false sentence says what is not so-and-so (e.g. flying) as being so-and-so (e.g. flying)’ could not be felt as meaning the same as ‘says what is not true’.

It also becomes clear why Plato uses ‘. . . says *the* things which are . . . about you’ (263B4–5) and ‘. . . says *the* things which are not . . . about you’ (263B9), formulations which in virtue of the presence of the article ‘the’ echo the usual descriptions of truth and falsehood.¹¹⁰ He is hinting that these formulations supersede those without the qualifier ‘about you’. The formulation ‘. . . says the things which are not’, without the qualifier ‘about you’, was the source of all difficulties.

The cross-reference at 263B11–12. At 263B11–12 the Visitor remarks: ‘For, in a way, we said that περὶ ἕκαστον there are many things which are and many which are not.’ The cross-reference must be to 256E6–8, where the Visitor and Theaetetus agreed that ‘περὶ ἕκαστον [. . .] τῶν εἰδῶν what is is a lot whereas what is not is of indefinite multitude’ (256E6–7).

The cross-reference of 263B11–12 to 256E6–8 raises two difficulties. First, on their most intuitive reading, the words ‘περὶ ἕκαστον’ (263B12) in the later passage (263B11–12) mean ‘about each thing’. Suppose this is what they mean. Then in the later passage the Visitor reports that in the earlier passage (256E6–8) he and Theaetetus agreed that *about each thing* ‘there are many things which are and many which are not’ (263B11–12). But in the earlier passage the Visitor and Theaetetus agreed that *‘about each of the kinds* what is is a lot whereas what is not is of indefinite multitude’ (256E6–7). The claim agreed upon in the earlier passage is thus described as *about each thing* (therefore about each perceptible particular and each kind), while in fact it was *about each of the kinds*. So, the Visitor seems to misreport the earlier agreement.¹¹¹ Secondly, the account of falsehood, to which the later passage (263B11–12) belongs, seems to require kinds which are not about things in that they do not hold of them (for the kind flying is not about Theaetetus in that it does not hold of him). But when, in the earlier passage (256E6–8), the Visitor and Theaetetus agreed that ‘about each of the kinds [. . .] what is not is of indefinite multitude’ (256E6–7),

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Kahn (1981), 113; Szaif (1998), 470–1, 475.

¹¹⁰ Cf. above, text to nn. 92 and 98. ¹¹¹ Cf. Kamlah (1963), 45.

the claim agreed upon was that indefinitely many things are not about each kind in that it is different from them.¹¹²

I begin with the first difficulty. Although the Visitor could be sloppy in his report of the earlier agreement, it would be preferable to avoid saddling him with sloppiness. Barring sloppiness, one might try to solve the first difficulty by making two moves: first, preserve the intuition that the words ‘περὶ ἕκαστον’ (263B12) in the later passage (263B11–12) mean ‘about each thing’; secondly, maintain that in the later passage the Visitor makes a claim that echoes but expands on the claim agreed upon in the earlier passage (256E6–8). However, on reflection, this proposal does not work because it fails to confront the difficulty. Consider again the words whereby the later passage’s cross-reference is formulated: ‘For, in a way, we said that about each thing . . .’ (263B11–12). The earlier passage’s agreement is thereby described as ‘about each thing’, therefore not only about kinds but also about perceptible particulars. But in the earlier passage the two inquirers simply did not agree what the Visitor now alleges they did. Although ‘in a way’ (which translates ‘πou’ at 263B12) expresses a qualification, it can hardly allude to an expansion from a claim ‘about each of the kinds’ to one ‘about each thing’.

One might try to solve the first difficulty by renouncing the intuition that the phrase ‘περὶ ἕκαστον’ (263B12) in the later passage (263B11–12) means ‘about each thing’. Clearly, ‘περὶ ἕκαστον’ does not mean ‘about each of the kinds’. One could, however, take it to mean ‘about each’ and to refer to each of the kinds thanks to some occurrence of the word ‘kind’ in the immediate context. This would get rid of the charge of misreport. But the word ‘kind’ does not occur in the context of the later passage (263B11–12): its closest earlier occurrence is pretty far (at 261D1). So, this proposal also fails.

The best solution of the first difficulty is to assume that ‘περὶ ἕκαστον’ (263B12) in the later passage (263B11–12) means ‘about each’ and has its reference fixed by some expression which occurs in its context but is not the word ‘kind’. There are two candidates for such a role: the phrase ‘things which are about you’ (‘ὄντων . . . περὶ σοῦ’, 263B11) and the phrase ‘things which are different from things which are about you’ (‘ὄντων . . . ὄντα ἕτερα περὶ σοῦ’, 263B11). The second gives a more satisfactory sense. I therefore translate ‘περὶ ἕκαστον’ (263B12) with ‘about each’ and supply

¹¹² Cf. Kamlah (1963), 45; McDowell (1982), 123–7; Bostock (1984), 111–12; Frede (1992), 421–2. Some commentators (e.g. Fronterotta (2007), 487) take the cross-reference of 263B11–12 to be to 259B4–7. This does not improve the situation: difficulties analogous to those described in the main text above arise.

‘of the things which are different from things which are about you’ from the context. So, ‘περὶ ἑκάστων’ (263B12) is tantamount to ‘about each of the things which are different from things which are about you’. In the earlier passage (256E6–8) the Visitor and Theaetetus agreed on a claim about all kinds: they agreed that ‘about each of the kinds what is is a lot whereas what is not is of indefinite multitude’ (256E6–7). Since the ‘things which are different from things which are about you’ (263B11) are kinds, the claim agreed upon in the earlier passage entails a claim about each of the ‘things which are different from things which are about you’ (263B11). In the later passage the Visitor refers to this entailed claim as what, ‘in a way, we said [. . .] about each’ (263B12) of the ‘things [*sc.* kinds] which are different from things which are about you’ (263B11). The expression ‘in a way’ (‘ποῦ’, 263B12), which conveys a qualification, probably hints that the claim is not the one that was explicitly agreed upon, but is entailed by it.

This solution of the first difficulty paves the way for one of the second. As I just argued, in the later passage (263B11–12) the Visitor makes a claim ‘about each’ (263B12) of the ‘things [*sc.* kinds] which are different from things which are about you’ (263B11). The claim is that about each of these kinds ‘there are many things which are and many which are not’ (263B11–12). The Visitor regards this claim as a consequence of the one which he and Theaetetus had agreed upon in the earlier passage (256E6–8), namely of the claim that ‘about each of the kinds what is is a lot whereas what is not is of indefinite multitude’ (256E6–7). Consider the negative components of these two claims. When in the earlier passage the Visitor and Theaetetus agreed that ‘about each of the kinds [. . .] what is not is of indefinite multitude’ (256E6–7), the ground for this was that each kind is different from indefinitely many kinds (for it is different from all other kinds).¹¹³ It may then be plausibly inferred that when in the later passage the Visitor claims that ‘about each’ (263B12) of the ‘things [*sc.* kinds] which are different from things which are about you’ (263B11) ‘there are many things [. . .] which are not’ (263B11–12), the ground for this claim is that each of the ‘things [*sc.* kinds] which are different from things which are about you’ (263B11) is different from (indefinitely) many kinds. I suggest that the Visitor is alluding to this ground: he is indicating that each of the ‘things [*sc.* kinds] which are different from things which are about you’ (263B11) is different from (indefinitely) many kinds. This provides some justification for speaking of each of the ‘things [*sc.* kinds] which are different from things which are about you’ (263B11) in the way in which the Visitor just did, namely for describing them as different from certain

¹¹³ Cf. above, subsection to n. 190 of Ch. 4.

kinds – specifically, as different from the kinds that are about Theaetetus, the ‘things which are about you’ (263B11).¹¹⁴

A revamped objection blocked. The sophist might try to attack the proposed account of falsehood by deploying a variant of his original paradox. He could claim: ‘If flying is not about Theaetetus, it follows that flying does not exist’. This claim, if correct, would have as devastating an effect as the sophist’s original paradox. It could be used, for instance, to argue that if ‘Theaetetus is flying’ is false then it is meaningless because the action its verb should signify does not exist.

This revamped sophistic objection is blocked by Plato’s earlier account of not-being based on difference. For one of the results of this account is principle *NPNE*:¹¹⁵ if something is not (a) ϕ , it does not follow that it does not exist (where ‘ ϕ ’ is a schematic letter to be replaced with general terms). This immediately entails that if flying is not about Theaetetus, it does not follow that flying does not exist (just substitute ‘about Theaetetus’ for ‘ ϕ ’ and apply the result to flying).

An objection concerning false negative sentences could be raised: ‘You want to retain the jargon of a false sentence saying what is not by analysing it away so as to render it innocuous. On your analysis, a false sentence *says what is not* in that it *says* about an object *what is not* about it. Your analysis works for false affirmative sentences: for a false affirmative sentence does indeed *say what is not* in that it *says* about an object *what is not* about it to be. However, your analysis does not work for false negative sentences. For, what a negative sentence does is to *say* about an object something *not to be*. So, while a true negative sentence *says* about an object *what is not* about it *not to be*, a false negative sentence *says* about an object *what is* about it *not to be*. But false negative sentences also *say what is not* (simply because they are false).’¹¹⁶

Two replies to this objection are available to Plato. Both have strengths and weaknesses. Of both there are traces in the *Sophist*.

First reply: negative false sentences say what is. The first reply accepts the objection’s first move: that a negative sentence *says* about an object something *not to be*. The first reply then pushes the line that not every false sentence says what is not, but only affirmative sentences do. Specifically, it insists that while a false *affirmative* sentence *says what is not* in that it

¹¹⁴ In Crivelli (1990), 93 and Crivelli (2008), 238–9 I attempted different solutions of the difficulties raised by the cross-reference at 263B11–12.

¹¹⁵ Cf. above, text to n. 74 of Ch. 5. ¹¹⁶ Cf. Kamlah (1963), 26–7.

says about something *what is not* about it to be, a false *negative* sentence says *what is* in that it says about something *what is* about it not to be. For instance, the false affirmative sentence ‘Theaetetus is flying’ says what is not because it says about Theaetetus that the kind flying, which in fact is not about him (in that it is different from everything that is about him), is; the false negative sentence ‘Theaetetus is not sitting’ says what is because it says about Theaetetus that the kind sitting, which in fact is about him, is not.¹¹⁷

This reply is simple and elegant. It treats affirmative and negative sentences differently¹¹⁸ but puts them on a par (affirmative sentences have no precedence over negative ones). The cost is the abandonment of the idea that all false sentences say what is not. Some false sentences, in particular false negative sentences, do not say what is not: rather, they say what is. People tend to think that all false sentences say what is not because they concentrate on affirmative sentences and ignore negative ones.

Second reply: negative false sentences attribute negative kinds. The second reply rejects the objection’s first move: it rejects that a negative sentence says about an object something *not to be*. Rather, a negative sentence also says about an object something *to be*. Specifically, as an affirmative sentence says about an object a kind, namely the kind signified by its verb, to be, so a negative sentence says about an object a kind, namely the complement of the kind signified by its verb, to be. The very same treatment is offered for both affirmative and negative false sentences. All false sentences, affirmative and negative alike, say what is not in that they say about an object what is not about it to be. The difference between the affirmative and the negative cases lies in what the false sentence says about its object: an affirmative false sentence says what is not in that it says to be about an object *the kind signified by its verb*, a kind which is not about that object; a negative false sentence says what is not in that it says to be about an object *the complement of the kind signified by its verb*, a kind which is not about that object. For instance, the false affirmative sentence ‘Theaetetus is flying’ says what is not in that it says about Theaetetus the kind flying, which is not about Theaetetus, to be; the false negative sentence ‘Theaetetus is not sitting’ says what is not in that it says about Theaetetus the kind not-sitting, which is not about Theaetetus, to be.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Cf. Owen (1971), 260.

¹¹⁸ Sayre (1970), 83 maintains that having different accounts for affirmative and negative sentences ‘falls short of the formal elegance which characterizes Plato’s analysis elsewhere in the dialogue’. On the contrary, different but parallel and independent accounts are extremely elegant.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Frede (1967), 52–3.

The strength of this reply is that it preserves the idea that all false sentences say what is not: even negative false sentences say what is not. It has two weaknesses: it solves a logical difficulty at the cost of introducing cumbersome ontological items (namely kinds that match negative predicables) and it generates an asymmetry between affirmative and negative sentences (an affirmative sentence attributes the kind signified by its verb, a negative sentence instead attributes the complement of such a kind).

Textual evidence for the first reply. The first reply chimes with the discussion of falsehood at 240D6–241A2. There¹²⁰ Plato begins by offering a ‘unipolar’ description of false belief:

[δ_1]¹²¹ A false belief believes the things which are not (cf. 240D9–10).

He then mentions beliefs which believe that the things which are not are not: since such beliefs are true, he infers that a false belief concerning the things which are not must believe them to be. This leads him to recognizing another case of false belief: that which believes that the things which are are not. The unipolar description [δ_1] is thus superseded by a ‘bipolar’ description:

[δ_2] A false belief believes either that the things which are not are or that the things which are are not (cf. 240E1–9).

With regard to false sentences, Plato does not offer a unipolar description, but it may be plausibly assumed that he leaves it for the reader mentally to supply:

[λ_1]* A false sentence says the things which are not.

Instead he explicitly puts forward a bipolar description of false sentences:

[λ_2] A false sentence says either that the things which are are not or that the things which are not are (cf. 240E10–241A2).

The development from [δ_1] to [δ_2] and from [λ_1] to [λ_2] may be viewed as an expansion of the account of falsehood: at the beginning it covers only affirmative false beliefs and sentences, then it is extended to negative false beliefs and sentences. Such an expansion fits well with the first reply to the antepenultimate subsection’s objection.

¹²⁰ Cf. above, section 4 of Ch. 2, whose results I summarize.

¹²¹ Cf. above, n. 87 of Ch. 2.

Textual evidence for the second reply. The Visitor remarks that when only names or only verbs are uttered in succession, it is not the case that ‘the utterances indicate any action or inaction or being of what is or of what is not’ (262C2–4). This obscure remark has been variously interpreted. I forgo reporting the exegeses which commentators have offered,¹²² and I restrict myself to floating one that I regard as no less plausible than any in the literature.

Every affirmative sentence attributes to the object signified by its name the action signified by its verb. Every negative sentence attributes to the object signified by its name an inaction, which is the complement of the action signified by its verb (to be understood along the guidelines of 257C5–258C6). For instance, whoever utters ‘Theaetetus is sitting’ says that sitting, an action, is about Theaetetus, an object; whoever utters ‘Theaetetus is flying’ says that flying, another action, is about Theaetetus; whoever utters ‘Theaetetus is not flying’ says that not-flying, an inaction (the complement of flying, the action signified by the verb ‘is flying’), is about Theaetetus; and whoever utters ‘Theaetetus is not sitting’ says that not-sitting, another inaction (the complement of sitting, the action signified by the verb ‘is sitting’), is about Theaetetus. A sentence is true just if its action or inaction is about the object signified by its name. For instance, ‘Theaetetus is sitting’ is true because sitting is about Theaetetus, and ‘Theaetetus is not flying’ is true because not-flying is about Theaetetus. Finally, a sentence is false just if its action or inaction is not about the object signified by its name by being different from everything that is about that object. For instance, ‘Theaetetus is flying’ is false because flying is not about Theaetetus in that it is different from everything that is about Theaetetus, and ‘Theaetetus is not sitting’ is false because not-sitting is not about Theaetetus in that it is different from everything that is about Theaetetus.

This exegesis has the advantage of recognizing a role for the negative kinds introduced at 257C5–258C6:¹²³ the inaction of not-flying is difference from everything that falls under the action of flying, similarly with the inaction of not-sitting.

Which of the two replies is Plato’s? Since there is textual evidence for both replies, one wonders which one Plato has in mind in the *Sophist*. I suspect that the answer is ‘both’. Plato’s preferred reply is probably the first: the

¹²² Cf. Owen (1971), 263; Soulez (1991), 232; Hoekstra and Scheppers (2003), 70–1.

¹²³ Some commentators (e.g. Lee (1972), 299) wonder what contribution the theory of the parts of difference could make to the final account of falsehood.

textual evidence for it is surely more explicit than that for the second.¹²⁴ Plato nevertheless hints at the second reply to forestall a possible rejoinder to the first: that it abandons the view that all false sentences (negative as well as affirmative) say what is not. Were someone to make such a rejoinder to the line adopted by the first reply, the second reply is available as a final defence.

The *Sophist's* hesitation in front of the objection about false negative sentences perhaps left a trace in Aristotle's *De interpretatione*, an early work influenced by the *Sophist*. Aristotle looks at negative sentences in two ways. On the one hand, he puts negative sentences on a par with affirmative ones: an affirmative sentence joins the items signified by its subject- and predicate-expressions, a negative sentence separates them.¹²⁵ Aristotle also specifies the truth conditions and falsehood conditions of affirmative and negative sentences in a way close to the bipolar account: 'Since it is possible to assert that what holds does not hold, that what does not hold holds, that what holds holds, and that what does not hold does not hold, and similarly for times outside the present, whatever one affirmed it is possible to deny, and whatever one denied it is possible to affirm' (*Int.* 6, 17^a26–31).¹²⁶ This first way of considering negative sentences fits with the first reply to the objection about false negative sentences. On the other hand, Aristotle treats negative predicables as semantic units endowed with their own special signification: "Is not healthy" and "is not sick" I do not call verbs: for they signify additionally time and always hold of something, but no name has been given to their difference: but let them be indefinite verbs, because they hold in the same way of anything, both what is and what is not' (*Int.* 3, 16^b12–15). Such a treatment of negative predicables chimes with the second reply to the objection about false negative sentences.

6.3 FALSE BELIEF

From (false) sentence to (false) belief and (false) appearing. The Visitor and Theaetetus shoot a salvo of definitions that enable them to transfer the results about (false) sentences to (erroneous) mental states. Thought (διάνοια) is 'the inner conversation of the soul with itself that occurs without voice' (263E3–5);¹²⁷ belief (δόξα) is the soul's inner silent affirmation or

¹²⁴ The exposition of Plato's theory of truth and falsehood in the Appendix presupposes that Plato offers the first reply.

¹²⁵ Cf. *Int.* 1, 16^a9–18 with Crivelli (2004), 82–6.

¹²⁶ Cf. above, n. 97 of Ch. 2 and text thereto. ¹²⁷ Cf. 264A9–264B1; *Th.* 189E4–7.

denial that comes as a conclusion of the inner silent conversation (263E10–264A3);¹²⁸ ‘what we say “appears” [φαίνεται . . . ὃ λέγομεν]¹²⁹ is the mixture of perception and belief’ (264B1–2);¹³⁰ and a sentence (λόγος) is the ‘efflux that passes through the mouth with sound’ (263E7–8).¹³¹ Given that an account of false sentences has been attained, so that sentences can be both true and false, it immediately follows that beliefs and appearances can also be both true and false.

What is the language of the soul’s inner silent conversation? Is it a divine language? A language of images?¹³² Or the language the speaker prefers at the moment? No answer is forthcoming from Plato’s works.¹³³ Another important unasked question is: can thinkers always tell, by introspecting their consciousness, what the contents of their beliefs are?¹³⁴

‘Appearance’ and ‘apparition’. The noun ‘appearance’ (φαντασία) is probably a Platonic neologism: it is not attested in earlier Greek literature.¹³⁵ Its first occurrence in the *Sophist* is at 260C9, where the context suggests a connection with ‘apparition’ (φάντασμα).¹³⁶ For Plato says that ‘if error exists, all things are necessarily full of images [εἰδῶλων] and likenesses [εἰκόνων] and appearance [φαντασίας]’ (260C8–9). Since apparitions are one type of images alongside likenesses (cf. 235B8–236C8), the association of appearance with images and likenesses suggests that ‘appearance’ is linked with ‘apparition’. The impression is strengthened by the fact that shortly afterwards, at 260D8–9, Plato goes on to mention the art of producing images (εἰδωλοποιική, 260D8–9) and that of producing apparitions (φανταστική, 260D9, cf. 236C3–4).

The change from ‘apparition’ to ‘appearance’ is probably due to the fact that they denote items of different kinds. ‘Apparition’ denotes external things, e.g. monumental statues that appear to have certain characteristics which they in fact lack.¹³⁷ ‘Appearance’ denotes instead mental states. Appearances are perceptual beliefs, which may be false but may also be true. Appearances, i.e. perceptual beliefs, are linked with apparitions because an apparition achieves its goal when it instils in its victim a false appearance, i.e. a false perceptual belief.

¹²⁸ Cf. 264B1; *Tht.* 189E7–190A6; 196A4–7; *Ti.* 37A2–37C5; *Phlb.* 38C5–38E8; Crivelli (1998), 20–1; Szaif (1998), 495–6.

¹²⁹ Cf. *Tht.* 152B12; below, n. 135 and text thereto. ¹³⁰ Cf. *Ti.* 52A7; Arist. *de An.* 3.3, 428^a24–6.

¹³¹ Cf. *Tht.* 206C7–206D6. One is reminded of definitions in Gorgias’ style: cf. *Men.* 76C4–76E2.

¹³² Cf. Lloyd (1953), 69–70. ¹³³ Cf. Crivelli (1998), 21–3. ¹³⁴ Cf. N. P. White (1992), 241.

¹³⁵ Cf. Notomi (1999), 250. Plato uses ‘φαντασία’ also in the *Republic* (2. 382E10) and the *Theaetetus* (152C1, 161E8).

¹³⁶ Cf. above, n. 43 of Ch. 1. ¹³⁷ Cf. above, text to n. 46 of Ch. 1.

The Sophist on true and false sentences
Formal presentation

Alphabet. I first introduce the alphabet of the formal language in which the formal presentation of the *Sophist's* theory of truth and falsehood for sentences is formulated.

[1] The logical symbols of the alphabet are:

- two parentheses: '(' and ')';
- one one-argument propositional connective: '¬';
- four two-argument propositional connectives: '&', '∨', '→', and '↔';
- two quantifiers: '∀' and '∃';
- one two-place relation constant: '='.

These logical symbols are understood in the usual way.

[2] The descriptive symbols of the alphabet include:

- ten one-place relation constants: 'S', 'S_y', 'S_n', 'S_a', 'S_e', 'S_i', 'S_o', 'K', 'T', and 'F';
- five two-place relation constants: 'O', 'A', 'D', 'B', and 'C';
- infinitely many individual variables: 'x', 'y', 'z', 'u', 'v', 'w', 'x₀', 'x₁', 'x₂', ...;
- infinitely many individual parameters: 'a', 'b', 'c', 'd', 'e', 'g', 'h', 'l', 'm', 'a₀', 'a₁', 'a₂', ..., 'b₀', 'b₁', ...;
- infinitely many one-place relation parameters: 'R₀¹', 'R₁¹', 'R₂¹', ...;
- infinitely many two-place relation parameters: 'R₀²', 'R₁²', 'R₂²', ...;
- ⋮

The meanings of the relation constants are best explained by considering them in context:

[3] Every instance of every schema in the following left-hand side column has the same meaning as the corresponding instance of the schema on the same line in the following right-hand side column:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| ' $S\alpha$ ' | ' α is a sentence' |
| ' $S_y\alpha$ ' | ' α is a singular affirmative sentence' |
| ' $S_n\alpha$ ' | ' α is a singular negative sentence' ¹ |
| ' $S_a\alpha$ ' | ' α is a universal affirmative sentence' |
| ' $S_e\alpha$ ' | ' α is a universal negative sentence' |
| ' $S_i\alpha$ ' | ' α is a particular affirmative sentence' |
| ' $S_o\alpha$ ' | ' α is a particular negative sentence' ² |
| ' $K\alpha$ ' | ' α is a kind' |
| ' $T\alpha$ ' | ' α is true' |
| ' $F\alpha$ ' | ' α is false' |
| ' $O\alpha\beta$ ' | ' α is an object signified by the name in β ' |
| ' $A\alpha\beta$ ' | ' α is an action signified by the verb in β ' |
| ' $D\alpha\beta$ ' | ' α is different from β ' |
| ' $B\alpha\beta$ ' | ' α is about β ' ³ |
| ' $C\alpha\beta$ ' | ' α is a contradictory of β ' |

Formulae. Formulae are constructed in the standard way. The usual conventions for economizing on parentheses are adopted (the conjunctive and the disjunctive connectives, '&' and ' \vee ', have greater binding power than the conditional and the biconditional connectives, ' \rightarrow ' and ' \leftrightarrow ').

The syntax and the semantics of sentences are governed by six axioms:

- [4] $\forall x (Sx \leftrightarrow S_yx \vee S_nx \vee S_ax \vee S_ex \vee S_ix \vee S_ox)$.
 [5] $\forall x ((S_yx \rightarrow \neg(S_nx \vee S_ax \vee S_ex \vee S_ix \vee S_ox)) \& (S_nx \rightarrow \neg(S_ax \vee S_ex \vee S_ix \vee S_ox)) \& (S_ax \rightarrow \neg(S_ex \vee S_ix \vee S_ox)) \& (S_ex \rightarrow \neg(S_ix \vee S_ox)) \& (S_ix \rightarrow \neg S_ox))$.
 [6] $\forall x (Sx \rightarrow \exists y (Ayx \& \forall z (Azx \rightarrow z = y) \& Ky))$.
 [7] $\forall x (S_yx \vee S_nx \rightarrow \exists y (Oyx \& \forall z (Ozx \rightarrow z = y)))$.
 [8] $\forall x (S_ax \vee S_ex \vee S_ix \vee S_ox \rightarrow \exists y (Oyx \& \forall z (Ozx \rightarrow z = y) \& Ky))$.
 [9] $\forall x \forall y (Cxy \leftrightarrow \exists z \exists u (Ozx \& Ozy \& Aux \& Auy \& ((S_yx \& S_ny) \vee (S_nx \& S_yy) \vee (S_ax \& S_oy) \vee (S_ox \& S_ay) \vee (S_ex \& S_iy) \vee (S_ix \& S_ey))))$.

Axioms [4] and [5] state that sentences are of exactly six reciprocally disjoint kinds. Recognizing six kinds of sentences goes beyond what Plato says in the *Sophist*, where sentences of only two kinds are discussed: singular affirmative and singular negative sentences. I carried out such an extension

¹ The subscripts ' y ' and ' n ' abbreviate 'yes' and 'no'.

² The subscripts ' a ', ' e ', ' i ', and ' o ' are the traditional symbols for (respectively) universal affirmative, universal negative, particular affirmative, and particular negative sentences.

³ ' B ' abbreviates 'being about'.

in order to show how the *Sophist's* theory of truth and falsehood could easily come to cover a reasonable amount of sentences. Axioms [6], [7], and [8] lay down some semantic properties of sentences. Specifically, axiom [6] posits that there is exactly one action signified by the verb within any sentence, and it is a kind. Axiom [7] asserts that there is exactly one object signified by the name within any singular affirmative or singular negative sentence. Axiom [8] requires that in the case of general sentences, the only object signified by the sentence's name be a kind. Finally, axiom [9] fixes the extension of the relation of contradictoriness. It obtains between any two sentences that satisfy three conditions: their names signify the same object; their verbs signify the same action; and they are an affirmative and a negative sentence of the appropriate types (either both singular or one universal and the other particular).

Ontology. Three axioms deal with ontological matters:

[I0] $\forall x \forall y (Dxy \leftrightarrow \neg x = y)$.

[I1] $\forall x (\exists y Bxy \rightarrow Kx)$.

[I2] $\forall x (Kx \rightarrow \exists y (Ky \& \forall v (Byv \leftrightarrow \forall w (Bxw \rightarrow Dvw))))$.

Axiom [I0] asserts that the relation of difference obtains between all and only the things that are not reciprocally identical. Axiom [I1] makes the intuitive requirement that only kinds be about things, i.e. hold of things. Axiom [I2] states that any given kind has a complement, a kind that is about all and only the things different from everything which the given kind is about.

The definition of truth and falsehood consists of axioms that specify the truth conditions and the falsehood conditions for sentences of each of the six sorts contemplated. This calls for twelve axioms.

As one expects, a singular affirmative sentence is true just if the action signified by its verb is about the object signified by its name. A singular affirmative sentence is instead false just if the action signified by its verb is not about the object signified by its name by being different from everything that is about that object. A singular negative sentence is true just if the action signified by its verb is not about the object signified by its name by being different from everything that is about that object. A singular negative sentence is false just if the action signified by its verb is about the object signified by its name. As for quantified sentences, the truth condition and falsehood condition specifications are simple extrapolations of those for singular affirmative and singular negative sentences. For

instance, a universal negative sentence is true just if the action signified by its verb is not about anything the object signified by its name is about (and not-being-about amounts to difference-from-everything-that-is-about). A universal negative sentence is instead false just if the action signified by its verb is about something which the object signified by its name is about.

Here are the twelve axioms:

- [13] $\forall x (S_{yx} \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& Bzy)))$.
 [14] $\forall x (S_{yx} \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& \forall v (Bvy \rightarrow Dzv))))$.
 [15] $\forall x (S_{nx} \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& \forall v (Bvy \rightarrow Dzv))))$.
 [16] $\forall x (S_{nx} \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& Bzy)))$.
 [17] $\forall x (S_{ax} \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow Bzw))))$.
 [18] $\forall x (S_{ax} \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& \exists w (Byw \& \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv))))$.
 [19] $\forall x (S_{ex} \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv))))$.
 [20] $\forall x (S_{ex} \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& \exists w (Byw \& Bzw))))$.
 [21] $\forall x (S_{ix} \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& \exists w (Byw \& Bzw))))$.
 [22] $\forall x (S_{ix} \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv))))$.
 [23] $\forall x (S_{ox} \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& \exists w (Byw \& \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv))))$.
 [24] $\forall x (S_{ox} \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow Bzw))))$.

Note that the symbol ‘ \neg ’ does not occur in axioms [13]–[24].

Some ontological results. The next two results are the fundamental ontological theorems of the present account of the truth and falsehood conditions of sentences.

- [25] $\forall x \forall y (\neg Bxy \leftrightarrow \forall w (Bxw \rightarrow Dyw))$.

Proof. Suppose $\neg Bab$. Let c be such that Bac . Were it the case that $b = c$, it would follow that Bab , which contradicts the initial hypothesis. Therefore $\neg b = c$. Hence (by [10]) Dbc . But c was arbitrary, so $\forall w (Baw \rightarrow Dbw)$. Therefore $\neg Bab \rightarrow \forall w (Baw \rightarrow Dbw)$.

Vice versa, suppose $\forall w (Baw \rightarrow Dbw)$. Were it the case that Bab , it would follow that Dbb , so that (by [10]) $\neg b = b$, which is not the case. Hence $\neg Bab$. Therefore $\forall w (Baw \rightarrow Dbw) \rightarrow \neg Bab$.

Hence $\neg Bab \leftrightarrow \forall w (Baw \rightarrow Dbw)$. But a and b were arbitrary, so $\forall x \forall y (\neg Bxy \leftrightarrow \forall w (Bxw \rightarrow Dyw))$.

- [26] $\forall x \forall y (\neg Bxy \leftrightarrow \forall v (Bvy \rightarrow Dxy))$.

Proof. Suppose $\neg Bab$. Let c be such that Bcb . Were it the case that $a = c$, it would follow that Bab , which contradicts the initial hypothesis. Therefore $\neg a = c$. Hence (by [10]) Dac . But c was arbitrary, so $\forall v(Bvb \rightarrow Dav)$. Therefore $\neg Bab \rightarrow \forall v(Bvb \rightarrow Dav)$.

Vice versa, suppose $\forall v(Bvb \rightarrow Dav)$. Were it the case that Bab , it would follow that Daa , so that (by [10]) $\neg a = a$, which is not the case. Hence $\neg Bab$. Therefore $\forall v(Bvb \rightarrow Dav) \rightarrow \neg Bab$.

Hence $\neg Bab \leftrightarrow \forall v(Bvb \rightarrow Dav)$. But a and b were arbitrary, so $\forall x \forall y (\neg Bxy \leftrightarrow \forall v(Bvy \rightarrow D xv))$.

There are some further interesting ontological results:

$$[27] \quad \forall x \forall y (\forall w (Bxw \rightarrow D yw) \leftrightarrow \forall v (Bvy \rightarrow D xv)).$$

Proof. A trivial consequence of [25] and [26].

$$[28] \quad \forall x \forall y (\forall v (Bxv \leftrightarrow \forall w (Byw \rightarrow Dvw)) \rightarrow \forall w (Bxw \leftrightarrow \neg Byw)).$$

Proof. Suppose $\forall v (Bav \leftrightarrow \forall w (Bbw \rightarrow Dvw))$. Then $Bac \leftrightarrow \forall w (Bbw \rightarrow Dcw)$. By [25], $\neg Bbc \leftrightarrow \forall w (Bbw \rightarrow Dcw)$. Hence $Bac \leftrightarrow \neg Bbc$. But c was arbitrary, so $\forall w (Baw \leftrightarrow \neg Bbw)$. But a and b were arbitrary, so $\forall x \forall y (\forall v (Bxv \leftrightarrow \forall w (Byw \rightarrow Dvw)) \rightarrow \forall w (Bxw \leftrightarrow \neg Byw))$.

$$[29] \quad \forall x (Kx \rightarrow \exists u (Ku \ \& \ \forall v (Buv \leftrightarrow \forall w (Bxw \rightarrow Dvw)) \ \& \ \forall w (Buw \leftrightarrow \neg Bxw))).$$

Proof. Suppose Ka . By [12], $\exists y (Ky \ \& \ \forall v (Byv \leftrightarrow \forall w (Baw \rightarrow Dvw)))$. Let then b be such that $Kb \ \& \ \forall v (Bbv \leftrightarrow \forall w (Baw \rightarrow Dvw))$. By [28], $\forall v (Bbv \leftrightarrow \forall w (Baw \rightarrow Dvw)) \rightarrow \forall w (Bbw \leftrightarrow \neg Baw)$. Hence $\forall w (Bbw \leftrightarrow \neg Baw)$. Then $Kb \ \& \ \forall v (Bbv \leftrightarrow \forall w (Baw \rightarrow Dvw)) \ \& \ \forall w (Bbw \leftrightarrow \neg Baw)$, so $\exists u (Ku \ \& \ \forall v (Buv \leftrightarrow \forall w (Baw \rightarrow Dvw)) \ \& \ \forall w (Buw \leftrightarrow \neg Baw))$. But a was arbitrary, so $\forall x (Kx \rightarrow \exists u (Ku \ \& \ \forall v (Buv \leftrightarrow \forall w (Bxw \rightarrow Dvw)) \ \& \ \forall w (Buw \leftrightarrow \neg Bxw)))$.

Limitative results based on Russell's argument. A version of Russell's argument can be used to show that there is no kind that is about all and only the kinds that are not about themselves. Since, as postulated by axiom [12], any given kind has a complement, namely a kind which is about all and only the things different from all the things which the given kind is about, several limitative results about the range of kinds can be derived. For instance, there is no kind that is about all and only the kinds that are about themselves.⁴

⁴ Cf. above, text to n. 94 of Ch. 5.

[30] $\neg\exists x \forall y (Bxy \leftrightarrow \neg Byy)$.

Proof. Suppose $\exists x \forall y (Bxy \leftrightarrow \neg Byy)$. Let then a be such that $\forall y (Bay \leftrightarrow \neg Byy)$. Then $Baa \leftrightarrow \neg Baa$. Suppose it were the case that Baa : since $Baa \leftrightarrow \neg Baa$, it would follow that $\neg Baa$, whence $Baa \& \neg Baa$, which is a contradiction. Therefore $\neg Baa$. Since $Baa \leftrightarrow \neg Baa$, it follows that Baa , so that $Baa \& \neg Baa$, which is a contradiction. Therefore $\neg\exists x \forall y (Bxy \leftrightarrow \neg Byy)$.

[31] $\neg\exists x (Kx \& \forall y (Bxy \leftrightarrow Byy))$.

Proof. Suppose $\exists x (Kx \& \forall y (Bxy \leftrightarrow Byy))$. Let then a be such that $Ka \& \forall y (Bay \leftrightarrow Byy)$. Since Ka , it follows (by [29]) that $\exists u (Ku \& \forall v (Buv \leftrightarrow \forall w (Baw \rightarrow Dvw)) \& \forall w (Buw \leftrightarrow \neg Baw))$. Let then b be such that $Kb \& \forall v (Bbv \leftrightarrow \forall w (Baw \rightarrow Dvw)) \& \forall w (Bbw \leftrightarrow \neg Baw)$. Since $\forall w (Bbw \leftrightarrow \neg Baw)$, $Bbc \leftrightarrow \neg Bac$. Since $\forall y (Bay \leftrightarrow Byy)$, $Bac \leftrightarrow Bcc$, so $\neg Bac \leftrightarrow \neg Bcc$. Since $Bbc \leftrightarrow \neg Bac$ and $\neg Bac \leftrightarrow \neg Bcc$, it follows that $Bbc \leftrightarrow \neg Bcc$. But c was arbitrary, so $\forall y (Bby \leftrightarrow \neg Byy)$. Hence $\exists x \forall y (Bxy \leftrightarrow \neg Byy)$, contrary to [30]. Therefore $\neg\exists x (Kx \& \forall y (Bxy \leftrightarrow Byy))$.

[32] $\exists x (Kx \& \forall y (Bxy \leftrightarrow Ky)) \rightarrow \neg\forall x (Kx \rightarrow Bxx)$.

Proof. Suppose $\exists x (Kx \& \forall y (Bxy \leftrightarrow Ky))$. Let then a be such that $Ka \& \forall y (Bay \leftrightarrow Ky)$. Suppose $\forall x (Kx \rightarrow Bxx)$. Suppose Bab . Since $\forall y (Bay \leftrightarrow Ky)$, Kb . Since $\forall x (Kx \rightarrow Bxx)$, Bbb . So $Bab \rightarrow Bbb$. Vice versa, suppose Bbb . Then $\exists y Bby$. Since (by [11]) $\exists y Bby \rightarrow Kb$, Kb . Since $\forall y (Bay \leftrightarrow Ky)$, Bab . So $Bbb \rightarrow Bab$. Therefore $Bab \leftrightarrow Bbb$. But b was arbitrary, so $\forall y (Bay \leftrightarrow Byy)$. Therefore $Ka \& \forall y (Bay \leftrightarrow Byy)$, so $\exists x (Kx \& \forall y (Bxy \leftrightarrow Byy))$, contrary to [31]. Therefore $\neg\forall x (Kx \rightarrow Bxx)$. So $\exists x (Kx \& \forall y (Bxy \leftrightarrow Ky)) \rightarrow \neg\forall x (Kx \rightarrow Bxx)$.

This last result shows that if there is a kind of kinds, then not all kinds are self-predicating.

Some semantic results. I move on to prove that the definition of truth and falsehood given above as axioms [13]–[24] yields the expected results. I begin by proving that a singular affirmative sentence is false just if the action signified by its verb is not about the object signified by its name. I then prove that a singular negative sentence is true just if the action signified by its verb is not about the object signified by its name. Next, I prove that a universal affirmative sentence is false just if the action signified by its verb is not about some entity which the object signified by its name

is about. I then prove analogous theses for universal negative, particular affirmative, and particular negative sentences.

[33] $\forall x (S_yx \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \ \& \ Azx \ \& \ \neg Bzy)))$.

Proof. Suppose S_ya . Then, by [14], $Fa \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall v (Bvy \rightarrow Dzv))$.

Suppose Fa . Then $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall v (Bvy \rightarrow Dzv))$. Let then b and c be such that $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \forall v (Bvb \rightarrow Dcv)$. By [26], $\neg Bcb \leftrightarrow \forall v (Bvb \rightarrow Dcv)$. Therefore $\neg Bcb$. Hence $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \neg Bcb$, so $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \neg Bzy)$. Therefore $Fa \rightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \neg Bzy)$.

Vice versa, suppose $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \neg Bzy)$. Let then b and c be such that $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \neg Bcb$. By [26], $\neg Bcb \leftrightarrow \forall v (Bvb \rightarrow Dcv)$. Hence $\forall v (Bvb \rightarrow Dcv)$. Therefore $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \forall v (Bvb \rightarrow Dcv)$, so $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall v (Bvy \rightarrow Dzv))$. Hence Fa . So $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \neg Bzy) \rightarrow Fa$.

Therefore $Fa \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \neg Bzy)$. But a was arbitrary, so $\forall x (S_yx \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \ \& \ Azx \ \& \ \neg Bzy)))$.

[34] $\forall x (S_nx \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \ \& \ Azx \ \& \ \neg Bzy)))$.

Proof. Suppose $S_n a$. Then, by [15], $Ta \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall v (Bvy \rightarrow Dzv))$.

Suppose Ta . Then $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall v (Bvy \rightarrow Dzv))$. Let then b and c be such that $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \forall v (Bvb \rightarrow Dcv)$. By [26], $\neg Bcb \leftrightarrow \forall v (Bvb \rightarrow Dcv)$. Therefore $\neg Bcb$. Hence $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \neg Bcb$, so $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \neg Bzy)$. Therefore $Fa \rightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \neg Bzy)$.

Vice versa, suppose $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \neg Bzy)$. Let then b and c be such that $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \neg Bcb$. By [26], $\neg Bcb \leftrightarrow \forall v (Bvb \rightarrow Dcv)$. Hence $\forall v (Bvb \rightarrow Dcv)$. Therefore $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \forall v (Bvb \rightarrow Dcv)$, so $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall v (Bvy \rightarrow Dzv))$. Hence Ta . So $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \neg Bzy) \rightarrow Ta$.

Therefore $Ta \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \neg Bzy)$. But a was arbitrary, so $\forall x (S_nx \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \ \& \ Azx \ \& \ \neg Bzy)))$.

[35] $\forall x (S_ax \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \ \& \ Azx \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \neg Bzw))))$.

Proof. Suppose $S_a a$. Then, by [18], $Fa \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv)))$.

Suppose Fa . Then $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv)))$. Let then b and c be such that $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \exists w (Bbw \ \& \ \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$. Since $\exists w (Bbw \ \& \ \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$, let d be such that $Bbd \ \& \ \forall v (Bvd \rightarrow Dcv)$. By [26], $\neg Bcd \leftrightarrow \forall v (Bvd \rightarrow Dcv)$. Therefore $\neg Bcd$. Hence $Bbd \ \&$

$\neg Bcd$, so $\exists w (Bbw \& \neg Bcw)$. Therefore $Oba \& Aca \& \exists w (Bbw \& \neg Bcw)$, so $\exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \exists w (Byw \& \neg Bzw))$. Therefore $Fa \rightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \exists w (Byw \& \neg Bzw))$.

Vice versa, suppose $\exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \exists w (Byw \& \neg Bzw))$. Let then b and c be such that $Oba \& Aca \& \exists w (Bbw \& \neg Bcw)$. Since $\exists w (Bbw \& \neg Bcw)$, let d be such that $Bbd \& \neg Bcd$. By [26], $\neg Bcd \leftrightarrow \forall v (Bvd \rightarrow Dcv)$. Therefore $\forall v (Bvd \rightarrow Dcv)$. Hence $Bbd \& \forall v (Bvd \rightarrow Dcv)$, so $\exists w (Bbw \& \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$. Therefore $Oba \& Aca \& \exists w (Bbw \& \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$, so $\exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \exists w (Byw \& \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv)))$. Hence Fa . So $\exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \exists w (Byw \& \neg Bzw)) \rightarrow Fa$.

Therefore $Fa \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \exists w (Byw \& \neg Bzw))$. But a was arbitrary, so $\forall x (S_{ax} \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& \exists w (Byw \& \neg Bzw))))$.

[36] $\forall x (S_{ex} \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \neg Bzw))))$.

Proof. Suppose S_{ea} . Then, by [19], $Ta \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv)))$.

Suppose Ta . Then $\exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv)))$. Let then b and c be such that $Oba \& Aca \& \forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$. Let d be such that Bbd . Since $\forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$, it follows that $\forall v (Bvd \rightarrow Dcv)$. By [26], $\neg Bcd \leftrightarrow \forall v (Bvd \rightarrow Dcv)$. Therefore $\neg Bcd$. But d was arbitrary, so $\forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \neg Bcw)$. Hence $Oba \& Aca \& \forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \neg Bcw)$, so $\exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \neg Bzw))$. Therefore $Ta \rightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \neg Bzw))$.

Vice versa, suppose $\exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \neg Bzw))$. Let then b and c be such that $Oba \& Aca \& \forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \neg Bcw)$. Let e be such that Bbe . Since $\forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \neg Bcw)$, it follows that $\neg Bce$. By [26], $\neg Bce \leftrightarrow \forall v (Bve \rightarrow Dcv)$. Therefore $\forall v (Bve \rightarrow Dcv)$. But e was arbitrary, so $\forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$. Hence $Oba \& Aca \& \forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$, so $\exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv)))$. Therefore Ta . So $\exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \neg Bzw)) \rightarrow Ta$.

Therefore $Ta \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \neg Bzw))$. But a was arbitrary, so $\forall x (S_{ex} \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \neg Bzw))))$.

[37] $\forall x (S_{ix} \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyx \& Azx \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \neg Bzw))))$.

Proof. Suppose S_{ia} . Then, by [22], $Fa \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv)))$.

Suppose Fa . Then $\exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv)))$. Let then b and c be such that $Oba \& Aca \& \forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$. Let d be such that Bbd . Since $\forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$, it follows that $\forall v (Bvd \rightarrow Dcv)$. By [26], $\neg Bcd \leftrightarrow \forall v (Bvd \rightarrow Dcv)$. Therefore $\neg Bcd$.

But d was arbitrary, so $\forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \neg Bcw)$. Hence $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \neg Bcw)$, so $\exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \neg Bzw))$. Therefore $Fa \rightarrow \exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \neg Bzw))$.

Vice versa, suppose $\exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \neg Bzw))$. Let then b and c be such that $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \neg Bcw)$. Let e be such that Bbe . Since $\forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \neg Bcw)$, it follows that $\neg Bce$. By [26], $\neg Bce \leftrightarrow \forall v (Bve \rightarrow Dcv)$. Therefore $\forall v (Bve \rightarrow Dcv)$. But e was arbitrary, so $\forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$. Hence $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \forall w (Bbw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$, so $\exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv)))$. Therefore Fa . So $\exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \neg Bzw)) \rightarrow Fa$.

Therefore $Fa \leftrightarrow \exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \neg Bzw))$. But a was arbitrary, so $\forall x (S_{\circ}x \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow \exists y \ \exists z (Oyx \ \& \ Azx \ \& \ \forall w (Byw \rightarrow \neg Bzw))))$.

[38] $\forall x (S_{\circ}x \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \exists y \ \exists z (Oyx \ \& \ Azx \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \neg Bzw))))$.

Proof. Suppose $S_{\circ}a$. Then, by [23], $Ta \leftrightarrow \exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv)))$.

Suppose Ta . Then $\exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv)))$. Let then b and c be such that $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \exists w (Bbw \ \& \ \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$. Since $\exists w (Bbw \ \& \ \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$, let d be such that $Bbd \ \& \ \forall v (Bvd \rightarrow Dcv)$. By [26], $\neg Bcd \leftrightarrow \forall v (Bvd \rightarrow Dcv)$. Therefore $\neg Bcd$. Therefore $Bbd \ \& \ \neg Bcd$, so $\exists w (Bbw \ \& \ \neg Bcw)$. Hence $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \exists w (Bbw \ \& \ \neg Bcw)$, so $\exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \neg Bzw))$. Therefore $Ta \rightarrow \exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \neg Bzw))$.

Vice versa, suppose $\exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \neg Bzw))$. Let then b and c be such that $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \exists w (Bbw \ \& \ \neg Bcw)$. Since $\exists w (Bbw \ \& \ \neg Bcw)$, let e be such that $Bbe \ \& \ \neg Bce$. By [26], $\neg Bce \leftrightarrow \forall v (Bve \rightarrow Dcv)$. Therefore $\forall v (Bve \rightarrow Dcv)$. Then $Bbe \ \& \ \forall v (Bve \rightarrow Dcv)$, so $\exists w (Bbw \ \& \ \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$. Hence $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \exists w (Bbw \ \& \ \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dcv))$, so $\exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \forall v (Bvw \rightarrow Dzv)))$. Then Ta . So $\exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \neg Bzw)) \rightarrow Ta$.

Therefore $Ta \leftrightarrow \exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \neg Bzw))$. But a was arbitrary, so $\forall x (S_{\circ}x \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \exists y \ \exists z (Oyx \ \& \ Azx \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \neg Bzw))))$.

Bivalence. The definition of truth and falsehood given above as axioms [13]–[24] introduces apparently independent conditions for the truth and falsehood of sentences of each kind. One might wonder whether the Principle of Bivalence holds, i.e. whether every sentence is either true or false but not both. The theses I now go on to prove show that the Principle of Bivalence does hold.

[39] $\forall x (S_{\gamma}x \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Fx))$.

Proof. Suppose $S_y a$. Then, by [13], $Ta \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ Bzy)$. By [33], $Fa \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \neg Bzy)$. By [7], $\exists y (Oya \ \& \ \forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = y))$. Let then b be such that $Oba \ \& \ \forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = b)$. By [4], Sa . Then, by [6], $\exists y (Aya \ \& \ \forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = y) \ \& \ Ky)$. Let then c be such that $Aca \ \& \ \forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = c) \ \& \ Kc$.

Suppose Ta . Then $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ Bzy)$. Let then d and e be such that $Oda \ \& \ Aea \ \& \ Bed$. Since $\forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = c) \ \& \ Aea, e = c$. Since $\forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = b) \ \& \ Oda, d = b$. Then $Bed \ \& \ e = c \ \& \ d = b$, so Bcb . Suppose Fa . Then $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \neg Bzy)$. Let then g and h be such that $Oga \ \& \ Aha \ \& \ \neg Bhg$. Since $\forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = c) \ \& \ Aha, h = c$. Since $\forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = b) \ \& \ Oga, g = b$. Then $Bcb \ \& \ h = c \ \& \ g = b$, so Bhg , contrary to an earlier result. Therefore $\neg Fa$. So $Ta \rightarrow \neg Fa$.

Suppose $\neg Fa$. Suppose $\neg Bcb$: then $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ \neg Bcb$, so that $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \neg Bzy)$, whence Fa , contrary to hypothesis. Therefore $\neg \neg Bcb$, so Bcb . Then $Oba \ \& \ Aca \ \& \ Bcb$, so $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ Bzy)$, whence Ta . So $\neg Fa \rightarrow Ta$.

Therefore $Ta \leftrightarrow \neg Fa$. But a was arbitrary, so $\forall x (S_y x \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Fx))$.

[40] $\forall x (S_n x \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Fx))$.

Proof. Similar to that of [39].

[41] $\forall x (S_a x \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Fx))$.

Proof. Suppose $S_a a$. Then, by [17], $Ta \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall w (Byw \rightarrow Bzw))$. By [35], $Fa \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \neg Bzw))$. By [8], $\exists y (Oya \ \& \ \forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = y) \ \& \ Ky)$. Let then b be such that $Oba \ \& \ \forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = b) \ \& \ Kb$. By [4], Sa . Then, by [6], $\exists y (Aya \ \& \ \forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = y) \ \& \ Ky)$. Let then c be such that $Aca \ \& \ \forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = c) \ \& \ Kc$.

Suppose Ta . Then $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall w (Byw \rightarrow Bzw))$. Let then d and e be such that $Oda \ \& \ Aea \ \& \ \forall w (Bdw \rightarrow Bew)$. Since $\forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = b) \ \& \ Oda, d = b$. Since $\forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = c) \ \& \ Aea, e = c$. Suppose Fa . Then $\exists y \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \exists w (Byw \ \& \ \neg Bzw))$. Let then g and h be such that $Oga \ \& \ Aha \ \& \ \exists w (Bgw \ \& \ \neg Bhw)$. Since $\forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = b) \ \& \ Oga, g = b$. Since $\forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = c) \ \& \ Aha, h = c$. Since $d = b \ \& \ g = b, d = g$. Since $e = c \ \& \ h = c, e = h$. Since $\exists w (Bgw \ \& \ \neg Bhw)$, let l be such that $Bgl \ \& \ \neg Bhl$. Then $Bgl \ \& \ d = g$, so Bdl . Since $\forall w (Bdw \rightarrow Bew)$, it follows that Bel . Then $Bel \ \& \ e = h$, so Bhl , contrary to an earlier result. Therefore $\neg Fa$. So $Ta \rightarrow \neg Fa$.

Suppose $\neg Fa$. Let m be such that Bbm . Suppose $\neg Bcm$. Then $Bbm \& \neg Bcm$, so $\exists w (Bbw \& \neg Bcw)$. Then $Oba \& Aca \& \exists w (Bbw \& \neg Bcw)$, so $\exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \exists w (Byw \& \neg Bzw))$, whence Fa , contrary to hypothesis. Therefore $\neg \neg Bcm$, so Bcm . But m was arbitrary, so $\forall w (Bbw \rightarrow Bcw)$. Then $Oba \& Aca \& \forall w (Bbw \rightarrow Bcw)$, so $\exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow Bzw))$, whence Ta . So $\neg Fa \rightarrow Ta$.

Therefore $Ta \leftrightarrow \neg Fa$. But a was arbitrary, so $\forall x (S_ax \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Fx))$.

[42] $\forall x (S_ex \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Fx))$.

Proof. Similar to that of [41].

[43] $\forall x (S_ix \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Fx))$.

Proof. Similar to that of [41].

[44] $\forall x (S_ox \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Fx))$.

Proof. Similar to that of [41].

[45] $\forall x (Sx \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Fx))$.

Proof. Suppose Sa . Then, by [4], $S_ya \vee S_na \vee S_aa \vee S_ea \vee S_ia \vee S_oa$. Each of the alternatives entails (by [39]–[44]) that $Ta \leftrightarrow \neg Fa$. Hence $Ta \leftrightarrow \neg Fa$. But a was arbitrary, so $\forall x (Sx \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Fx))$.

Contradictories. The relation of contradictoriness is symmetric:

[46] $\forall x \forall y (Cxy \rightarrow Cyx)$.

Proof. Suppose Cab . Then, by [9], $\exists z \exists u (Oza \& Ozb \& Aua \& Aub \& ((S_ya \& S_nb) \vee (S_na \& S_yb) \vee (S_aa \& S_ob) \vee (S_oa \& S_ab) \vee (S_ea \& S_ib) \vee (S_ia \& S_eb)))$. Let then c and d be such that $Oca \& Ocb \& Ada \& Adb \& ((S_ya \& S_nb) \vee (S_na \& S_yb) \vee (S_aa \& S_ob) \vee (S_oa \& S_ab) \vee (S_ea \& S_ib) \vee (S_ia \& S_eb))$. Then $Ocb \& Oca \& Adb \& Ada \& ((S_yb \& S_na) \vee (S_nb \& S_ya) \vee (S_ab \& S_oa) \vee (S_ob \& S_aa) \vee (S_eb \& S_ia) \vee (S_ib \& S_ea))$. Therefore $\exists z \exists u (Ozb \& Oza \& Aub \& Aua \& ((S_yb \& S_na) \vee (S_nb \& S_ya) \vee (S_ab \& S_oa) \vee (S_ob \& S_aa) \vee (S_eb \& S_ia) \vee (S_ib \& S_ea)))$. Hence, by [9], Cba . But a and b were arbitrary, so $\forall x \forall y (Cxy \rightarrow Cyx)$.

The given definitions enable a derivation of the Principle of Non-Contradiction and the Principle of Excluded Middle.

[47] $\forall x \forall y \forall z \forall u (S_yx \& S_ny \& Ozx \& Ozy \& Aux \& Auy \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Ty))$.

Proof. Suppose $S_y a$ & $S_n b$ & Oca & Ocb & Ada & ADB . By [13], $Ta \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& Bzy)$. By [16], $Fb \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyb \& Azb \& Bzy)$.

By [7], $\exists y (Oya \& \forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = y))$. Let then c_1 be such that $Oc_1 a$ & $\forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = c_1)$. Similarly, by [7], $\exists y (Oyb \& \forall z (Ozb \rightarrow z = y))$. Let then c_2 be such that $Oc_2 b$ & $\forall z (Ozb \rightarrow z = c_2)$. Since $\forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = c_1)$ & Oca , $c = c_1$. Since $\forall z (Ozb \rightarrow z = c_2)$ & Ocb , $c = c_2$. Then $c = c_1$ & $c = c_2$, so $c_1 = c_2$.

Since $S_y a$, Sa (by [4]). Then, by [6], $\exists y (Aya \& \forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = y) \& Ky)$. Let then d_1 be such that $Ad_1 a$ & $\forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = d_1)$ & Kd_1 . Similarly, since $S_n b$, Sb (by [4]). Then, by [6], $\exists y (Ayb \& \forall z (Azb \rightarrow z = y) \& Ky)$. Let then d_2 be such that $Ad_2 b$ & $\forall z (Azb \rightarrow z = d_2)$ & Kd_2 . Since $\forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = d_1)$ & Ada , $d = d_1$. Since $\forall z (Azb \rightarrow z = d_2)$ & ADB , $d = d_2$. Then $d = d_1$ & $d = d_2$, so $d_1 = d_2$.

Suppose Ta . Then $\exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& Bzy)$. Let then c_3 and d_3 be such that $Oc_3 a$ & $Ad_3 a$ & $Bd_3 c_3$. Since $\forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = c_1)$ & $Oc_3 a$, $c_3 = c_1$. Then $c_3 = c_1$ & $c_1 = c_2$, so $c_3 = c_2$. Since $\forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = d_1)$ & $Ad_3 a$, $d_3 = d_1$. Then $d_3 = d_1$ & $d_1 = d_2$, so $d_3 = d_2$. Since $Bd_3 c_3$ & $d_3 = d_2$ & $c_3 = c_2$, $Bd_2 c_2$. Then $Oc_2 b$ & $Ad_2 b$ & $Bd_2 c_2$, so $\exists y \exists z (Oyb \& Azb \& Bzy)$, whence Fb . Therefore $Ta \rightarrow Fb$.

Vice versa, suppose Fb . Then $\exists y \exists z (Oyb \& Azb \& Bzy)$. Let then c_4 and d_4 be such that $Oc_4 b$ & $Ad_4 b$ & $Bd_4 c_4$. Since $\forall z (Ozb \rightarrow z = c_2)$ & $Oc_4 b$, $c_4 = c_2$. Then $c_4 = c_2$ & $c_1 = c_2$, so $c_4 = c_1$. Since $\forall z (Azb \rightarrow z = d_2)$ & $Ad_4 b$, $d_4 = d_2$. Then $d_4 = d_2$ & $d_1 = d_2$, so $d_4 = d_1$. Since $Bd_4 c_4$ & $d_4 = d_1$ & $c_4 = c_1$, $Bd_1 c_1$. Then $Oc_1 a$ & $Ad_1 a$ & $Bd_1 c_1$, so $\exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& Bzy)$, whence Ta . Therefore $Fb \rightarrow Ta$.

Hence $Ta \leftrightarrow Fb$. Since $S_n b$, $Tb \leftrightarrow \neg Fb$ (by [40]), so $Fb \leftrightarrow \neg Tb$. Therefore $Ta \leftrightarrow \neg Tb$. But a , b , c , and d were arbitrary, so $\forall x \forall y \forall z \forall u (S_y x \& S_n y \& Ozx \& Ozy \& Aux \& Auy \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Ty))$.

[48] $\forall x \forall y \forall z \forall u (S_a x \& S_o y \& Ozx \& Ozy \& Aux \& Auy \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Ty))$.

Proof. Suppose $S_a a$ & $S_o b$ & Oca & Ocb & Ada & ADB . By [17], $Ta \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oya \& Aza \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow Bzw))$. By [24], $Fb \leftrightarrow \exists y \exists z (Oyb \& Azb \& \forall w (Byw \rightarrow Bzw))$.

By [8], $\exists y (Oya \& \forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = y) \& Ky)$. Let then c_1 be such that $Oc_1 a$ & $\forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = c_1)$ & Kc_1 . Similarly, by [8], $\exists y (Oyb \& \forall z (Ozb \rightarrow z = y) \& Ky)$. Let then c_2 be such that $Oc_2 b$ & $\forall z (Ozb \rightarrow z = c_2)$ & Kc_2 . Since $\forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = c_1)$ & Oca , $c = c_1$. Since $\forall z (Ozb \rightarrow z = c_2)$ & Ocb , $c = c_2$. Then $c = c_1$ & $c = c_2$, so $c_1 = c_2$.

Since $S_a a$, Sa (by [4]). Then, by [6], $\exists y (Aya \& \forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = y) \& Ky)$. Let then d_1 be such that $Ad_1 a$ & $\forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = d_1)$ & Kd_1 . Similarly,

since S_0b, Sb (by [4]). Then, by [6], $\exists y (Ayb \ \& \ \forall z (Az b \rightarrow z = y) \ \& \ Ky)$. Let then d_2 be such that $Ad_2b \ \& \ \forall z (Az b \rightarrow z = d_2) \ \& \ Kd_2$. Since $\forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = d_1) \ \& \ Ada, d = d_1$. Since $\forall z (Az b \rightarrow z = d_2) \ \& \ Adb, d = d_2$. Then $d = d_1 \ \& \ d = d_2$, so $d_1 = d_2$.

Suppose Ta . Then $\exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall w (Byw \rightarrow Bzw))$. Let then c_3 and d_3 be such that $Oc_3a \ \& \ Ad_3a \ \& \ \forall w (Bc_3w \rightarrow Bd_3w)$. Let e be such that Bc_2e . Since $\forall z (Oza \rightarrow z = c_1) \ \& \ Oc_3a, c_3 = c_1$. Then $c_3 = c_1 \ \& \ c_1 = c_2$, so $c_3 = c_2$. Since $Bc_2e \ \& \ c_3 = c_2, Bc_3e$. Since $\forall w (Bc_3w \rightarrow Bd_3w)$, it follows that Bd_3e . Since $\forall z (Aza \rightarrow z = d_1) \ \& \ Ad_3a, d_3 = d_1$. Then $d_3 = d_1 \ \& \ d_1 = d_2$, so $d_3 = d_2$. Since $Bd_3e \ \& \ d_3 = d_2, Bd_2e$. But e was arbitrary, so $\forall w (Bc_2w \rightarrow Bd_2w)$. Then $Oc_2b \ \& \ Ad_2b \ \& \ \forall w (Bc_2w \rightarrow Bd_2w)$, so $\exists y \ \exists z (Oyb \ \& \ Azb \ \& \ \forall w (Byw \rightarrow Bzw))$, whence Fb . Therefore $Ta \rightarrow Fb$.

Vice versa, suppose Fb . Then $\exists y \ \exists z (Oyb \ \& \ Azb \ \& \ \forall w (Byw \rightarrow Bzw))$. Let then c_4 and d_4 be such that $Oc_4b \ \& \ Ad_4b \ \& \ \forall w (Bc_4w \rightarrow Bd_4w)$. Let g be such that Bc_1g . Since $\forall z (Ozb \rightarrow z = c_2) \ \& \ Oc_4b, c_4 = c_2$. Then $c_4 = c_2 \ \& \ c_1 = c_2$, so $c_4 = c_1$. Since $Bc_1g \ \& \ c_4 = c_1, Bc_4g$. Since $\forall w (Bc_4w \rightarrow Bd_4w)$, it follows that Bd_4g . Since $\forall z (Az b \rightarrow z = d_2) \ \& \ Ad_4b, d_4 = d_2$. Then $d_4 = d_2 \ \& \ d_1 = d_2$, so $d_4 = d_1$. Since $Bd_4g \ \& \ d_4 = d_1, Bd_1g$. But g was arbitrary, so $\forall w (Bc_1w \rightarrow Bd_1w)$. Then $Oc_1a \ \& \ Ad_1a \ \& \ \forall w (Bc_1w \rightarrow Bd_1w)$, so $\exists y \ \exists z (Oya \ \& \ Aza \ \& \ \forall w (Byw \rightarrow Bzw))$, whence Ta . Therefore $Fb \rightarrow Ta$.

Hence $Ta \leftrightarrow Fb$. Since $S_0b, Tb \leftrightarrow \neg Fb$ (by [44]), so $Fb \leftrightarrow \neg Tb$. Therefore $Ta \leftrightarrow \neg Tb$. But a, b, c , and d were arbitrary, so $\forall x \ \forall y \ \forall z \ \forall u (S_ax \ \& \ S_0y \ \& \ Ozx \ \& \ Ozy \ \& \ Aux \ \& \ Auy \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Ty))$.

[49] $\forall x \ \forall y \ \forall z \ \forall u (S_ex \ \& \ S_0y \ \& \ Ozx \ \& \ Ozy \ \& \ Aux \ \& \ Auy \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Ty))$.

Proof. Similar to that of [48].

[50] $\forall x \ \forall y (Cxy \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Ty))$.

Proof. Suppose Cab . Then, by [9], $\exists z \ \exists u (Oza \ \& \ Ozb \ \& \ Aua \ \& \ Aub \ \& \ ((S_0ya \ \& \ S_nb) \vee (S_na \ \& \ S_yb) \vee (S_aa \ \& \ S_0b) \vee (S_0a \ \& \ S_ab) \vee (S_ea \ \& \ S_ib) \vee (S_ia \ \& \ S_eb)))$. Let then c and d be such that $Oca \ \& \ Ocb \ \& \ Ada \ \& \ Adb \ \& \ ((S_0ya \ \& \ S_nb) \vee (S_na \ \& \ S_yb) \vee (S_aa \ \& \ S_0b) \vee (S_0a \ \& \ S_ab) \vee (S_ea \ \& \ S_ib) \vee (S_ia \ \& \ S_eb))$.

Suppose $S_0ya \ \& \ S_nb$. Then $S_0ya \ \& \ S_nb \ \& \ Oca \ \& \ Ocb \ \& \ Ada \ \& \ Adb$, so (by [47]) $Ta \leftrightarrow \neg Tb$.

Suppose $S_na \ \& \ S_yb$. Then $S_yb \ \& \ S_na \ \& \ Ocb \ \& \ Oca \ \& \ Adb \ \& \ Ada$, so (by [47]) $Tb \leftrightarrow \neg Ta$, whence $Ta \leftrightarrow \neg Tb$.

Suppose $S_a a$ & $S_o b$. Then $S_a a$ & $S_o b$ & Oca & Ocb & Ada & Adb , so (by [48]) $Ta \leftrightarrow \neg Tb$.

Suppose $S_o a$ & $S_a b$. Then $S_a b$ & $S_o a$ & Ocb & Oca & Adb & Ada , so (by [48]) $Tb \leftrightarrow \neg Ta$, whence $Ta \leftrightarrow \neg Tb$.

Suppose $S_e a$ & $S_i b$. Then $S_e a$ & $S_i b$ & Oca & Ocb & Ada & Adb , so (by [49]) $Ta \leftrightarrow \neg Tb$.

Finally, suppose $S_i a$ & $S_e b$. Then $S_e b$ & $S_i a$ & Ocb & Oca & Adb & Ada , so (by [49]) $Tb \leftrightarrow \neg Ta$, whence $Ta \leftrightarrow \neg Tb$.

So, in all cases, $Ta \leftrightarrow \neg Tb$. But a and b were arbitrary, so $\forall x \forall y (Cxy \rightarrow (Tx \leftrightarrow \neg Ty))$.

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- AGPh *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie.*
- AJPh *American Journal of Philology.*
- AP *Ancient Philosophy.*
- BPhdI *Beiträge zur Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus.*
- CJP *Canadian Journal of Philosophy.*
- CQ *Classical Quarterly.*
- CSCA *California Studies in Classical Antiquity.*
- HPbQ *History of Philosophy Quarterly.*
- JHPb *Journal of the History of Philosophy.*
- JHS *Journal of Hellenic Studies.*
- JP *Journal of Philosophy.*
- LSJ Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., and Jones, H. S., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edn, with a Revised Supplement, Oxford 1996.
- OSAP *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy.*
- PAS *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society.*
- PPR *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research.*
- PQ *Philosophical Quarterly.*
- PR *Philosophical Review.*
- RM *Review of Metaphysics.*
- RPA *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne.*
- SJP *Southern Journal of Philosophy.*
- TAPhA *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association.*
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