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Grammata #13

The first way the Eleatic visitor presents thinking about the nature of “sophists” is a “hunter of young, rich individuals who takes fees” (231c12). More specifically, these individuals are “rich and reputable young men” (223b5). Then, the visitor says “sophists” are a “sort of importer-exporter dealing in lessons for the soul” (231d5). The act of importing-exporting lessons refers particularly a characteristic of marketing in which lessons are “buying and selling [lessons] from one city to another” (223d2). On the other hand, “sophists” are also “retailers dealing in these same things” which is the other characteristic of marketing (231d8). The “retailer” characteristic of a sophist is related to “an expertise in trading” (223d3). Similarly, the visitor presents “sophists” as a “lessons-salesman who dealt in his own lessons” (231d10). This exchange occurs when one has “settled here in the city and set himself to make a living from selling lessons... some brought in, some also manufactured by himself” (244d5). Apart from the marketing characteristic, “sophists” are also thought about as an “athlete in the expertise of verbal combat” (231e2). This verbal combat is “eristic” in nature (225c9). Finally, the visitor presents thinking about the nature of “sophists” as a “cleanser in relation to soul of beliefs that prevent it from learning” (231e6). This action removes “beliefs that obstruct the lessons to be learned” (230d3). Furthermore, “challenging people... is the most authoritative of all cleansings” (230d7).

Gorgias best fits with the sophistic nature of a retailer. As an orator, Gorgias manufactures speeches in exchange for money, and he does not receive lessons which would set him apart from being an importer-exporter of lessons. Protagoras flaunts his monetary success with regard to being a sophist – being the first to gain success of this kind in exchange for education. Mainly, his success is due to his high-class “followers” who are rich and reputable young men. Furthermore, we can say that Protagoras “hunts” these types of students due to his high fees. With regards to Hippias, he best fits with the sophistic nature as an importer-exporter of lessons. As an ambassador, Hippias has gained and exchanged lessons from many different cities. He then presents lessons through public oration. Thrasymachus fits best as an athlete in the expertise of verbal combat. With his questionable theses about the nature of justice and harsh nature of argumentation, it is evident that his main goal is to win arguments. However, at the same time, Thrasymachus justifies his theses with experience and examples showing that there is a small motivation from logic; not solely for the sake of winning. Socrates perfectly fits the sophistic nature of a cleanser. His method of questioning is the purest form of challenging beliefs which is the greatest form of cleansing. Antiphon fits best as a lessons-salesman. This is evident through his Tetralogies which was solely for the purpose of teaching people how to defend themselves in court. Antiphon expresses this nature and not an importer-exporter or retailer because it is strictly a “one-way” exchange.