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PLATO'S *THEAETETUS:* ON THE WAY OF THE LOGOS

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THE OPENING OF THE *THEAETETUS*[1] is curious. The report we have of another opening of nearly the same length indicates that it was always a curiosity.[2] If both openings are Plato's, and the rest of the dialogue they preface were not different, then Plato changed his mind about how to start off the trilogy to which the *Theaetetus* belongs. If the second version is spurious, someone thought he could surpass Plato and make a more sensible introduction. If ours is spurious, however, then we cannot hope to interpret it. If we assume its genuineness and that it represents Plato's only or final recension—the other one is said to be spurious and rather frigid—then the *Theaetetus* opens with our listening in on a recital of the conversation Socrates had with Theaetetus and Theodorus shortly before his death, while we supposedly are hearing it in Megara many years after the conversation occurred.

The temporal and spatial layers of the dialogue are these: (1) the original conversation; (2) Socrates' report of it to Euclides, in which every speech, explicitly or not, had a parenthetical "I said" or "He said"; (3) Euclides' notes on Socrates' report which Euclides corrected after his frequent returns to Athens; (4) Euclides' retranslation of Socrates' report into nonnarrated dialogue; (5) Plato's eavesdropping on Euclides and Terpsion in Megara, and his subsequent transcription of the slaveboy's reading of the dialogue after their return to Euclides' house; and (6) our reading or hearing the dialogue at another time and another place. It is possible to ticket each of these layers, but it seems impossible to do anything with our careful discrimination of them. We are left with a logos whose indices of space and time

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[1]All references are to John Burnet, *Platonis Opera*, vols. 1–3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1900–1902); the translations are my own.

[2]*Anonymer Kommentar zu Platons Theaetet*, ed. Hermann Diels and Wilhelm Schubart (Berlin: Weidman, 1905), 3.28–35 (p. 4, column 2).

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alter while it itself presumably remains the same. It carries a reminder of the irrecoverable particularity of the original setting no less than of its subsequent transpositions, but the logos stands clear of what occasioned it and remains to be viewed without distortion under strata of nonillusory transparency.

The publication of the logos is due to Plato. Euclides was content to render an illusion of the original conversation, in conformity with Socrates' recommendation in the *Phaedrus*, as his own private reminder. One might suppose, however, that he would not have gone to so much trouble had he not intended to publish it at some time or other. Had not Plato intervened, and Euclides got around to bringing it into the light, we might have had a non-Platonic Socratic dialogue, which would have had a purely accidental link with Plato's *Sophist* and *Statesman*. They could still be taking up where the *Theaetetus* left off, but the difference in authorship would have hindered us from reading the *Theaetetus* in light of Plato's twins. The *Theaetetus* would not be standing at the head of the seven dialogues that now constitute a single logos about the trial and death of Socrates. It seems, then, that Plato has imagined what the transmission of Socrates' teaching would have been like had his illness at the time of Socrates' death been fatal,[3] and Socrates had had to rely on Euclides for getting out his message. The extreme skepticism of the Megarian school, with its reliance on nothing but logos, would have received its imprimatur in Euclides' *Theaetetus*. The solution to such a radical skepticism that we now find in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman* would have been missing.

The *Theaetetus* of course would not have been entirely free of the circumstantial. Socrates implies in his first speech to Theodorus that he is tied down to the local more than Theodorus is, and he does not fail to bring the dialogue down to earth by mentioning at the end that he must go to the stoa of King Archon to face the indictment Meletus has drawn up against him. Socrates the gossip, who knows all about Theaetetus's father, cannot possibly be the philosopher whom Socrates describes to Theodorus, whose body alone remains in the city but whose thought flies above and below the earth. Theodorus would call such a theoretical man a philosopher but not apparently Socrates.[4] This highflying philosopher, however, who does not know

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[3] *Phaedo* 59b10.
[4] *Theaetetus* 175e1–2.

whether his neighbor is a beast or not, devotes himself to Socratic questions: What is man? What is human happiness and misery? What is kingship?[5] The perspective of this Socratic pre-Socratic seems to be the perspective in light of which we are being made to read the *Theaetetus*. We are forced to abandon Theodorus's image of Socrates as another Antaeus, who weakens if he is raised above the earth but grows stronger whenever he renews contact with it,[6] and adopt a perspective against the Socratic understanding of things by Plato's reproduction, in the structure of the *Theaetetus* itself, of the universality of logos. The *Theaetetus* spells out defiantly the paradox of the *Phaedrus*. Its logos invites us, despite its built-in warning against our doing what we cannot help ourselves from doing, to read Socrates out of the dialogue and replace him with Theodorus's understanding of the philosopher, for whom the Eleatic Stranger and not Socrates is divine.[7] This end run around Socrates has the consequence that we are led to discount Socrates' maieutic knowledge, which resists the notion of the universality of science and elevates a private eccentricity into a principle.

If we resist the temptation Plato set in our way and try to insert Socrates' knowledge into the issue of knowledge, we are faced with the paradox that Socrates seems to prove conclusively, that it is as impossible to know what one does not know as either (1) not to know what one knows, or (2) to mistake what one knows for what one does not know. Theaetetus, however, seems to be the evidence to the contrary of the latter impossibility and Socrates himself of the former. The dialogue thus seems to be a knockdown proof that Socrates cannot have the knowledge he says he has and Theaetetus cannot have made the mistakes he acknowledges he has made. The logos of the *Theaetetus* sweeps the board of every answer it examines and then cancels itself and denies that what Theaetetus experiences could ever occur. Such a conclusion must have prompted Theaetetus, Theodorus, and young Socrates to ask the Eleatic Stranger about Socrates: what could possibly explain the sophistry of Socrates that parades as philosophy? According to Socrates, such an apparition is a necessary consequence of the position from which the philosopher is viewed, but, according to the Stranger, Socrates the sophist can be accounted for without grounding him in the reality of the

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[5] *Theaetetus* 175c2–8.
[6] Ibid., 169b2–4.
[7] *Sophist* 216b8–c1.

philosopher.[8] Socrates belongs to a distinct species that can be comprehended by itself. This Parmenidean claim must have been a consolation to Theaetetus and Theodorus. Speeches stripped of everything are going to be shown for what they are.

If that was what they expected, the company was bound to be disappointed by the Stranger's own logos. Rather than adopting the experiential mode of Socrates, who had likened perplexity to the labor pains of women, he will assure Theaetetus that he can be brought closer to the beings without ever experiencing the disenchantment of innocent youth,[9] and urge him to assume, since Theaetetus has never seen a sophist, that the sophist he is addressing is blind.[10] The *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* thus seem to stand together and deny us any easy way to restore to the *Theaetetus* a revindication of Socrates' insistence that the arguments of Theaetetus cannot be separated from the mode in which he delivered them from him. Since Theaetetus seems to say on his own no more than "knowledge is perception," "knowledge is true opinion," and "knowledge is true opinion with logos," while the elaboration of each of these propositions belongs exclusively to Socrates' doing, Socrates seems to refute himself. There is no science of midwifery. It is just a way of encouraging Theaetetus after the failure of his first answer, but there really is nothing to it. Socrates' claim to be barren in point of wisdom stands refuted by the variety of his wise inventions that he falsely attributes to Theaetetus's conceptions. The refutation that Socrates anticipates will be inflicted upon him for his poorness in speeches by the Eleatic Stranger, who serves as a refutative god, has already been inflicted by himself. Socrates is willing, it seems, to endure a second beating.[11]

The problem Theaetetus is called upon to solve has been stated emblematically even prior to Socrates' formal questioning of Theaetetus about knowledge. He raises the emblematic question based on Theodorus's praise of Theaetetus's nature. Theodorus's praise has nothing to do with Theaetetus's particular aptitude for mathematics. Socrates could never have cast doubt on it, and Theaetetus later displays it on his own when he shows how he classified irrational square roots. Socrates, by speaking of "geometry and the rest of philosophy,"

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[8] *Sophist* 216c4–217b3.
[9] Ibid., 234e3–6; *Theaetetus* 207e7–9.
[10] *Sophist* 239e1–240a2.
[11] *Theaetetus* 169b6–8.

had allowed Theodorus to stick to his special knowledge in his praise of Theaetetus.[12] Yet Theodorus, rather than mentioning Theaetetus's ingenious procedure, chooses to stray into Socrates' field of expertise and give an account of Theaetetus's soul—though he never mentions the word—that if true would put at the beginning of the trilogy the union of moderation and courage that the Eleatic Stranger discusses at the end with young Socrates. The phrase "geometry and the rest of philosophy" seems to imply that either philosophy is a science or philosophy and science are all of a piece.[13] Theodorus's praise of Theaetetus is a praise of his philosophic nature, which is the indispensable basis for his purely mathematical skills. Theodorus, one might say, comes forward as one of the guardians of Kallipolis and declares Theaetetus to be fit for the higher training in dialectic. He seems, at any rate, to be challenging Socrates. Socrates, to be sure, does not let on that Theodorus has poached on his knowledge. Instead, he gets Theaetetus's assent to the view that whoever is praised should be as eager to display his excellence as the listener of the praise should be eager to test its truth. Socrates' question about knowledge naturally follows from the apparent impossibility of putting together Socrates' knowledge with Theodorus's, even though Theodorus's general remarks about the disparate natures of the bold and the temperate seem within the competence of any experienced teacher. Moreover, his praise of Theaetetus as an exception to the rule also seems to be well within what Theodorus could have picked up in a long career. Theodorus thus has scientific knowledge about a number of subjects and ordinary human understanding of his students. Socrates cannot compete with him scientifically, however, and he is simply absurd to come forward with the claim that he has replaced Theodorus's experience with a science that in his own case did not need any experience to precede his acquisition of it.

What seems to have rankled Socrates was Theodorus's preliminary remark that Theaetetus was almost as ugly as Socrates, and therefore his praise of him could not possibly be construed as due to any desire for Theaetetus on his part. In his conversation with Theaetetus, Socrates began by casting doubt on Theodorus's credentials: He could not say that Theaetetus was ugly unless he were a skilled

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[12] *Theaetetus* 143d3.
[13] Cf. ibid., 172c5.

painter.[14] Socrates left it open at that point whether he was so competent. When Theaetetus finally comes around to assigning to "soul by itself" certain functions, however, Socrates triumphantly declares that Theaetetus is beautiful, "for he who speaks beautifully is beautiful and good."[15] Socrates' knowledge discounts the senses, and just as Theodorus had to disclaim any erotic attachment to Theaetetus, so Socrates has to claim to be barren in order that his attachment to his own might not interfere with his delivery of Theaetetus. Socrates is on a par with Artemis, and unlike her human surrogates, he never had to have put behind him the age of child bearing in order to turn to the delivery and examination of another's offspring.

The implausibility of Socrates' pretensions seems to make the emblematic confrontation between Theaetetus's knowledge and Socrates' a nonstarter. Theaetetus certainly does not see that if two such radically different types of science are involved, the possibility of a comprehensive characterization of science seems precluded. However, once Theaetetus supplies a series of mathematical sciences, along with their productive counterparts, as his first answer, and Socrates later gives an account of maieutics, we cannot help but believe that Socrates has asked Theaetetus to put together the apparently irrational science of soul, of which he is the sole master, with the rational sciences of number and measure.

Theaetetus first offers Socrates an indeterminate number of sciences as science; but once Socrates shows him that he did not answer the question properly, Theaetetus abandons everything he knows and declares his incapacity to say what science is. Just as Meno's first answer to Socrates' question, what is virtue, allows for a simple answer that would comprehend all the examples Meno gave—virtue consists in doing one's own job well—so Theaetetus's list is just as easy to stamp with a single sign: science is the knowledge of how to count and measure. After Theaetetus has told Socrates how he understands the question—it is comparable to the question he and young Socrates raised, how to characterize irrational square roots positively—he does not even try to do the same for knowledge. Had Theaetetus given the answer we expect, Theaetetus would have shown his daring in extending what he knows into all that he does not know and claiming thereby that whatever is not countable or measurable is not knowledge. Theodorus's knowledge of Theaetetus would have been de-

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[14] *Theaetetus*, 144e8–145a4.
[15] Ibid., 184e4–5.

moted and put in a field that resists any scientific account, though for all practical purposes it may be good enough. Indeed, Socrates could even say he was superior to Theodorus in this regard without ever advancing the claim that he was just as much an expert in souls as Theodorus was in numbers and measure.

Theaetetus's innate modesty, it seems, checked him from extending the domain of mathematics. He is more moderate than Theodorus, who, according to Socrates, naturally pulled into the field of relative measures what was not susceptible to geometrical proportions.[16] Socrates does assign moderation to Theaetetus, but only at the end of the dialogue when he is completely empty.[17] If he had indeed been moderate, however, he would have refused to give any answer at all once he was persuaded to give up mathematical knowledge. Socrates persuaded him that he could not mention any art or science unless he knew what science was, and since he had just listed the arts and sciences, he was convinced he could not give any answer in light of what he knew.

Socrates emptied Theaetetus of everything Theodorus had taught him. His first essay as midwife was to cast out from Theaetetus whatever he had thought was a science. He cauterized Theaetetus's womb and then encouraged him to give birth. So whereas it looks as if mathematics is a rival to maieutics, and which indeed it is if one steps back from the *Theaetetus* and looks at the pieces as they are laid out, still, from the temporal perspective of Theaetetus, who does not learn about maieutics until after mathematics has been set aside, there is only one science on the board that is supposed to be accounted for, and that is Socrates' midwifery. From the moment midwifery is described until the very end of the dialogue, when Socrates allows Theaetetus to have once again the arithmetical art,[18] μαιευτική is the only τέχνη Socrates mentions while talking with Theaetetus. Even with Theodorus only rhetoric is mentioned by name.[19] Theaetetus is challenged to account for Socrates' speciality, something he does not know, and which, like his characterization of irrational square roots, has to rely on an image to be made plain.

Theaetetus's second answer, perception, is the answer of one who has just been born. It has the effect of putting Socrates' art in its

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[16] *Statesman* 257a6–b7.
[17] *Theaetetus* 210c3.
[18] Ibid., 198a5.
[19] Ibid., 177b6.

place. Midwifery is nothing but a knack, slowly acquired through the course of a long life; it is no more than that which lay behind Theodorus's praise of Theaetetus. Theaetetus himself may not have intended his answer to be so interpreted. He might have thought that if everything Theodorus taught him could not be the characteristic of science, Socrates must have wanted a prescientific answer, that without which we would not know anything. It is not until later in the dialogue that Socrates reveals to him the necessity of conversing impurely, and that means in the context to speak about knowing and not knowing while trying to answer the question what is knowledge. The impurity of conversation is nowhere more clearly hinted at than in Theaetetus's response to Socrates' assertion that the dizziness he has felt is not due to his emptiness but to his pregnancy: "I do not know, Socrates, but I say what I have experienced."[20] Theaetetus distinguishes perception from knowledge and implies that knowledge is always knowledge of cause.[21] Socrates indeed goes on to confirm this when he reports that people say of him that he is most strange and makes them perplexed. He then asks whether he should tell Theaetetus the cause. The cause is that they do not know that he has the same art as his mother, but he does not maintain that they are mistaken in attributing to him the power to make them perplexed.

Socrates not only forestalls Theaetetus's answer, but he hints at an understanding of knowledge that does not come up again in the *Theaetetus*. If, however, we turn to the *Sophist* and *Statesman*, and look to the highest science in each, the *Sophist's* answer seems to be the divine knowledge of making, and the *Statesman's* answer, insofar as the ruler is the knower of the order of ends, seems to be knowledge of the good. The union of these two knowledges would be a teleological physics, or precisely that science Socrates once figured out should have been contained in Anaxagoras's book if he maintained correctly that mind was the highest cause.[22] There is embedded, then, at the start of the *Theaetetus* the problem that prompted Socrates from the start. Perhaps it would have been too much to expect for Socrates' look-alike to renew the issue, even though the shadow of the problem came out of himself and did not require any teasing on Socrates' part.

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[20] *Theaetetus* 148e9–10.

[21] In the *Gorgias*, Socrates distinguishes between art and experience by two characteristics: art aims at the good and knows the cause of each thing it handles (464e2–465a5).

[22] *Phaedo* 97b8–d5.

His first answer had already suggested that wisdom would consist in a science that would combine the mathematical sciences with the causal knowledge implicit in shoemaking and the like. That Theaetetus was on the edge of renewing Socrates' earliest speculation shows that the barrenness of Socrates, upon which his claim to disinterested authority rests, cannot be genuine. Even if we do not count the "ideas" as his second birth and identify them instead with a comprehensive structure of questions, Socrates' own autobiography contradicts the premise of his maieutics. Socrates decided to release through Euclides a version of himself that discounts his own experience. Socrates relies on nothing but logos. He was always young and beautiful.

If, moreover, Theaetetus had simply listened to Socrates' description of his own art, he could easily have put the problem of knowledge in terms of what he knew and what Socrates knows. Socrates' knowledge seems to amount to self-knowledge. He knows through his art that knowledge of soul is not wisdom, and no other art knows through itself that it is necessarily limited in its possible range. Theaetetus could then have asked whether it was possible to put scientific knowledge and self-knowledge together into a single science. For scientific knowledge, once it has comprehended everything, cannot comprehend scientific knowledge itself, and whatever knowledge does comprehend scientific knowledge cannot be scientific. Socrates' knowledge also seems to differ from any other known science in one important respect: unlike every other science it cannot as self-knowledge be written down. It cannot be taught. It thus seems not to be knowledge at all but at best a kind of virtue. What holds for Socrates also holds for those he delivers. Their wisdom must be *their* wisdom. It too cannot be found in a book, but must have their individual signatures upon it. Otherwise, it would become Socrates' own wisdom as soon as he brought it into the light. The identification, then, of wisdom and knowledge, with which Socrates begins his question,[23] cannot be right. The offspring he delivers must necessarily be so many instances of pseudowisdom or sophistry. Whatever knowledge his pregnant charges have must produce by itself a completion of itself that is necessarily a phantom image of wisdom. Sophistry is the inevitable consequence of the contact of soul with science.

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[23] *Theaetetus* 145d12–e7.

There were, then, several ways in which Theaetetus could have got hold of the question Socrates put to him, but he takes none of them. He gives an answer that confirms his bafflement once Socrates has blocked the only way open to him to approach the problem. Socrates finds it relatively easy to refute the answer once he has got rid of his spontaneous variations on a theme supplied by Theaetetus, just as he later finds it no less easy to refute Theaetetus's second answer, true opinion, once he returns from his unsolved puzzle about false opinion.

The *Theaetetus*, then, has a remarkably symmetric structure: the first part is dominated by Socrates' Heraclitean-Protagorean thesis, which he simply foists on Theaetetus, and the second part is dominated by the intrusion of Socrates' own perplexity about false opinion. The theme of the first part is that there is neither true nor false opinion, but there is wisdom of a certain kind. The theme of the second part is that false opinion is impossible. These two theses amount to a concealed assault on Socrates' midwifery: he has no wisdom on his own and he can tell infallibly true from false opinion. Thus the *Theaetetus* has a single theme, Socrates' maieutics and why it cannot be a science. Insofar as one believes that the attack Socrates mounts against his own knowledge is successful, one has to conclude that the *Theaetetus* restores to Theaetetus all the knowledges he was persuaded to set aside at the beginning of the dialogue, and that accordingly mathematics does not have to share its claim to knowledge with anything else. Socrates' problem is not a problem. Socrates' suicidal mission also gives Theaetetus a model of what philosophical courage is. It is not a model he has the guts to follow. He does, however, practice a phantom image of Socrates' daring: for a time he gives up what he knows.

It would be easy enough to assimilate Socrates' midwifery to what he claims elsewhere to be his sole knowledge, competence in erotic things, but it would require the sacrifice of what is central to erotics: the generation of beautiful speeches on the beautiful,[24] for Theaetetus is not beautiful. Since, moreover, maieutics demands that Socrates share with his mother the art of the go-between, which cannot publicly be distinguished from the art of the pimp, it might seem that maieutics becomes fully artful at the expense of the spontaneity of Eros. Yet one could suppose that Socrates' erotic art is just an-

[24] *Symposium* 208e5–209c7.

other name for this original sorting of natures, and Socrates' mistake is to jump over this initial stage with Theaetetus—he had seen him before but had not been attracted to him—and try to exercise his art on a nature that did not fit his own. Socrates does indeed speak of beautiful offspring as the possible outcome of his technique.[25] Since, however, he says they are not his, are we allowed to suppose that Theaetetus inspired in him a phantom image of Theaetetus that he generously imputed to Theaetetus himself? It certainly looks as if the account of Theaetetus's definition is Socrates' alone, and Theaetetus falls for an alien falsification that fits himself. What is fatal, however, to such an association of erotics and maieutics is that Theaetetus's four offspring are not viable. Once they are brought into the light, they cannot survive Socrates' examination. Rather than offering Theaetetus something he can live with or live by, Socrates does his best to make Theaetetus as perplexed as himself. The Eleatic Stranger, on the other hand, does hold out to Theaetetus something beautiful. He gives him a proleptic vision of his own future self in which his nature will finally fit his own opinion that a god made everything.[26] This completion of Theaetetus's nature stands at the opposite pole from Socrates' suggestion that he (Socrates) no less than the Stranger is a god.

Socrates' science knows how to induce labor pains and soothe them. These labor pains are perplexities. Protagoras will later be credited with the argument that it is impossible to live in the element of perplexity: everyone is forced to come up with a solution, which is neither true nor false but rather either strong or weak. Even apart from this Nietzschean criticism of Socrates, Socrates' presentation of his art is deeply flawed. He admits that his delivery of conceptions can be fully understood in light of his mother's art, but he grants that her art has nothing that corresponds to his infallible testing of truth and falsehood. If, then, the testing of the offspring does not match anything in female maieutics, Socrates cannot appeal to it in order to make good his claim that his critical knowledge is part of midwifery. Socrates may well have such an art, but unless he can show that it coheres with the art of delivery, and that the art of the go-between must belong no less to his mother than to himself, he comes forward with two arts, the unity of which is far more puzzling than the unity of Theaetetus's list of arts and sciences. The twoness of Socrates' singular

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[25] *Theaetetus* 150d7.
[26] *Sophist* 265d5–e2.

art is mapped onto and enlarged in the two parts of the *Theaetetus*. This large-scale display of Socrates' maieutics drives home the point that each part can be treated separately and does not necessarily belong to the other. The two offspring of Theaetetus's soul that control severally the two parts of the dialogue—perception and true opinion—refute the unity of Socrates' art. In separating soul from logos, they anticipate his death.[27]

Each part of the *Theaetetus* has a controlling principle. For the first part, it is that nothing is one by itself, but every apparent one is a two.[28] For the second part, the principle is that there are nothing but ones, whether they be the ones of pure arithmetic, of elements, or of individuals like Socrates, Theaetetus, and Theodorus. The first principle is the Heraclitean ground for the Protagorean principle that man is the measure of all things. It supplies the physics for relativism. Socrates builds up the Protagorean-Heraclitean theory from 151e4 to 160e4. This interval corresponds to the gestation and labor pains of pregnancy, after which Theaetetus's offspring is finally brought forth. The initial offspring is as it were a disembodied logos; it gets a life only through the ministrations of Socrates, who has had to cajole Theaetetus to allow it to be shaped and not drop stillborn at every possible objection. Theaetetus's definition, which appeared as one, now comes to light as having concealed a two—Protagoras and Heraclitus—who have come together to produce Theaetetus's definition. It now contains a causal account, but insofar as it is a causal account, it contradicts the definition of knowledge. The causal account, then, must be spurious. It cannot possibly be true, but only a product of another two that are thought to be separable and each to be a one apart. These illusory two are Socrates and Theaetetus, who in contact with one another play the role of agent and patient respectively and have engendered together Theaetetus's thesis. The Protagorean-Heraclitean theory, as Socrates formulates it, requires a version of Socrates' maieutics in which Socrates is no longer the neutral helper and inspector but a coproducer of what Theaetetus is told is his alone. Socrates, then, works out a way in which his maieutics could be understood as fully in conformity with Protagoras's understanding of wisdom.

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[27] See *Phaedo* 115c6–8.
[28] *Theaetetus* 152d2–3, 153e4–5.

The Protagorean thesis has two anchors. The first is relatively trivial. The bitterness or sweetness of wine depends on the condition of the drinker. At the other end, there is the plausible thesis that cities are likewise either healthy or sick. The set of authoritative opinions of each city, which are called laws, determine what is beautiful and just or what is ugly and unjust. We can call the beautiful and just together morality. Morality is the way in which the city expresses its condition as a symptom of its health. It is the equivalent of a plant's "perceptions"—its turning to the light, for example, or its sending out roots in search of moisture—that reveal to the farmer its underlying state, which the plant knows no more about than the city knows about itself. Each city holds its morality to be true. Morality, however, is not true or false, but a way of life that has its ground in conditions or states that are neither true nor false but good or bad. A city is in a good condition if it can either resist being absorbed by another city or absorb another city. Health is the power to expand or defend; sickness is its contrary.

Between the individual's bodily state and the city's condition, Socrates comes forward with a theory about the soul, which, insofar as it speaks of pregnancy and barrenness, supplies an account comparable to talk of health and sickness. Socrates cannot but admit that if wisdom must be one's own wisdom, everyone says what he is, and the individual's logos is but a symptom of his underlying condition. It is therefore absurd for him to claim that he can speak of true or false symptoms, any more than he can determine whether what Theaetetus says is true or false. He has been the agent and Theaetetus the patient. As patient, Theaetetus believes he has produced something verifiable, but that belief is merely a sign of his patiency. The wise public speaker does not try to enlighten the city and replace morality with health. Instead, he presents to the city a version of its morality that fits what is to its good. Socrates is urged to follow the same procedure. He is to show his wisdom by reproducing on the level of symptoms his own health, so that nothing remains in Theaetetus of his former perplexities and he copies the agency of Socrates in a passive reflection.[29] This is a very powerful condemnation of Socrates: the city will ultimately prove to be healthier than he could ever be by killing him. If we follow Protagoras, we can say that every city has established the symptomatic network of its condition through what it holds

[29] *Theaetetus* 167e3–168a7.

to be the highest beings, the gods. Further, it is forced to live within the horizon of putative truth while it undergoes whatever the real power relations among cities determine. On Protagoras's interpretation, Athens takes out on Socrates its defeat by Sparta: it naturally believes that its weakness is Socrates' falseness.

Theaetetus's second irrational answer—knowledge is perception—seems to represent the soul's answer, once its scientific superstructure has been dismantled. The soul, however, cannot possibly see that its answer contradicts itself in its very formulation, for it must be blind to the nonperceptibility of such an equation. Socrates' elaboration of Theaetetus's answer attempts to derive it from the union of two theories, Protagoras's "man is the measure" and Heraclitean motion. Heraclitean motion is given a mathematical structure, and Protagoras's measure poses a counterclaim to Socrates' knowledge. Together they produce a total wisdom that claims to solve the problem that Socrates had put first to Theaetetus in casting doubt on Theodorus's competence, and that he had then let us formulate for ourselves in setting up the contrast between mathematics and maieutics. Socrates' version of wisdom is designed to show Theaetetus what it would mean to have a grasp of science prior to the understanding of any particular science. It offers for example an understanding of power (δύναμις) that lends itself very naturally to its mathematical sense. Power as agency and patiency easily fits the multiplication of numbers and magnitudes, where the equivalence of four times three and three times four points simultaneously to the nonfixability of agent and patient and the need to fix temporarily one number or the other as the patient of the other's agency. The more special use of δύναμις as root is connected with Theaetetus's imagistic translation of all numbers into magnitudes, so that as magnitudes they can represent motions of any size.

Protagoras's sentence does not lend itself to an interpretation that readily fits Theaetetus's definition. In itself, it seems to be a clever way of saying what part of the chorus in Aeschylus's *Seven* say: "καὶ πόλις ἄλλως ἄλλοτ' ἐπαινεῖ τὰ δίκαια." ("And the city praises the just things at different times in different ways.")[30] Their saying could be further generalized: "ἄλλα ἔθνη ἄλλους θεοὺς νομίζει" ("Different tribes believe different gods"), and in this form it seems to bear a not too distant relation to the implication of Socrates' maieutics. The

[30] Aeschylus, *Seven*, 1070–1.

gods are those beings that complete the individual's particular knowledge. Such completions are of necessity nonscientific, however indispensable they are for understanding the way in which the individual understands his own knowledge. In the spin that Socrates puts upon it, Protagoras is made to bestow divinity on Theaetetus himself. Yet if one replaces this identification with a somewhat weaker version, that what Theaetetus generates out of himself is an ideal of total wisdom which Socrates implies is always an idol of total wisdom, then the political or conventional interpretation of Protagoras's statement and its radically subjective interpretation, with which Socrates starts, get a middle position that is hard to distinguish from Socrates' own.

Theaetetus had originally said, "οὐκ ἄλλο τί ἐστιν ἐπιστήμη ἢ αἴσθησις." ("Knowledge is not anything else than perception.")[31] Socrates had rephrased it without "is": αἴσθησις, φῄς, ἐπιστήμη.[32] Φῄς is the bond between "knowledge" and "perception." Yet φῄς is Theaetetus: he puts the two together. He is the "man" of Protagoras's general formula. Theaetetus is the place where knowledge and perception meet. Such a meeting involves the replacement of both with τὰ φαινόμενα, but τὰ φαινόμενα seems to be paired with τὰ ὄντα. In order, then, for τὰ φαινόμενα and τὰ ὄντα to be in turn fused together, τὰ ὄντα must be replaced with τὰ γιγνόμενα, and then again with τὰ κεκινημένα. The things in motion are then to be distributed between τὰ ποιοῦντα and τὰ πάσχοντα, agent and patient motions. Socrates, however, does not go as quickly as this to his suggested mathematical physics. He first appeals to Homer as the propounder of the view that Ocean stands for motion and then that the sun in its revolution stands for motion. In the second interpretation, motion is the cause of good and rest of decay and nonbeing. If one cancels the difference between water and fire, Socrates seems to be appealing to an antientropic principle, to which we can assign, following the *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*, the name soul. There lurks under the Heracliteanism Socrates uncovers the indispensable ground he himself needs if soul is to be something nonderivative. Heraclitean motion and Protagorean relativism together thus turn out to be not a bad copy of Socrates' teaching in the *Phaedrus*, where soul as self-motion has its counterpart no less than do the Olympian gods. What seems to be missing, the hyperuranian beings, has been supplied by numbers, which, though they have been

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[31] *Theaetetus* 151e2–3.
[32] Ibid., 151e6.

officially eliminated through Socrates' refutation of Theaetetus's first answer, recur in the disguised form of fast and slow motions.

The principle of Socrates' interpretation of Theaetetus is not that nothing is one, but nothing is one by itself. Every apparent one is a two, and this apparent one is such through the imaginative connector soul, but there is nothing there. The soul is that which puts the line between numerator and denominator and interprets the ratio as greater or less than some constant. This constant, however, is an illusion, for to say that Theaetetus is greater than he was a year ago identifies the Theaetetus of a year ago as the real Theaetetus. The reason is that if one says that Theaetetus and the measured Theaetetus are the same, it is impossible to say that Theaetetus becomes taller than himself, for "himself" is not apart from whatever size he is. We want to believe that Theaetetus the measure is not the same as Theaetetus the measured. We do not want to trust our mathematics. This conflict between mathematics and the hallucinations of becoming is nothing other than the apparent conflict between Theaetetus's first and second answers. Yet his second answer turns out to be fully in accord with his first, provided one replaces becoming with motion. All three φάσματα of becoming share at their base an assumption about counting: the first states that nothing becomes greater or less as long as it is equal to itself; the second is that what is not added to or subtracted from is always equal; and the third is that whatever it was not before but is later cannot occur without becoming. Nothing, then, alters in time unless there is the equivalent of an arithmetical operation. However, 1±½ is only 1½ or ½, it is not 1½ and 1 or 1 and ½. Yet unless it is both at once, 1 has not become 1½ or ½. Every magnitude is just what it is, for there is no real becoming in number. Number therefore allows us to handle change while denying change.[33] Theaetetus had felt dizzy because his experience was not in accord with his mathematics, but Socrates has shown him how they could be reconciled without giving up either what he felt or what he knew. The rational and the irrational are in perfect harmony, and Theaetetus is all of a piece. It is a consequence of this that when Theaetetus says, "I don't know" a second time, he means that he does not know his own experience, for Socrates has not yet molded him completely to his taste.[34]

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[33] This recalls the equivalence of Newton's dynamical equation F=ma to its static representation F–ma=0.

[34] *Theaetetus* 157c4.

At the very moment Socrates has completed delivery of Theaetetus's offspring, he seems to admit that he has delivered his own as well: τοῦτο μὲν δή, ὡς ἔοικεν, μόλις ποτε ἐγεννήσαμεν, ὅτι δή ποτε τυγχάνει ὄν." ("Well, this, it seems, whatever it is exactly, we at last generated with difficulty.")[35] Socrates then goes on to speak of the offspring as τὸ γιγνόμενον, and they must consider whether it deserves to be brought up or whether it is a wind-egg and false.[36] The offspring is to be considered simultaneously under two different aspects: (1) Is it viable? and (2) Is it true? If the issue is viability, Socrates' maieutics is exactly parallel to his mother's, who would likewise have examined the offspring for signs of life. However, if the issue is truth, the equivalent for Phaenarete would be whether it was suppositious, and again for Socrates whether Theaetetus had genuinely given birth or it was all due to Socrates' spoon-feeding. Socrates, however, not only denied from the start that his art could be interpreted in this way, but he reasserts it now when Theodorus expresses astonishment that the offspring could possibly be false: "You don't get (ἐννοεῖς) what's happening (τὸ γιγνόμενον), that none of the speeches comes from me but always from my interlocutor (παρὰ τοῦ ἐμοὶ προσδιαλεγομένου)."[37] Socrates implicitly distinguishes between τὸ γιγνόμενον$_1$, which exclusively is the thought of Theaetetus, and τὸ γιγνόμενον$_2$, which is the course of the conversation he and Theaetetus are having. Now Socrates has just developed a teaching that denies that these two γιγνόμενα can be separated, for one is due to him and the other to Theaetetus. The one due to him, however, is the combined result of himself and Theaetetus and cannot accordingly be told apart from τὸ γιγνόμενον$_1$, as Socrates' own ἐγεννήσαμεν had already indicated. This argument is not directly refuted by Socrates. Instead, he allows it to remain while he dismantles its components into three separate arguments that came together in it. Theodorus confronts the Protagorean and Heraclitean arguments, and Theaetetus confronts his own thesis, apart from that double support. Each collapses quite easily. Their refutation therefore shows the power of the combination in which Socrates' own science is at stake. It shows that, contrary to what Theaetetus comes to believe, a whole is not a sum.

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[35] *Theaetetus*, 160e5; cf. 150c8.
[36] Ibid., 160e8–9.
[37] Ibid., 161b1–3.

The radical criticism of Socrates' knowledge attributed to Protagoras allows one to formulate more precisely what must be involved in Socrates' practice of delivery and verification. If his double practice involves a distinction between soul and mind (*nous*) or thought (*dianoia*), and if that distinction entails in turn a difference between the excellence of soul and of mind, or a difference between virtue and wisdom,[38] then the denial of the possibility of complete knowledge or wisdom entails the corresponding elevation of the moral virtues of moderation and courage into nonscientific or philosophic equivalents. The former goes by the name of self-knowledge, while the latter is more elusive, since the daringness of thought or δεινότης is commonly pejorative and will be devalued as mere cleverness. Socrates implies, however, that there is a true and not seeming δεινότης.[39] Socrates' insistence, through his reliance on the model of midwifery, on private experience and private wisdom underlines the resemblance between Socrates' Protagoras and himself. It also underscores the need to separate the Protagorean thesis that soul is to the speech of soul as condition is to symptom from the Socratic thesis that soul, without philosophy, necessarily completes what it knows with a phantom image of what it knows. Soundness of soul or strength of soul has to be separated from Protagoras's understanding of health or sickness in terms of the power to affect or be affected. Theodorus had originally posed the problem by his praise of Theaetetus's virtue, which he had associated with his knowledge in a not altogether clear manner. He had implied that Theaetetus's virtues were indispensable for his learning whatever Theodorus could teach him, but once he gained this knowledge his virtues could fall away. He certainly did not imply that his knowledge would override his virtues and produce ghosts of wisdom.

In order to slip out from under his own critique, Socrates appeals to Theodorus. He thus reproduces himself again in a second phantom. By dragging Theodorus into the argument, he gets him to concede to Protagoras the relativism of πρᾶξις and assign to philosophers like himself an immunity from the Heracliteanism of the waterclock. The good of life and death belongs to the city; the beautiful and the just are divorced from it and relegated to a higher region. Theodorus is led to believe that this relegation also applies to So-

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[38] *Theaetetus* 145b1–2, 176c4–5.
[39] Ibid., 176c3–6.

crates, but it does not, either in general or on this occasion, when Socrates does not have the leisure both Theaetetus and Theodorus believe he has.[40] The innocence of Theodorus makes him as unaware of the threat Socrates now faces as to the applicability of the revised Protagorean argument to Socrates. Even were he made to see its applicability, it would not disturb him. It would only go to show the absurdity of Socrates' claim to have an art that simultaneously depends on his knowing the way to the marketplace and on his detachment from the city. Theodorus does not notice, and he would not think it matters if he did, that Socrates' flattering portrait of Theodorus does not involve any mention of the soul. He has διάνοια;[41] the pettifoggers have a paltry soul and are engaged in a battle for their life or soul.[42] Theodorus, however, for all of the purity of his attitude, is not unattracted by Protagoras. He is infuriated by the slippery answers of the Heracliteans, but he is very reluctant to criticize Protagoras. There is something that attaches Theodorus to Protagoras that goes beyond friendship. After all, Protagoras is already dead. The first hint of that attraction shows up in Theodorus's understanding of speeches as his slaves, over which he has complete power,[43] but its hidden ground emerges once Socrates has finished with his account of the Theodoran philosopher and his opposite. The Theodoran philosopher has nothing but an attitude to sustain him. His remoteness from ordinary life is not grounded in anything but a high-minded snobbery: he looks down on everyone else, but he has made no reflection on his own aerie. He therefore is tempted to treat evils as only a matter of opinion, and inclined accordingly to hope that with a change of opinion more in conformity with his own, evils would cease. Socrates separates himself from Theodorus on precisely this point.

"If you should persuade all," Theodorus tells Socrates, "of what you are saying, just as you persuaded me, peace would be more extensive and evils less among men."[44] Socrates first separates Theodorus's sentence into two propositions. He treats the question of evil apart from the issue of persuasion. He implies that evils are not exclusively a question of what convictions men have or might have. Evils will persist regardless of whether Socrates succeeds in persuading everyone

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[40] *Theaetetus* 172c2, 187d10–11.
[41] Ibid., 173e3.
[42] Ibid., 172e7, 175d1; cf. 173a3, 173a6, and 175b4.
[43] Ibid., 173b9–c5.
[44] Ibid., 176a3–4.

or not. Theodorus has accepted, then, the Protagorean understanding of power: Socrates could in principle effect a universal change in public opinion. Socrates denies not only that evils can perish but asserts that "god" is most just. God's justice consists in his knowledge that evils cannot perish. He therefore is not tempted to eliminate them: what seems to be god's injustice, in not exercising his power to do away with evils entirely, is in fact his wisdom. Human wisdom consists in a comparable awareness of the necessity for this limitation on divine power: "The understanding of this is wisdom and true virtue, and ignorance [of it] folly and manifest vice."[45] It consists in an awareness of the reasons for abstaining from political life.

Theodorus, however, does not know this. He believes that it is possible to combine the theoretical sciences with Protagorean power. Such a combination would be nothing but a version of what we call technology, whose very name betrays the union of science with the productive arts. Theaetetus had already suggested such a union in his very first answer, where he had added to what he had learned from Theodorus the Socratic example of shoemaking. "Shoemaking" stood for all the productive arts, and in itself could be understood, in accordance with Socrates' suggestion in the *Philebus*,[46] as implying no more than that its strictly scientific part consists in its dependence on an applied mathematics, and the remainder is to be dismissed as the flair of experience. If, however, the theoretical sciences can be fused with the productive arts, then the increase in power such a fusion would engender seems to offer the prospect of the total relief of man's estate. Socrates seems to imply that Theodorus could never have dreamed of this prospect had he not come along and first refashioned Protagoras into a more formidable opponent than he actually was and then shown Theodorus to himself, who does not know that he does not know what he does not know.[47] Such a refashioning was made necessary once Socrates' maieutics were subject to examination in light of Theodorus's and Theaetetus's knowledge, and such a showing of Theodorus to himself freed him from his troublesome relations with other men and suggested his triumphant return to political life with almost infinite power. Socrates, with an uncharacteristic dogmatism, simply stated the vanity of Theodorus's hope. We may see in the

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[45] *Theaetetus* 176c4–5.
[46] *Philebus* 55d5–57a5.
[47] *Theaetetus* 173e1; cf. 174a3.

myth of the *Statesman*, however, the reasoning behind Socrates' statement: the world, over which the demiurgic god rules, is not only ugly but lacks the good of philosophy. The only consolation Socrates offers Theodorus is a punishment of the unjust that consists in their ignorance of their own misery. In order for one of them to become aware, he must be manly and not run away from his confutation: Callicles is to be left off the hook. This too is part of god's justice.

The dissatisfaction we may feel with the first part of the *Theaetetus* is as nothing to our unease after we finish reading the second part. Socrates gets Theaetetus to acknowledge the need for a single form (μία τις ἰδέα) or soul to coordinate the manifold of perceptions, but he does not get him to see that those things that the soul by itself deals with, which range from the being of number to the being of good,[48] encapsulate the very problem Socrates had posed at the beginning. Once Theaetetus has admitted that there is knowledge only in reflection on aesthetic experiences, he should have said that knowledge consists in a comprehensive συλλογισμός about all aesthetic experiences, as well as about the categories the soul by itself uses and discovers in its survey of them. Theaetetus admits that he thinks "is," "both," "same" and "other," and "one" and "two" when he thinks about sound and color, and he grants that it might be possible to go on to examine the likeness and unlikeness of them.[49] He thus admits that the aesthetic and the dianoetic might be comparable, as Socrates' use of "touch" for "understand" suggests.[50] Therefore knowledge would consist in an account that separated and combined the aesthetic and the noetic beings. Such an answer would have been the equivalent of Aristotle's, that "the soul is somehow all things."[51] Would anything then be missing? Socrates already implied that what would be missing would be the Parmenidean whole that cannot be understood as the equivalent of soul: the one Parmenides is is not the one of his teaching.[52] The Parmenidean one eludes the soul regardless of how extensive the soul's range is presumed to be. We can say if we wish that the unexamined Parmenidean one is doing double duty in the *Theaetetus*: it stands for the unknown unity of knowledge of number and knowledge of good, and for the unknown unity of the cause of being and

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[48] *Theaetetus* 186c3.
[49] Ibid., 185b4–6.
[50] Ibid., 186d4; see also 186a4 and 187b1.
[51] Aristotle, *De Anima* 3.8.431b21.
[52] *Theaetetus* 183e5.

being known, neither of which is to be found in the unity of soul by itself.

Theaetetus's answer—knowledge is true opinion—must be seen as a disappointment in light of all that Theaetetus himself has admitted. It is also disappointing in a more limited sense, inasmuch as Theaetetus refused to assign to soul any instrument comparable to the sense organs. Whereas the answer "the soul through speeches" seems to be strongly hinted at by Socrates' way of phrasing the question, Theaetetus's "soul by itself" cannot handle errors of thought, since it is too inflexible within itself to make mistakes. Theaetetus's third answer is as opaque as his second. It is the answer of one who has not yet lost his innocence and still has confidence in the good and the beautiful of opinion.[53] True opinion cannot confirm its own truth and experientially does not have a different feel from false opinion. Experientially, then, a false opinion is no less an opinion than a true opinion.[54] Opinion (δόξα) is according to Socrates a logos,[55] but this logos differs from that which the soul conducts before itself in silence when it asks and answers questions.[56] To ask or answer a question is presumably not in some sense to speak or opine; it is only when one stops asking questions and decides the questioning is finished that one has an opinion. Socrates implicitly separates the logos of διαλέγεσθαι or διανοεῖσθαι, which is the soul's instrument, from the logos that is δόξα. It is not easy to discern the difference except in terms of the conviction behind doxastic logos, that this logos is unqualifiedly true. If we revert to Socrates' maieutics, Socrates now pulls ὠδίνειν apart from τίκτειν. To give birth is to utter an opinion; to suffer labor pains is to go on questioning. Socrates now formalizes what was implicit in his account of maieutics. Opinion is always false opinion, the phantom image of complete wisdom. There is, then, no true opinion, not because there is no false opinion, but because opinion is merely the offspring of the soul that has lost its connection with the dialogic character of thinking. Theaetetus is not saying what knowledge is. Rather, he is saying what the character is of whatever offspring Socrates' maieutics examines. We are being shown what Socrates deals with: he deals not only with the offspring of the soul—

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[53] *Theaetetus* 200e5–6; cf. *Sophist* 234d2–e3.
[54] *Theaetetus* 187d3.
[55] Ibid., 190a5.
[56] Ibid., 189e6.

the first part of the *Theaetetus*—but also with the belief that accompanies the offspring. At the very moment Theaetetus had given his second answer—knowledge is perception—he had begun by saying: "It's my opinion."[57] Accordingly, Socrates' digression on false opinion is not a digression at all, but rather an account of what is involved in the soul's pronouncement on its own phantom image, "true."

It seems, however, that when the issue of the speech, which either silently or not accompanies any offspring of the soul, is treated by itself, the speech is always true. It is impossible that Theaetetus could ever have made a mistake in thought. Whereas in the first part of the dialogue there could be no truth, for everyone says what they are—whether they be the "streamers" (οἱ ῥέοντες) or "the stoppers of the whole" (οἱ τοῦ ὅλου στασιῶται)—in the second part everyone says what is. If Socrates' maieutics is to be saved, it is necessary that the two parts of the *Theaetetus* be put together over against their manifest separation. It is not easy to say how this can be done. Socrates first offers three possible ways in which false opinion could be possible: (1) the mistaking of what one knows for what one knows or what one does not know for what one does not know; (2) the mistaking of what is not for what is or what is for what is not; and (3) the mistaking of the other for the same or the same for the other. Socrates does not consider the possibility that mistaking occurs when all three propositions are combined: He who has a false opinion believes that those things that are not are not those things that he knows are not, but some other things that he knows are (οἴεται τὰ μὴ ὄντα εἶναι ἕτερα τῶν μὴ ὄντων ἀλλὰ εἶναι ἕτερά τινα ὄντα), for example, "Zeus is not Osiris but heaven," "Eros is not Aphrodite but love," or "Homer's Hades is not Milton's Beelzebub but death."

Since it is possible for someone to maintain any or all three of these propositions and be mistaken, why does Socrates fail to examine the combination of his three kinds of mistaking and thus reproduce here a parallel to the combination of Protagoras, Heraclitus, and Theaetetus that proved to be so fatal to his maieutics in the first part? In the first part, the principle of patiency and agency was that nothing is together what it is apart. In the second part, the principle is that everything is just what it is and nothing else. This principle requires the identification of part with element and whole with sum. Such an identification, however, has the consequence that Theaetetus must deny

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[57] *Theaetetus* 151e1.

that the soul is some single form (μία τις ἰδέα),[58] in which the manifold of perceptions comes together. Theaetetus is made to give up that which made him beautiful in order that he can recover his mathematics. The atomicity of things, which runs through the second part of the *Theaetetus*, seems to be more in accordance with what Theaetetus knows than the doubleness of things, which Theaetetus was induced to accept from Socrates' delivery of his phantom image. Theaetetus, however, does not see that he must sacrifice the principle of arithmetic in order to keep his arithmetic. He sacrifices the principle when he admitted that the soul in thinking converses with itself—a one is therefore a two—and again when Socrates asked about seven itself and five itself:[59] indistinguishable ones are many. The sacrifice of the principle thus reproduces within Theaetetus's own expertise Socrates' problem, for however the one that is two of soul is to be understood, it is of a different order from the manifold of ones with which arithmetic deals. Socrates has pulled off within the restriction of a false principle a kind of miracle: a genuine image of his own question about the unity of his knowledge and Theaetetus's knowledge. What makes this image so miraculous is that it occurs despite Theaetetus's sacrifice, for Theaetetus does not know that he made the sacrifice when he could not hold onto the notion of a whole.

In the course of the analysis of Theaetetus's third definition of knowledge, Socrates offers two images of the soul, wax and birds. Neither solves the problem of false opinion. Theaetetus does not see, however, that these two images are images of a science of soul; they are not the science of soul. They are images of the science Theaetetus does not know and Socrates claims for himself. Of the two images, one is more materialistic than the other, and together they point to the difference between aesthetic soul and dianoetic soul. Socrates hinted at this difference when he moved so abruptly from the single form of soul, which must be there if the senses are not to be lodged in us as if they were soldiers in the wooden horse, to the variety of functions soul undertakes when it reflects on its aesthetic experiences.[60] One image fits us from the moment we are born;[61] the other corresponds to our learning the sciences.[62] When Socrates gives the arithmetical

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[58] *Theaetetus* 203c5–6, e4.
[59] Ibid., 196a2; cf. *Philebus* 56d9–e3.
[60] *Theaetetus* 184d1–6.
[61] Ibid., 186b11–c2.
[62] Ibid., 197e2–3.

art back to Theaetetus, he characterizes it is as a hunting of the knowledges (ἐπιστῆμαι) of every odd and even number.[63] "Hunting" (θήρα) implies that arithmetic as a science is not a complete science. It is out in the wild and demands the virtues of patience and daring if the hunter is to snare his prey. If, moreover, the number hunter fails to catch anything, he does not cease to be a number hunter. He is not a complete or perfect arithmetician, who has domesticated all that he knows, but he is still an arithmetician.[64] There is no reason to suppose that this model cannot be extended to the scientist in general: he is the hunter of the knowledges of beings.[65] Socrates implies that the dialectical art too can be called a hunting. The hunting of the dialectical art is the hunting of the huntings of the arts and sciences. It is the hunting of perplexity itself.

When Socrates had admitted he was going to be shameless in defining ἐπίστασθαι before defining ἐπιστήμη, Theaetetus did not know what he was talking about.[66] "We have long been infected with conversing impurely," Socrates tells him, "we have said thousands of times 'We know' (γιγνώσκομεν), 'we don't know,' and 'we have scientific knowledge' (ἐπιστάμεθα), and 'we don't have scientific knowledge,' as if we were understanding (συνιέντες) one another while we still are ignorant (ἀγνοοῦμεν) of science (ἐπιστήμη)."[67] As a matter of fact, not one of these verbs has occurred at all in their conversation, and Socrates implies as much when he now calls attention to his use of συνιέναι and ἀγνοεῖν.[68] What Socrates is referring to, though Theaetetus does not understand, is their conversation. Every time Theaetetus or Socrates has asked a question, he has said, "I do not know this or that in your speech," and every time either has asked a question, he has also implied, "I know this or that in your speech." The same goes for every answer they have given. As long as the continuity of question and answer was not broken, there has been a mixture of knowledge and ignorance. Socrates' second image tries to formalize the impurity in dialectical knowledge, but fails to do so because the double

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[63] *Theaetetus* 198a7–8.

[64] Cf. ibid., 198b9.

[65] Cf. *Eutyhydemus* 290b1–c6.

[66] *Theaetetus* 196d6.

[67] Ibid., 196e1–5.

[68] Ibid., 196e5–7. In the very first argument with Theaetetus, συνιέναι occurs four times (147a7, b2, b4, and b7): they had started off conversing impurely; cf. 208e8. Before Socrates meets Theaetetus, he and Theodorus each use γιγνώσκειν once (144c4 and e5).

state of knowing that the image postulates—between use and possession—is not the same as the impurity of knowing and not knowing simultaneously that belongs in the image to "art" and not "science." Art denotes the field of some expertise; science denotes each and every thing known within that field.[69] It is not surprising, then, that once a number is captured, no false opinion proves to be possible, but while a number is being hunted, it is. Socrates does not discuss the arithmetician as hunter but the arithmetician as knower. He thus allows there to be a kind of partial knowing while forbidding it to Theaetetus. How is this possible? Socrates had called one logos the logos of the soul's conversation with itself or the soul's asking and answering questions. He had called another logos opinion when any answer had separated itself from question and answer. Theaetetus called any true answer, apart from question and answer, science. Socrates implies that whenever any art or science ceases to be a hunting and becomes complete it becomes a false opinion. It becomes a part that parades as a whole. It is phantom wisdom.

When Theaetetus recalls that he heard someone say that knowledge was true opinion with logos, it is almost as if Theaetetus were recalling Socrates' own identification of opinion and logos. By the end of the first argument about this definition, Socrates has shown not only that the elements must be as knowable as the compounds,[70] but that there cannot be a whole that is different from the sum of the parts. Yet since he has not shown that the parts of a whole are the same as the elements in a whole (that is, though one is an element in

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[69] At 146c7–d1 Theaetetus seems to distinguish ἐπιστήμη and τέχνη, as Aristotle will, by assigning the former to what he learns from Theodorus and the latter to shoemaking and the like. After that, τέχνη occurs eighteen times, seven of them in Socrates' discussion of maieutics. At 207c2 τεχνικός and ἐπιστήμων occur together. Socrates never calls maieutics a science. The suffix -ική occurs eleven times, once of arithmetic and once of music (206b2).

[70] Γραμματική illustrates perfectly how an art, as a hunting, becomes as science false opinion, if one remarks that the Greek alphabet represents the results of an incomplete science of Greek let alone of language in general. Since the bonding that occurs after alphabetization occurs only perceptually, Socrates implicitly raises the question whether there is a dianoetic bond of the smear. The *Philebus* is meant to answer this question. Γραμματική also illustrates Socrates' observation about σκιαγράφημα (208e8). Our knowledge of γραμματική informs us at what distance we are to stand from Euclides' writing: Without such knowledge it becomes a blur of signs that make no sense. At the "right" distance, however, it gives us the illusion of individuality, but it is in fact an atomic species of logographic necessity.

five it is not as one a part of five), he has allowed the soul to be a whole of parts in a sense that eludes Theaetetus. Accordingly, the first account of logos is equivalent to the problem posed by Socrates' own maieutics, that it must handle the soul as a whole if its matter is not to be reduced to speeches in themselves.

Socrates then says there are three other possible meanings that logos could have in Theaetetus's definition. The second possible meaning is that logos is that which makes clear one's thought through sound with words and phrases.[71] Though Socrates seems to prove, however, that everyone who has an opinion makes it plain, whether he does it slowly or quickly, he does not argue that everyone can do this with his thought (διάνοια). For thought was silent διαλέγεσθαι, and διαλέγεσθαι is subject to an art and involves the knowledge of soul, speech, and being.[72] So far is this capacity to express one's thought trivial that whoever spoke the opinion Theaetetus heard did not make his thought clear,[73] to say nothing of Socrates' failure to understand what Parmenides said, let alone what he thought.[74] Indeed, when Socrates turns to the third possible meaning of logos, he speaks of conversation, since to go through the elements is to answer a question that someone else has put.[75] If, then, we insert this correction into the second possible meaning of logos, logos now means either knowledge of soul or knowledge of conversation, and the first two senses of logos then sum up the first part of Socrates' maieutics.[76]

The third possible meaning of logos is the knowledge of how to put together all the elements of something. We may call this, following the Eleatic Stranger, συγκριτική. It consists in the knowledge of how to put together like with like and worse with better. The fourth possible meaning of logos is the knowledge of how to give the one differentia by means of which one thing is told apart from everything

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[71] *Theaetetus* 206d1–2.

[72] Although Socrates begins by speaking of thought (διάνοια), by the end of the sentence thought has become opinion (δόξα). The transformation has been accomplished through an image: τὸ μὲν πρῶτον εἴη ἄν τὸ τὴν αὐτοῦ διάνοιαν ἐμφανῆ ποιεῖν διὰ φωνῆς μετὰ ῥημάτων τε καὶ ὀνομάτων, ὥσπερ εἰς κάτοπτρον ἢ ὕδωρ τὴν δόξαν ἐκτυπούμενον εἰς τὴν διὰ τοῦ στόματος ῥοήν (206d1–4).

[73] *Theaetetus* 206e6.

[74] Ibid., 184a1–3; cf. *Sophist* 243a6–b7.

[75] *Theaetetus* 206e6–207a1.

[76] At *Theaetetus* 161e5, immediately after he refers to his own maieutic art, Socrates speaks of the entire business of conversing (σύμπασα ἡ τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι πραγματεία).

else. We may call this, again following the Eleatic Stranger, διακριτική. It consists in the knowledge of how to divide like from like and better from worse. Socrates' cathartics of soul is meant to exemplify a form of this diacritical task, but in fact the fourfold form of the diacritical-syncritical art is nothing but Socrates' presumed knowledge of how to tell true speech from false speech. The four meanings of logos thus comprehend the range of Socrates' maieutics. What is the difficulty, then, that Socrates saw that prevented him from claiming to have total wisdom? After all, while being nonhypothetical, it was as nonexperiential as mathematics. The difficulty was that within diacritics and syncritics there is the art of arithmetic, and arithmetic and everything that goes along with arithmetic do not fit Socrates' knowledge.

The *Theaetetus* thus ends with a double conclusion. On the one hand, there is lurking within Theaetetus's understanding of arithmetic a double dilution of his own principle. On the other, there is lurking within Socrates' maieutics a science that does not need his science even though its way is partly his own way of division and collection. Theaetetus himself had started on this way when he collected numbers into two separate kinds and put a distinctive mark on each. Yet he could not put a mark on his knowledge and Socrates' knowledge, any more than Socrates could combine their knowledges even though he could collect and divide them.

Theaetetus had given the following case as an example of false opinion: "Sometimes I, in being acquainted with (γιγνώσκων) Socrates, but seeing at a distance another with whom I am not acquainted, believed him to be Socrates whom I know (οἶδα)."[77] This example can readily be applied to what happened in the first part of the dialogue: "The science one knows makes one believe that the science one does not know is the science one knows." It might seem strange, however, that the examples chosen are always of perception and do not rise to the level of science until Socrates and Theaetetus are far into an examination of the third definition, and that Socrates reverts to perception to prove conclusively that true opinion is not knowledge. His counterexample concerns a jury, who on the basis of mere speeches comes to a just decision with regard to a matter that requires firsthand evidence. Socrates is about to go on trial. Those who will acquit him do not know Socrates firsthand; they do not know

[77] *Theaetetus* 191b3–6.

he has an art, which is the cause of the common opinion about his strangeness. Theaetetus had been told the cause and experienced its effect in his own perplexity. Yet he does not know Socrates the knower, for he has given birth to four phantom images of what Socrates knows: he has given birth to pseudowisdoms that image Socrates' knowledge of his own ignorance. Socrates' knowledge arises from a comprehensive reflection on the δοξοσοφίαι of those he delivers. Once, however, Theaetetus's opinion is separated from himself and treated apart from its cause, it seems that he could never have conceived such an opinion. The very form of the *Theaetetus*, in which conception and delivery are split from opinion and logos, acts as a barrier against solving the issue of false opinion. The conjunctive two of its form stands in the way of the disjunctive two of Socrates' dialectic, in which Socrates and Theaetetus are a couple and question and answer are together. This is the logos of an action.

Within the Platonic corpus, Theaetetus is the only character who is examined twice by two different philosophers. Socrates questions him through Theaetetus's own experiences. The Eleatic Stranger questions him without disillusioning him. Socrates' maieutic art seems designed to induce in Theaetetus moderation; the Eleatic Stranger's image of hunting is designed to induce in Theaetetus courage. The *Theaetetus* ends with the restoration of Theaetetus's mathematical knowledge to himself without his knowing what he does not know; the *Sophist* ends with the problem of sophistry solved through the Stranger's bestowal onto Theaetetus of his future self or that which will fulfill his nature. The *Theaetetus* is concerned with the discovery of what knowledge or wisdom is; the *Sophist* has as its premise that wisdom for man is impossible.[78] The problem Socrates puts to Theaetetus in the *Theaetetus* is assumed to be insoluble in the *Sophist*. The effect of the *Theaetetus* has been to convince Theaetetus that any solution to the problem of knowledge is pseudowisdom, but he has been convinced without ever gaining anything but a phantom image of the true problem and by taking Socrates for the sophist. The *Theaetetus* seems to suggest that Theaetetus's ignorance of the true problem and his mistaking Socrates for a sophist are one and the same.

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[78] *Sophist* 232e6–233a7.