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Cratylus

Hermogenes. Here is Socrates; shall we take him as a partner in our discussion?

Cratylus. If you like.

Hermogenes. Cratylus, whom you see here, Socrates, says that everything has a right name of its own, which comes by nature, and that a name is not whatever people call a thing by agreement, just a piece of their own voice applied to the thing, but that there is a kind of inherent correctness in names, which is the same for all men, both Greeks and barbarians. So I ask him whether his name is in truth Cratylus, and he agrees that it is.

"And what is Socrates' name?" I said.

"Socrates," said he.

"Then that applies to all men, and the particular name by which we call each person is his name?" And he said,

"Well, your name is not Hermogenes,[1] even if all mankind call you so."

Hermogenes. Now, though I am asking him and am exerting myself to find out what in the world he means, he does not explain himself at all; he meets me with dissimulation, claiming to have some special knowledge of his own about it which would, if he chose to speak it out clearly, make me agree entirely with him. Now if you could interpret Cratylus's oracular speech, I should like to hear you; or rather, I should like still better to hear, if you please, what you yourself think about

[1] i.e. you are no son of Hermes. Hermes was the patron deity of traders, bankers, and the like, and Hermogenes, as is suggested below, was not successful as a money-maker.

the correctness of names.

Socrates. Hermogenes, son of Hipponicus, there is an ancient saying that knowledge of high things is hard to gain; and surely knowledge of names is no small matter. Now if I had attended Prodicus's fifty-drachma course of lectures, after which, as he himself says, a man has a complete education on this subject, there would be nothing to hinder your learning the truth about the correctness of names at once; but I have heard only the one-drachma course, and so I do not know what the truth is about such matters. However, I am ready to join you and Cratylus in looking for it. But as for his saying that Hermogenes is not truly your name, I suspect he is making fun of you; for perhaps he thinks that you want to make money and fail every time. But, as I said, it is difficult to know such things. We must join forces and try to find out whether you are right, or Cratylus.

Hermogenes. For my part, Socrates, I have often talked with Cratylus and many others, and cannot come to the conclusion that there is any correctness of names other than convention and agreement. For it seems to me that whatever name you give to a thing is its right name; and if you give up that name and change it for another, the later name is no less correct than the earlier, just as we change the names of our servants; for I think no name belongs to any particular thing by nature, but only by the habit and custom of those who employ it and who established the usage. But if this is not the case, I am ready to hear and to learn from Cratylus or anyone else.

Socrates. It may be that you are right, Hermogenes; but let us see. Whatever name we decide to give each particular thing is its name?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. Whether the giver be a private person or a state?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. Well, then, suppose I give a name to some thing or other, designating, for instance, that which we now call "man" as "horse" and that which we now call "horse" as "man," will the real name of the same thing be "man" for the public and "horse" for me individually, and in the other case "horse" for the public and "man" for me individually? Is that your meaning?

Hermogenes. Yes, that is my opinion.

Socrates. Now answer this question. Is there anything which you call speaking the truth and speaking falsehood?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. Then there would be true speech and false speech?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Then that speech which says things as they are is true, and that which says them as they are not is false?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. It is possible, then, to say in speech that which is and that which is not?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. But is true speech true only as a whole, and are its parts untrue?

Hermogenes. No, its parts also are true.

Socrates. Are the large parts true, but not the small ones, or are all true?

Hermogenes. All, in my opinion.

Socrates. Is there, then, anything which you say is a smaller part of speech than a name?

Hermogenes. No, that is the smallest.

Socrates. And the name is spoken as a part of the true speech?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. Then it is, according to you, true.

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. And a part of false speech is false, is it not?

Hermogenes. It is.

Socrates. Then it is possible to utter either a false or a true name, since one may utter speech that is either true or false?

Hermogenes. Yes, of course.

Socrates. Then whatever each particular person says is the name of anything, that is its name for that person?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. And whatever the number of names anyone says a thing has, it will really have that number at the time when he says it?

Hermogenes. Yes, Socrates, for I cannot conceive of any other kind of correctness in names than this; I may call a thing by one name, which I gave, and you by another, which you gave. And in the same way, I see that states have their own different names for the same things, and Greeks differ from other Greeks and from barbarians in their use of names.

Socrates. Now, Hermogenes, let us see. Do you think this is true of the real things, that their reality is a separate one for each person, as Protagoras said with his doctrine that man is the measure of all things—that things are to me such as they seem to me, and to you

such as they seem to you—or do you think things have some fixed reality of their own?

Hermogenes. It has sometimes happened to me, Socrates, to be so perplexed that I have been carried away even into this doctrine of Protagoras; but I do not at all believe he is right.

Socrates. Well, have you ever been carried away so far as not to believe at all that any man is bad?

Hermogenes. Lord, no; but I have often been carried away into the belief that certain men, and a good many of them, are very bad.

Socrates. Well, did you never think any were very good?

Hermogenes. Very few.

Socrates. But you did think them so?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. And what is your idea about that? Are the very good very wise and the very bad very foolish?

Hermogenes. Yes, that is my opinion.

Socrates. Now if Protagoras is right and the truth is as he says, that all things are to each person as they seem to him, is it possible for some of us to be wise and some foolish?

Hermogenes. No, it is not.

Socrates. And you are, I imagine, strongly of the opinion that if wisdom and folly exist, it is quite impossible that Protagoras is right, for one man would not in reality be at all wiser than another if whatever seems to each person is really true to him.

Hermogenes. Quite right.

Socrates. But neither do you believe with Euthydemus that all things belong equally to all men at the same time and perpetually,[2] for on this assumption also some could not be good and others bad, if virtue and its opposite were always equally possessed by all.

Hermogenes. True.

Socrates. Then if neither all things belong equally to all men at the same time and perpetually nor each thing to each man individually, it is clear that things have some fixed reality of their own, not in relation to us nor caused by us; they do not vary, swaying one way and another in accordance with our fancy, but exist of themselves in relation to their own reality imposed by nature.

Hermogenes. I think, Socrates, that is the case.

[2]The doctrine here attributed to Euthydemus is not expressly enunciated by him in the dialogue which bears his name, but it is little more than a comprehensive statement of the several doctrines there proclaimed by him and his brother Dionysodorus.

Socrates. Can things themselves, then, possess such a nature as this, and that of their actions be different? Or are not actions also a class of realities?

Hermogenes. Certainly they are.

Socrates. Then actions also are performed according to their own nature, not according to our opinion. For instance, if we undertake to cut anything, ought we to cut it as we wish, and with whatever instrument we wish, or shall we, if we are willing to cut each thing in accordance with the nature of cutting and being cut, and with the natural instrument, succeed in cutting it, and do it rightly, whereas if we try to do it contrary to nature we shall fail and accomplish nothing?

Hermogenes. I think the way is as you suggest.

Socrates. Then, too, if we undertake to burn anything, we must burn not according to every opinion, but according to the right one? And that is as each thing naturally burns or is burned and with the natural instrument?

Hermogenes. True.

Socrates. And all other actions are to be performed In like manner?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. And speaking is an action, is it not?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. Then if a man speaks as he fancies he ought to speak, will he speak rightly, or will he succeed in speaking if he speaks in the way and with the instrument in which and with which it is natural for us to speak and for things to be spoken, whereas otherwise he will fail and accomplish nothing?

Hermogenes. I think the way you suggest is the right one.

Socrates. Now naming is a part of speaking, for in naming I suppose people utter speech.

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Then is not naming also a kind of action, if speaking is a kind of action concerned with things?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. But we saw that actions are not merely relative to us, but possess a separate nature of their own?

Hermogenes. True.

Socrates. Then in naming also, if we are to be consistent with our previous conclusions, we cannot follow our own will, but the way and the instrument which the nature of things prescribes must be employed,

must they not? And if we pursue this course we shall be successful in our naming, but otherwise we shall fail.

Hermogenes. I think you are right.

Socrates. And again, what has to be cut, we said, has to be cut with something.

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. And what has to be woven, has to be woven with something, and what has to be bored, has to be bored with something?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. And then what has to be named, has to be named with something?

Hermogenes. True.

Socrates. And what is that with which we have to bore?

Hermogenes. A borer.

Socrates. And that with which we weave?

Hermogenes. A shuttle.

Socrates. And that with which we must name?

Hermogenes. A name.

Socrates. Right. A name also, then, is a kind of instrument.

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Then if I were to ask

"What instrument is the shuttle?" Is it not that with which we weave?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. And what do we do when we weave? Do we not separate the mingled threads of warp and woof?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. And you could give a similar answer about the borer and the rest, could you not?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. And can you say something of the same kind about a name? The name being an instrument, what do we do with it when we name?

Hermogenes. I cannot tell.

Socrates. Do we not teach one another something, and separate things according to their natures?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. A name is, then, an instrument of teaching and of separating reality, as a shuttle is an instrument of separating the web?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. But the shuttle is an instrument of weaving?

Hermogenes. Of course.

Socrates. The weaver, then, will use the shuttle well, and well means like a weaver; and a teacher will use a name well, and well means like a teacher.

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. Whose work will the weaver use well when he uses the shuttle?

Hermogenes. The carpenter's.

Socrates. Is every one a carpenter, or he who has the skill?

Hermogenes. He who has the skill.

Socrates. And whose work will the hole-maker use when he uses the borer?

Hermogenes. The smith's.

Socrates. And is every one a smith, or he who has the skill?

Hermogenes. He who has the skill.

Socrates. And whose work will the teacher use when he uses the name?

Hermogenes. I cannot tell that, either.

Socrates. And can you not tell this, either, who gives us the names we use?

Hermogenes. No.

Socrates. Do you not think it is the law that gives them to us?

Hermogenes. Very likely.

Socrates. Then the teacher, when he uses a name, will be using the work of a lawgiver?

Hermogenes. I think so.

Socrates. Do you think every man is a lawgiver, or only he who has the skill?

Hermogenes. He who has the skill.

Socrates. Then it is not for every man, Hermogenes, to give names, but for him who may be called the name-maker; and he, it appears, is the lawgiver, who is of all the artisans among men the rarest.

Hermogenes. So it appears.

Socrates. See now what the lawgiver has in view in giving names. Look at it in the light of what has gone before. What has the carpenter in view when he makes a shuttle? Is it not something the nature of which is to weave?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Well, then, if the shuttle breaks while he making it, will

he make another with his mind fixed on that which is broken, or on that form with reference to which he was making the one which he broke?

Hermogenes. On that form, in my opinion.

Socrates. Then we should very properly call that the absolute or real shuttle?

Hermogenes. Yes, I think so.

Socrates. Then whenever he has to make a shuttle for a light or a thick garment, or for one of linen or of wool or of any kind whatsoever, all of them must contain the form or ideal of shuttle, and in each of his products he must embody the nature which is naturally best for each?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. And the same applies to all other instruments. The artisan must discover the instrument naturally fitted for each purpose and must embody that in the material of which he makes the instrument, not in accordance with his own will, but in accordance with its nature. He must, it appears, know how to embody in the iron the borer fitted by nature for each special use.

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. And he must embody in the wood the shuttle fitted by nature for each kind of weaving.

Hermogenes. True.

Socrates. For each kind of shuttle is, it appears, fitted by nature for its particular kind of weaving, and the like is true of other instruments.

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. Then, my dear friend, must not the law-giver also know how to embody in the sounds and syllables that name which is fitted by nature for each object? Must he not make and give all his names with his eye fixed upon the absolute or ideal name, if he is to be an authoritative giver of names? And if different lawgivers do not embody it in the same syllables, we must not forget this ideal name on that account; for different smiths do not embody the form in the same iron, though making the same instrument for the same purpose, but so long as they reproduce the same ideal, though it be in different iron, still the instrument is as it should be, whether it be made here or in foreign lands, is it not?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. On this basis, then, you will judge the law-giver, whether he be here or in a foreign land, so long as he gives to each thing the proper form of the name, in whatsoever syllables, to be no worse lawgiver, whether here or anywhere else, will you not?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Now who is likely to know whether the proper form of shuttle is embodied in any piece of wood? The carpenter who made it, or the weaver who is to use it ?

Hermogenes. Probably the one who is to use it, Socrates.

Socrates. Then who is to use the work of the lyre-maker? Is not he the man who would know best how to superintend the making of the lyre and would also know whether it is well made or not when it is finished?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Who is he?

Hermogenes. The lyre-player.

Socrates. And who would know best about the work of the ship-builder?

Hermogenes. The navigator.

Socrates. And who can best superintend the work of the lawgiver and judge of it when it is finished, both here and in foreign countries? The user, is it not?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. And is not this he who knows how to ask questions?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. And the same one knows also how to make replies?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. And the man who knows how to ask and answer questions you call a dialectician?

Hermogenes. Yes, that is what I call him.

Socrates. The work of the carpenter, then, is to make a rudder under the supervision of the steersman, if he rudder is to be a good one.

Hermogenes. Evidently.

Socrates. And the work of the lawgiver, as it seems, is to make a name, with the dialectician as his supervisor, if names are to be well given.

Hermogenes. True.

Socrates. Then, Hermogenes, the giving of names can hardly be, as you imagine, a trifling matter, or a task for trifling or casual persons: and Cratylus is right in saying that names belong to things by nature and that not every one is an artisan of names, but only he who keeps in view the name which belongs by nature to each particular thing and is able to embody its form in the letters and syllables.

Hermogenes. I do not know how to answer you, Socrates; nevertheless

it is not easy to change my conviction suddenly. I think you would be more likely to convince me, if you were to show me just what it is that you say is the natural correctness of names.

Socrates. I, my dear Hermogenes, do not say that there is any. You forget what I said a while ago, that I did not know, but would join you in looking for the truth. And now, as we are looking, you and I, we already see one thing we did not know before, that names do possess a certain natural correctness, and that not every man knows how to give a name well to anything whatsoever. Is not that true?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Then our next task is to try to find out, if you care to know about it, what kind of correctness that is which belongs to names.

Hermogenes. To be sure I care to know.

Socrates. Then investigate.

Hermogenes. How shall I investigate?

Socrates. The best way to investigate, my friend, is with the help of those who know; and you make sure of their favour by paying them money. They are the sophists, [3] of Protagoras altogether, should desire what is said in such a *Truth*, as if it were of any value.

Socrates. Then if you do not like that, you ought to learn from Homer and the other poets.

Hermogenes. Why, Socrates, what does Homer say about names, and where?

Socrates. In many passages; but chiefly and most admirably in those in which he distinguishes between the names by which gods and men call the same things. Do you not think he gives in those passages great and wonderful information about the correctness of names? For clearly the gods call things by the names that are naturally right. Do you not think so?

Hermogenes. Of course I know that if they call things, they call them rightly. But what are these instances to which you refer?

Socrates. Do you not know that he says about the river in Troy which had the single combat with Hephaestus,[4]"whom the gods call Xanthus, but men call Scamander"*Hom. Il. 20.74*?

Hermogenes. Oh yes.

Socrates. Well, do you not think this is a grand thing to know, that the

[3] *Truth* was the title of a book written by Protagoras.

[4] *Hom. Il. 21.342-380*

name of that river is rightly Xanthus, rather than Scamander? Or, if you like, do you think it is a slight thing to learn about the bird which he says "gods call chalcis, but men call cymindis,"*Hom. Il. 14.291* that it is much more correct for the same bird to be called chalcis than cymindis? Or to learn that the hill men call Batieia is called by the gods Myrina's tomb,[5] and many other such statements by Homer and other poets? But perhaps these matters are too high for us to understand; it is, I think, more within human power to investigate the names Scamandrius and Astyanax, and understand what kind of correctness he ascribes to these, which he says are the names of Hector's son. You recall, of course: the lines which contain the words to which I refer.

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Which of the names of the boy do you imagine Homer thought was more correct, Astyanax or Scamandrius?

Hermogenes. I cannot say.

Socrates. Look at it in this way: suppose you were asked,

"Do the wise or the unwise give names more correctly?"

Hermogenes.

"The wise, obviously," I should say.

Socrates. And do you think the women or the men of a city, regarded as a class in general, are the wiser?

Hermogenes. The men.

Socrates. And do you not know that Homer says the child of Hector was called Astyanax by the men of Troy;[6] so he must have been called Scamandrius by the women, since the men called him Astyanax?

Hermogenes. Yes, probably.

Socrates. And Homer too thought the Trojan men were wiser than the women?

Hermogenes. I suppose he did.

Socrates. Then he thought Astyanax was more rightly the boy's name than Scamandrius?

Hermogenes. So it appears.

Socrates. Let us, then, consider the reason for this. Does he not himself indicate the reason most admirably? For he says— "He alone defended their city and long walls."*Hom. Il. 22.507*[7] Therefore, as it seems, it is right to call the son of the defender Astyanax (Lord of the

[5] *Hom. Il. 2.813 f*

[6] *Hom. Il. 22.506*

[7] But the verb is in the second person, addressed by Hecuba to Hector after his death.

city), ruler of that which his father, as Homer says, defended.

Hermogenes. That is clear to me.

Socrates. Indeed? I do not yet understand about it myself, Hermogenes. Do you?

Hermogenes. No, by Zeus, I do not.

Socrates. But, my good friend, did not Homer himself also give Hector his name?

Hermogenes. Why do you ask that?

Socrates. Because that name seems to me similar to Astyanax, and both names seem to be Greek. For lord (ἄναξ) and holder (ἕκτωρ) mean nearly the same thing, indicating that they are names of a king; for surely a man is holder of that of which he is lord; for it is clear that he rules it and possesses it and holds it. Or does it seem to you that there is nothing in what I am saying, and am I wrong in imagining that I have found a clue to Homer's opinion about the correctness of names?

Hermogenes. No, by Zeus, you are not wrong, in my opinion; I think perhaps you have found a clue.

Socrates. It is right, I think, to call a lion's offspring a lion and a horse's offspring a horse. I am not speaking of prodigies, such as the birth of some other kind of creature from a horse, but of the natural offspring of each species after its kind. If a horse, contrary to nature, should bring forth a calf, the natural offspring of a cow, it should be called a calf, not a colt, nor if any offspring that is not human should be born from a human being, should that other offspring be called a human being; and the same applies to trees and all the rest. Do you not agree?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. Good; but keep watch of me, and do not let me trick you; for by the same argument any offspring of a king should be called a king; and whether the same meaning is expressed in one set of syllables or another makes no difference; and if a letter is added or subtracted, that does not matter either, so long as the essence of the thing named remains in force and is made plain in the name.

Hermogenes. What do you mean?

Socrates. Something quite simple. For instance, when we speak of the letters of the alphabet, you know, we speak their names, not merely the letters themselves, except in the case of four, *ε, υ, ο, ω*.[8] We make names for all the other vowels and consonants by adding other letters

to them; and so long as we include the letter in question and make its force plain, we may properly call it by that name, and that will designate it for us. Take beta, for instance, The addition of e(η), t(τ), a(α) does no harm and does not prevent the whole name from making clear the nature of that letter which the lawgiver wished to designate; he knew so well how to give names to letters.

Hermogenes. I think you are right.

Socrates. Does not the same reasoning apply to a king? A king's son will probably be a king, a good man's good, a handsome man's handsome, and so forth; the offspring of each class will be of the same class, unless some unnatural birth takes place; so they should be called by the same names. But variety in the syllables is admissible, so that names which are the same appear different to the uninitiated, just as the physicians' drugs, when prepared with various colors and perfumes, seem different to us, though they are the same, but to the physician, who considers only their medicinal value, they seem the same, and he is not confused by the additions. So perhaps the man who knows about names considers their value and is not confused if some letter is added, transposed, or subtracted, or even if the force of the name is expressed in entirely different letters. So, for instance, in the names we were just discussing, Astyanax and Hector, none of the letters is the same, except T, but nevertheless they have the same meaning. And what letters has Archepolis (ruler of the city) in common with them? Yet it means the same thing; and there are many other names which mean simply "king." Others again mean "general," such as Agis (leader), Polemarchus (war-lord), and Eupolemus (good warrior); and others indicate physicians, as Iatrocles (famous physician) and Acesimbrotus (healer of mortals); and we might perhaps find many others which differ in syllables and letters, but express the same meaning. Do you think that is true, or not?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. To those, then, who are born in accordance with nature the same names should be given.

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. And how about those who are born contrary to nature as prodigies? For instance, when an impious son is born to a good and pious man, ought he not, as in our former example when a mare brought forth a calf, to have the designation of the class to which he

[8] In Plato's time the names epsilon, ypsilon, omicron, and omega were not yet in vogue. The names used were $\epsilon\tilde{\iota}$, $\tilde{\upsilon}$, $o\tilde{\upsilon}$,and$\tilde{\omega}$.

belongs, instead of that of his parent?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Then the impious son of a pious father ought to receive the name of his class.

Hermogenes. True.

Socrates. Not Theophilus (beloved of God) or Mnesitheus (mindful of God) or anything of that sort; but something of opposite meaning, if names are correct.

Hermogenes. Most assuredly, Socrates.

Socrates. As the name of Orestes (mountain man) is undoubtedly correct, Hermogenes, whether it was given him by chance or by some poet who indicated by the name the fierceness, rudeness, and mountain-wildness of his nature.

Hermogenes. So it seems, Socrates.

Socrates. And his father's name also appears to be in accordance with nature.

Hermogenes. It seems so.

Socrates. Yes, for Agamemnon (admirable for remaining) is one who would resolve to toil to the end and to endure, putting the finish upon his resolution by virtue. And a proof of this is his long retention of the host at Troy and his endurance. So the name Agamemnon denotes that this man is admirable for remaining. And so, too, the name of Atreus is likely to be correct; for his murder of Chrysippus and the cruelty of his acts to Thyestes are all damaging and ruinous (*ἀτηρά*) to his virtue. Now the form of his name is slightly deflected and hidden, so that it does not make the man's nature plain to every one; but to those who understand about names it makes the meaning of Atreus plain enough; for indeed in view of his stubbornness (*ἀτειρές*) and fearlessness (*ἄτρεστον*) and ruinous acts (*ἀτηρά*) the name is correctly given to him on every ground. And I think Pelops also has a fitting name; for this name means that he who sees only what is near deserves this designation.

Hermogenes. How is that?

Socrates. Why it is said of him that in murdering Myrtilus he was quite unable to forecast or foresee the ultimate effects upon his whole race, and all the misery with which it was overwhelmed, because he saw only the near at hand and the immediate— that is to say, *πέλας* (near)—in his eagerness to win by all means the hand of Hippodameia. And any one would think the name of Tantalus was given rightly and

in accordance with nature, if the stories about him are true.

Hermogenes. What are the stories?

Socrates. The many terrible misfortunes that happened to him both in his life, the last of which was the utter overthrow of his country, and in Hades, after his death, the balancing (*ταλαντεία*) of the stone above his head, in wonderful agreement with his name; and it seems exactly as if someone who wished to call him most wretched (*ταλάντατον*) disguised the name and said Tantalus instead; in some such way as that chance seems to have affected his name in the legend. Socrates. And his father also, who is said to be Zeus, appears to have a very excellent name, but it is not easy to understand; for the name of Zeus is exactly like a sentence; we divide it into two parts, and some of us use one part, others the other; for some call him Zena (*Ζῆνα*), and others Dia (*Δία*); but the two in combination express the nature of the god, which is just what we said a name should be able to do. For certainly no one is so much the author of life (*ζῆν*) for us and all others as the ruler and king of all. Thus this god is correctly named, through whom (*δι' ὅν*) all living beings have the gift of life (*ζῆν*). But, as I say, the name is divided, though it is one name, into the two parts, Dia and Zena. And it might seem, at first hearing, highly irreverent to call him the son of Cronus and reasonable to say that Zeus is the offspring of some great intellect; and so he is, for *κόρος* (for *Κρόνος*) signifies not child, but the purity (*καθαρόν*) and unblemished nature of his mind. And Cronus, according to tradition, is the son of Uranus; but the upward gaze is rightly called by the name urania (*οὐρανία*), looking at the things above (*ὁρῶ τὰ ἄνω*), and the astronomers say, Hermogenes, that from this looking people acquire a pure mind, and Uranus is correctly named. If I remembered the genealogy of Hesiod and the still earlier ancestors of the gods he mentions, I would have gone on examining the correctness of their names until I had made a complete trial whether this wisdom which has suddenly come to me, I know not whence, will fail or not.

Hermogenes. Indeed, Socrates, you do seem to me to be uttering oracles, exactly like an inspired prophet.

Socrates. Yes, Hermogenes, and I am convinced that the inspiration came to me from Euthyphro the Prospaltian. For I was with him and listening to him a long time early this morning. So he must have been inspired, and he not only filled my ears but took possession of my soul with his superhuman wisdom. So I think this is our duty: we ought today to make use of this wisdom and finish the investigation of names, but tomorrow, if the rest of you agree, we will conjure it away

and purify ourselves, when we have found some one, whether priest or sophist, who is skilled in that kind of purifying.

Hermogenes. I agree, for I should be very glad to hear the rest of the talk about names.

Socrates. Very well. Then since we have outlined a general plan of investigation, where shall we begin, that we may discover whether the names themselves will bear witness that they are not at all distributed at haphazard, but have a certain correctness? Now the names of heroes and men might perhaps prove deceptive; for they are often given because they were names of ancestors, and in some cases, as we said in the beginning, they are quite inappropriate; many, too, are given as the expression of a prayer, such as Eutychides (fortunate), Sosias (saviour), Theophilus (beloved of God), and many others. I think we had better disregard such as these; but we are most likely to find the correct names in the nature of the eternal and absolute; for there the names ought to have been given with the greatest care, and perhaps some of them were given by a power more divine than is that of men.

Hermogenes. I think you are right, Socrates.

Socrates. Then is it not proper to begin with the gods and see how the gods are rightly called by that name?

Hermogenes. That is reasonable.

Socrates. Something of this sort, then, is what I suspect: I think the earliest men in Greece believed only in those gods in whom many foreigners believe today— sun, moon, earth, stars, and sky. They saw that all these were always moving in their courses and running, and so they called them gods (*θεούς*) from this running (*θεῖν*) nature; then afterwards, when they gained knowledge of the other gods, they called them all by the same name. Is that likely to be true, or not?

Hermogenes. Yes, very likely.

Socrates. What shall we consider next?

Hermogenes. Spirits, obviously.

Socrates. Hermogenes, what does the name "spirits" really mean? See if you think there is anything in what I am going to say.

Hermogenes. Go on and say it.

Socrates. Do you remember who Hesiod says the spirits are?

Hermogenes. I do not recall it.

Socrates. Nor that he says a golden race was the first race of men to be born?

Hermogenes. Yes, I do know that.

Socrates. Well, he says of it:"But since Fate has covered up this race,"
"They are called holy spirits under the earth,Noble, averters of evil,

guardians of mortal men."*Hes. WD 122 ff*

Hermogenes. What of that?

Socrates. Why, I think he means that the golden race was not made of gold, but was good and beautiful. And I regard it as a proof of this that he further says we are the iron race.

Hermogenes. True.

Socrates. Don't you suppose that if anyone of our day is good, Hesiod would say he was of that golden race?

Hermogenes. Quite likely.

Socrates. But the good are the wise, are they not?

Hermogenes. Yes, they are the wise.

Socrates. This, then, I think, is what he certainly means to say of the spirits: because they were wise and knowing (*δαήμονες*) he called them spirits (*δαίμονες*) and in the old form of our language the two words are the same. Now he and all the other poets are right, who say that when a good man dies he has a great portion and honor among the dead, and becomes a spirit, a name which is in accordance with the other name of wisdom. And so I assert that every good man, whether living or dead, is of spiritual nature, and is rightly called a spirit.

Hermogenes. And I, Socrates, believe I quite agree with you in that. But what is the word "hero"?

Socrates. That is easy to understand; for the name has been but slightly changed, and indicates their origin from love (*ἔρως*).

Hermogenes. What do you mean?

Socrates. Why, they were all born because a god fell in love with a mortal woman, or a mortal man with a goddess. Now if you consider the word "hero" also in the old Attic pronunciation,[9] you will understand better; for that will show you that it has been only slightly altered from the name of love (Eros), the source from which the heroes spring, to make a name for them. And either this is the reason why they are called heroes, or it is because they were wise and clever orators and dialecticians, able to ask questions (*ἐρωτᾶν*), for *εἴρειν* is the same as *λέγειν* (speak). Therefore, when their name is spoken in the Attic dialect, which I was mentioning just now, the heroes turn out to be orators and askers of questions, so that the heroic race proves to be a race of orators and sophists. That is easy to understand, but

[9]The old Attic alphabet was officially given up in favour of the Ionic alphabet in 404 or 403 B.C. The Attic for of the word "hero" is *ἥρος*, that of "Eros" *ἔρως*. Plato seems to think there was a change in pronunciation, as well as in spelling, and indeed that is quite possible. Or Plato may simply be confusing pronunciation with spelling, as he seems to do in several passages of this dialogue (cf. especially 410).

the case of men, and the reason why they are called men (*ἄνθρωποι*), is more difficult. Can you tell me what it is?

Hermogenes. No, my friend, I cannot; and even if I might perhaps find out, I shall not try, because I think you are more likely to find out than I am.

Socrates. You have faith in the inspiration of Euthyphro, it seems.

Hermogenes. Evidently.

Socrates. And you are right in having it; for just at this very moment I think I have had a clever thought, and if I am not careful, before the day is over I am likely to be wiser than I ought to be. So pay attention. First we must remember in regard to names that we often put in or take out letters, making the names different from the meaning we intend, and we change the accent. Take, for instance, *Διὶ φίλος*; to change this from a phrase to a name, we took out the second iota and pronounced the middle syllable with the grave instead of the acute accent (Diphilus). In other instances, on the contrary, we insert letters and pronounce grave accents as acute.

Hermogenes. True.

Socrates. Now it appears to me that the name of men (*ἄνθρωπος*) underwent a change of that sort. It was a phrase, but became a noun when one letter, alpha, was removed and the accent of the last syllable was dropped.

Hermogenes. What do you mean?

Socrates. I will tell you. The name "man" (*ἄνθρωπος*) indicates that the other animals do not examine, or consider, or look up at (*ἀναθρεῖ*) any of the things that they see, but man has no sooner seen—that is, *ὄπωπε*—than he looks up at and considers that which he has seen. Therefore of all the animals man alone is rightly called man (*ἄνθρωπος*), because he looks up at (*ἀναθρεῖ*) what he has seen (*ὄπωπε*).

Hermogenes. Of course. May I ask you about the next word I should like to have explained?

Socrates. Certainly.

Hermogenes. It seems to me to come naturally next after those you have discussed. We speak of man's soul and body.

Socrates. Yes, of course.

Hermogenes. Let us try to analyze these, as we did the previous words.

Socrates. You mean consider "soul" (*ψυχή*) and see why it is properly called by that name, and likewise "body" (*σῶμα*)?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. To speak on the spur of the moment, I think those who gave the soul its name had something of this sort in mind: they thought when it was present in the body it was the cause of its living, giving it the power to breathe and reviving it (*ἀναψῦχον*), and when this revivifying force fails, the body perishes and comes to an end therefore, I think, they called it *ψυχή*. But—please keep still a moment. I fancy I see something which will carry more conviction to Euthyphro and his followers; for I think they would despise this attempt and would consider it cheap talk. Now see if you like the new one.

Hermogenes. I am listening.

Socrates. Do you think there is anything which holds and carries the whole nature of the body, so that it lives and moves, except the soul?

Hermogenes. No; nothing.

Socrates. Well, and do you not believe the doctrine of Anaxagoras, that it is mind or soul which orders and holds the nature of all things?

Hermogenes. I do.

Socrates. Then there would be an admirable fitness in calling that power which carries and holds (*ἔχει*) nature (*φύσιν*) *φυσέχη* and this may be refined and pronounced *ψυχή*.

Hermogenes. Certainly; and I think this is a more scientific explanation than the other.

Socrates. Yes, it is. But it seems actually absurd that the name was given with such truth.

Hermogenes. Now what shall we say about the next word?

Socrates. You mean "body" (*σῶμα*)?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. I think this admits of many explanations, if a little, even very little, change is made; for some say it is the tomb (*σῆμα*) of the soul, their notion being that the soul is buried in the present life; and again, because by its means the soul gives any signs which it gives, it is for this reason also properly called sign (*σῆμα*). But I think it most likely that the Orphic poets gave this name, with the idea that the soul is undergoing punishment for something; they think it has the body as an enclosure to keep it safe, like a prison, and this is, as the name itself denotes, the safe (*σῶμα*) for the soul, until the penalty is paid, and not even a letter needs to be changed.

Hermogenes. I think, Socrates, enough has been said about these words; but might we not consider the names of the gods in the same way in which you were speaking about that of Zeus a few minutes ago,

and see what kind of correctness there is in them?

Socrates. By Zeus, Hermogenes, we, if we are sensible, must recognize that there is one most excellent kind, since of the gods we know nothing, neither of them nor of their names, whatever they may be, by which they call themselves, for it is clear that they use the true names. But there is a second kind of correctness, that we call them, as is customary in prayers, by whatever names and patronymics are pleasing to them, since we know no other. Now I think that is an excellent custom.

Socrates. So, if you like, let us first make a kind of announcement to the gods, saying that we are not going to investigate about them—for we do not claim to be able to do that—but about men, and let us inquire what thought men had in giving them their names; for in that there is no impiety.

Hermogenes. I think, Socrates, you are right; let us do as you say.

Socrates. Shall we, then, begin with Hestia, according to custom?

Hermogenes. That is the proper thing.

Socrates. Then what would you say the man had in mind who gave Hestia her name?

Hermogenes. By Zeus, I think that is no more easy question than the other.

Socrates. At any rate, my dear Hermogenes, the first men who gave names were no ordinary persons, but high thinkers and great talkers.

Hermogenes. What then?

Socrates. I am sure the names were given by men of that kind; and if foreign names are examined, the meaning of each of them is equally evident. Take, for instance, that which we call *οὐσία* (reality, essence); some people call it *ἐσσία*, and still others *ὠσία*. First, then, in connection with the second of these forms, it is reasonable that the essence of things be called Hestia; and moreover, because we ourselves say of that which partakes of reality "it is," (*ἔστιν*), the name Hestia would be correct in this connection also; for apparently we also called *οὐσία* (reality) *ἐσσία* in ancient times. And besides, if you consider it in connection with sacrifices, you would come to the conclusion that those who established them understood the name in that way; for those who called the essence of things *ἐσσία* would naturally sacrifice to Hestia first of all the gods. Those on the other hand, who say *ὠσία* would agree, well enough with Heracleitus that all things move and nothing remains still. So they would say the cause and ruler of things was the pushing power (*ὠθοῦν*), wherefore it had been rightly named *ὠσία*. But enough of this, considering that we know nothing. After Hestia it is

right to consider Rhea and Cronus. The name of Cronus, however, has already been discussed. But perhaps I am talking nonsense.

Hermogenes. Why, Socrates?

Socrates. My friend, I have thought of a swarm of wisdom.

Hermogenes. What is it?

Socrates. It sounds absurd, but I think there is some probability in it.

Hermogenes. What is this probability?

Socrates. I seem to have a vision of Heracleitus saying some ancient words of wisdom as old as the reign of Cronus and Rhea, which Homer said too.

Hermogenes. What do you mean by that?

Socrates. Heracleitus says, you know, that all things move and nothing remains still, and he likens the universe to the current of a river, saying that you cannot step twice into the same stream.

Hermogenes. True.

Socrates. Well, don't you think he who gave to the ancestors of the other gods the names "Rhea" and "Cronus" had the same thought as Heracleitus? Do you think he gave both of them the names of streams merely by chance? Just so Homer, too, says—"Ocean the origin of the gods, and their mother Tethys;"*Hom. Il. 14.201, 302* and I believe Hesiod says that also. Orpheus, too, says—"Fair-flowing Ocean was the first to marry," "and he wedded his sister Tethys, daughter of his mother."*Orpheus Fr*See how they agree with each other and all tend towards the doctrine of Heracleitus.

Hermogenes. I think there is something in what you say, Socrates; but I do not know what the name of Tethys means.

Socrates. Why, the name itself almost tells that it is the name of a spring somewhat disguised; for that which is strained (*διαττώμενον*) and filtered (*ἠθούμενον*) represents a spring, and the name Tethys is compounded of those two words.

Hermogenes. That is very neat, Socrates.

Socrates. Of course it is. But what comes next? Zeus we discussed before.

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. Let us, then, speak of his brothers, Poseidon and Pluto, including also the other name of the latter.

Hermogenes. By all means.

Socrates. I think Poseidon's name was given by him who first applied it, because the power the sea restrained him as he was walk-

ing and hindered his advance; it acted as a bond (*δεσμός*) of his feet (*ποδῶν*). So he called the lord of this power Poseidon, regarding him as a foot-bond (*ποσί-δεσμον*). The e is inserted perhaps for euphony. Socrates. But possibly that may not be right; possibly two lambdas were originally pronounced instead of the sigma, because the god knew (*εἰδότος*) many (*πολλά*) things. Or it may be that from his shaking he was called the Shaker (*ὁ σείων*), and the pi and delta are additions. As for Pluto, he was so named as the giver of wealth (*πλοῦτος*), because wealth comes up from below out of the earth. And Hades—I fancy most people think that this is a name of the Invisible (*ἀειδής*), so they are afraid and call him Pluto.

Hermogenes. And what do you think yourself, Socrates?

Socrates. I think people have many false notions about the power of this god, and are unduly afraid of him. They are afraid because when we are once dead we remain in his realm for ever, and they are also terrified because the soul goes to him without the covering of the body. But I think all these facts, and the office and the name of the god, point in the same direction.

Hermogenes. How so?

Socrates. I will tell you my own view. Please answer this question: Which is the stronger bond upon any living being to keep him in any one place, desire, or compulsion?

Hermogenes. Desire, Socrates, is much stronger.

Socrates. Then do you not believe there would be many fugitives from Hades, if he did not bind with the strongest bond those who go to him there?

Hermogenes. Of course there would.

Socrates. Apparently, then, if he binds them with the strongest bond, he binds them by some kind of desire, not by compulsion.

Hermogenes. Yes, that is plain.

Socrates. There are many desires, are there not?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. Then he binds with the desire which is the strongest of all, if he is to restrain them with the strongest bond.

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. And is there any desire stronger than the thought of being made a better man by association with some one?

Hermogenes. No, by Zeus, Socrates, there certainly is not.

Socrates. Then, Hermogenes, we must believe that this is the reason why no one has been willing to come away from that other world, not even the Sirens, but they and all others have been overcome by his

enchantments, so beautiful, as it appears, are the words which Hades has the power to speak; and from this point of view this god is a perfect sophist and a great benefactor of those in his realm, he who also bestows such great blessings upon us who are on earth; such abundance surrounds him there below, and for this reason he is called Pluto.

Socrates. Then, too, he refuses to consort with men while they have bodies, but only accepts their society when the soul is pure of all the evils and desires of the body. Do you not think this shows him to be a philosopher and to understand perfectly that under these conditions he could restrain them by binding them with the desire of virtue, but that so long as they are infected with the unrest and madness of the body, not even his father Cronus could hold them to himself, though he bound them with his famous chains?

Hermogenes. There seems to be something in that, Socrates.

Socrates. And the name "Hades" is not in the least derived from the invisible (*ἀειδές*), but far more probably from knowing (*εἰδέναι*) all noble things, and for that reason he was called Hades by the lawgiver.

Hermogenes. Very well; what shall we say of Demeter, Hera, Apollo, Athena, Hephaestus, Ares, and the other gods

Socrates. Demeter appears to have been called Demeter, because like a mother (*μήτηρ*) she gives the gift of food, and Hera is a lovely one (*ἐρατή*), as indeed, Zeus is said to have married her for love. But perhaps the lawgiver had natural phenomena in mind, and called her Hera (*Ἥρα*) as a disguise for *ἀήρ* (air), putting the beginning at the end. You would understand, if you were to repeat the name Hera over and over. And Pherephatta!—How many people fear this name, and also Apollo! I imagine it is because they do not know about correctness of names. You see they change the name to Phersephone and its aspect frightens them. But really the name indicates that the goddess is wise; for since things are in motion (*φερόμενα*), that which grasps (*ἐφαπτόμενον*) and touches (*ἐπαφῶν*) and is able to follow them is wisdom. Pherepapha, or something of that sort, would therefore be the correct name of the goddess, because she is wise and touches that which is in motion (*ἐπαφὴ τοῦ φερομένου*)—and this is the reason why Hades, who is wise, consorts with her, because she is wise—but people have altered her name, attaching more importance to euphony than to truth, and they call her Pherephatta. Likewise in the case of Apollo, as I say, many people are afraid because of the name of the god, thinking that it has some terrible meaning. Have you not noticed that?

Hermogenes. Certainly; what you say is true.

Socrates. But really the name is admirably appropriate to the

power of the god.

Hermogenes. How is that?

Socrates. I will try to tell you what I think about it; for no single name could more aptly indicate the four functions of the god, touching upon them all and in a manner declaring his power in music, prophecy, medicine, and archery.

Hermogenes. Go on; you seem to imply that it is a remarkable name.

Socrates. His name and nature are in harmony; you see he is a musical god. For in the first place, purification and purgations used in medicine and in soothsaying, and fumigations with medicinal and magic drugs, and the baths and sprinklings connected with that sort of thing all have the single function of making a man pure in body and soul, do they not?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. But this is the god who purifies and washes away (*ἀπαλοούων*) and delivers (*ἀπολύων*) from such evils, is he not?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. With reference, then, to his acts of delivering and his washings, as being the physician of such diseases, he might properly be called Apoluon (*ἀπαλούων*, the washer), and with reference to soothsaying and truth and simplicity—for the two are identical—he might most properly be called by the name the Thessalians use; for all Thessalians call the god Aplun. And because he is always by his archery controller of darts (*βολῶν*) he is ever darting (*ἀεὶ βάλλων*). And with reference to music we have to understand that alpha often signifies "together," and here it denotes moving together in the heavens about the poles, as we call them, and harmony in song, which is called concord; for, as the ingenious musicians and astronomers tell us, all these things move together by a kind of harmony. And this god directs the harmony, making them all move together, among both gods and men; and so, just as we call the *ὁμοκέλευθον* (him who accompanies), and *ὁμόκοιτιν* (bedfellow), by changing the *ὁμο* to alpha, *ἀκόλουθον* and *ἄκοιτιν*, so also we called him Apollo who was Homopolo, and the second lambda was inserted, because without it the name sounded of disaster (*ἀπολῶ, ἀπόλωλα*, etc.).

Socrates. Even as it is, some have a suspicion of this, because they do not properly regard the force of the name, and therefore they fear it, thinking that it denotes some kind of ruin. But in fact, as was said, the name touches upon all the qualities of the god, as simple, ever-darting, purifying, and accompanying. The Muses and music in general are

named, apparently, from *μῶσθαι*, searching, and philosophy; and Leto from her gentleness, because whatever is asked of her, she is willing (*ἐθελήμων*). But perhaps her name is Letho, as she is called by many foreigners; and those who call her by that name seem to do so on account of the mild and gentle (*λεῖον, Ληθώ*) kindness of her character. Artemis appears to get her name from her healthy (*ἀρτεμές*) and well-ordered nature, and her love of virginity; or perhaps he who named her meant that she is learned in virtue (*ἀρετή*), or possibly, too, that she hates sexual intercourse (*ἄροτον μισεῖ*) of man and woman; or he who gave the goddess her name may have given it for any or all of these reasons.

Hermogenes. What of Dionysus and Aphrodite?

Socrates. You ask great things of me, son of Hipponicus. You see there is both a serious and a facetious account of the form of the name of these deities. You will have to ask others for the serious one; but there is nothing to hinder my giving you the facetious account, for the gods also have a sense of humor. Dionysus, the giver (*διδούς*) of wine (*οἶνος*), might be called in jest Didoinysus, and wine, because it makes most drinkers think (*οἴεσθαι*) they have wit (*νοῦς*) when they have not, might very justly be called Oeonus (*οἰόνους*). As for Aphrodite, we need not oppose Hesiod; we can accept his derivation of the name from her birth out of the foam (*ἀφροῦ*).

Hermogenes. But surely you, as an Athenian, will not forget Athena, nor Hephaestus and Ares.

Socrates. That is not likely.

Hermogenes. No.

Socrates. It is easy to tell the reason of one of her two names.

Hermogenes. What name?

Socrates. We call her Pallas, you know.

Hermogenes. Yes, of course.

Socrates. Those of us are right, I fancy, who think this name is derived from armed dances, for lifting oneself or anything else from the ground or in the hands is called shaking (*πάλλειν*) and being shaken, or dancing and being danced.

Hermogenes. Yes, certainly.

Socrates. So that is the reason she is called Pallas.

Hermogenes. And rightly called so. But what can you say of her other name?

Socrates. You mean Athena?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. That is a weightier matter, my friend. The ancients

seem to have had the same belief about Athena as the interpreters of Homer have now; for most of these, in commenting on the poet, say that he represents Athena as mind (*νοῦς*) and intellect (*διάνοια*); and the maker of her name seems to have had a similar conception of her, but he gives her the still grander title of "mind of God" *ἡ θεοῦ νόησις*, seeming to say that she is a *ἀ θεονόα*; here he used the alpha in foreign fashion instead of eta, and dropped out the iota and sigma. But perhaps that was not his reason; he may have called her Theonoe because she has unequalled knowledge of divine things (*τὰ θεῖα νοοῦσα*). Perhaps, too, he may have wished to identify the goddess with wisdom of character (*ἐν ἤθει νόησις*) by calling her Ethonoe; and then he himself or others afterwards improved the name, as they thought, and called her Athenaa.

Hermogenes. And how do you explain Hephaestus?

Socrates. You ask about "the noble master of light"?

Hermogenes. To be sure.

Socrates. Hephaestus is Phaestus, with the eta added by attraction; anyone could see that, I should think.

Hermogenes. Very likely, unless some other explanation occurs to you, as it probably will.

Socrates. To prevent that, ask about Ares.

Hermogenes. I do ask.

Socrates. Ares, then, if you like, would be named for his virility and courage, or for his hard and unbending nature, which is called *ἄρρατον*; so Ares would be in every way a fitting name for the god of war.

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. For God's sake, let us leave the gods, as I am afraid to talk about them; but ask me about any others you please, "that you may see what" Euthyphro's "horses are."[10]

Hermogenes. I will do so, but first one more god. I want to ask you about Hermes, since Cratylus says I am not Hermogenes (son of Hermes). Let us investigate the name of Hermes, to find out whether there is anything in what he says.

Socrates. Well then, this name "Hermes" seems to me to have to do with speech; he is an interpreter (*ἡρμηνεύς*) and a messenger, is wily and deceptive in speech, and is oratorical. All this activity is concerned with the power of speech. Now, as I said before, *εἴρειν* denotes the use of speech; moreover, Homer often uses the word *ἐμήσατο*, which

[10]Cf. *Hom. Il. 5.221*, *Hom. Il. 8.105.*

means contrive. From these two words, then, the lawgiver imposes upon us the name of this god who contrived speech and the use of speech—*εἴρειν*means speak— and tells us: "Ye human beings, he who contrived speech (*εἴρειν ἐμήσατο*) ought to be called Eiremes by you." We, however, have beautified the name, as we imagine, and call him Hermes. Iris also seems to have got her name from *εἴρειν*, because she is a messenger.

Hermogenes. By Zeus, I believe Cratylus was right in saying I was not Hermogenes; I certainly am no good contriver of speech.

Socrates. And it is reasonable, my friend, that Pan is the double-natured son of Hermes.

Hermogenes. How is that?

Socrates. You know that speech makes all things (*πᾶν*) known and always makes them circulate and move about, and is twofold, true and false.

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Well, the true part is smooth and divine and dwells aloft among the gods, but falsehood dwells below among common men, is rough and like the tragic goat[11]; for tales and falsehoods are most at home there, in the tragic life.

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Then Pan, who declares and always moves (*ἀεὶ πολῶν*) all, is rightly called goat-herd (*αἰπόλος*), being the double-natured son of Hermes, smooth in his upper parts, rough and goat-like in his lower parts. And Pan, if he is the son of Hermes, is either speech or the brother of speech, and that brother resembles brother is not at all surprising. But, as I said, my friend, let us get away from the gods.

Hermogenes. From such gods as those, if you like, Socrates; but why should you not tell of another kind of gods, such as sun, moon, stars, earth, ether, air, fire, water, the seasons, and the year?

Socrates. You are imposing a good many tasks upon me; however, if it will give you pleasure, I am willing.

Hermogenes. It will give me pleasure.

Socrates. What, then, do you wish first? Shall we discuss the sun (*Ἥλιος*), as you mentioned it first?

Hermogenes. By all means.

Socrates. I think it would be clearer if we were to use the Doric form

[11]The chorus of the primitive performances from which tragedy developed appeared as satyrs, clad in goat-skins. Hence the name *τραγῳδία* (goat-song). The adjective *τραγικός* may mean either goat-like or tragic. In this passage it has both meanings.

of the name. The Dorians call it *Ἅλιος*. Now *ἅλιος* might be derived from collecting (*ἀλίζειν*) men when he rises, or because he always turns (*ἀεὶ εἱλεῖν*) about the earth in his course, or because he variegates the products of the earth, for variegate is identical with *ἀιολλεῖν*.

Hermogenes. And what of the moon, Selene?

Socrates. That name appears to put Anaxagoras in an uncomfortable position.

Hermogenes. How so?

Socrates. Why, it seems to have anticipated by many years the recent doctrine of Anaxagoras, that the moon receives its light from the sun.

Hermogenes. How is that?

Socrates. *Σέλας* (gleam) and *φῶς* (light) are the same thing.

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. Now the light is always new and old about the moon, if the Anaxagoreans are right; for they say the sun, in its continuous course about the moon, always sheds new light upon it, and the light of the previous month persists.

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. The moon is often called *Σελαναία*.

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Because it has always a new and old gleam (*σέλα νέον τε καὶ ἔνον*) the very most fitting name for it would be *Σελαενονεοάεια*, which has been compressed into *Σελαναία*.

Hermogenes. That is a regular opera bouffe name, Socrates. But what have you to say of the month (*μήν*) and the stars?

Socrates. The word "month" (*μείς*) would be properly pronounced *μείης*, from *μειοῦσθαι*, to grow less, and I think the stars (*ἄστερα*) get their name from *ἀστραπή* (lightning). But *ἀστραπή*, because it turns our eyes upwards (*τὰ ὦπα ἀναστρέθει*), would be called *ἀναστρωπή*, which is now pronounced more prettily *ἀστραπή*.

Hermogenes. And what of *πῦρ* (fire) and *ὕδωρ* (water)?

Socrates. *Πῦρ* is too much for me. It must be that either the muse of Euthyphro has deserted me or this is a very difficult word. Now just note the contrivance I introduce in all cases like this which are too much for me.

Hermogenes. What contrivance?

Socrates. I will tell you. Answer me; can you tell the reason of the word *πῦρ*?

Hermogenes. Not I, by Zeus.

Socrates. See what I suspect about it. I know that many Greeks,

especially those who are subject to the barbarians, have adopted many foreign words.

Hermogenes. What of that?

Socrates. If we should try to demonstrate the fitness of those words in accordance with the Greek language, and not in accordance with the language from which they are derived, you know we should get into trouble.

Hermogenes. Naturally.

Socrates. Well, this word *πῦρ* is probably foreign; for it is difficult to connect it with the Greek language, and besides, the Phrygians have the same word, only slightly altered. The same is the case with *ὕδωρ* (water), *κύων* (dog), and many other words.

Hermogenes. Yes, that is true.

Socrates. So we must not propose forced explanations of these words, though something might be said about them. I therefore set aside *πῦρ* and *ὕδωρ* in this way. But is air called *ἀήρ* because it raises (*αἴρει*) things from the earth, or because it is always flowing (*ἀεὶ ῥεῖ*), or because wind arises from its flow? The poets call the winds *ἀήτας*, blasts. Perhaps the poet means to say "air-flow" (*ἀητόρρουν*), as he might say "wind-flow" (*πνευματόρρουν*). The word *αἰθηρ* (ether) I understand in this way: because it always runs and flows about the air (*ἀεὶ θεῖ περὶ τὸν ἀέρα ῥέον*), it may properly be called *ἀειθεήρα*. The word *γῆ* (earth) shows the meaning better in the form *γαῖα*; for *γαῖα* is a correct word for "mother," as Homer says, for he uses *γεγάασιν* to mean *γεγενῆσθαι* (be born). Well, now what came next?

Hermogenes. The seasons, Socrates, and the two words for year.

Socrates. The word *ὧραι* (seasons) should be pronounced in the old Attic fashion, *ὅραι*, if you wish to know the probable meaning; *HOPAI* exist to divide winters and summers and winds and the fruits of the earth; and since they divide (*ὁρίζουσι*), they would rightly be called *ὅραι*. The two words for year, *ἐνιαυτός* and *ἔτος*, are really one. For that which brings to light within itself the plants and animals, each in its turn, and examines them, is called by some *ἐνιαυτός*, because of its activity within itself (*ἐν ἑαυτῷ*), and by others *ἔτος*, because it examines (*ἑτάζει*), just as we saw before that the name of Zeus was divided and some said *Δία* and others *Ζῆνα*. The whole phrase is "that which examines within itself" (*τὸ ἐν ἀυτῷ ἑτάζον*), and this one phrase is divided in speech so that the two words *ἐνιαυτός* and *ἔτος* are formed from one phrase.

Hermogenes. Truly, Socrates, you are going ahead at a great rate.

Socrates. Yes, I fancy I am already far along on the road of wisdom.

Hermogenes. I am sure you are.

Socrates. You will be surer presently.

Hermogenes. Now after the class of words you, have explained, I should like to examine the correctness of the noble words that relate to virtue, such as wisdom, intelligence, justice, and all the others of that sort.

Socrates. You are stirring up a mighty tribe of words, my friend; however, since I have put on the lion helmet, I must not play the coward, but must, it seems, examine wisdom, intelligence, thought, knowledge, and all the other noble words of which you speak.

Hermogenes. Certainly we must not stop until that is done.

Socrates. By dog, I believe I have a fine intuition which has just come to me, that the very ancient men who invented names were quite like most of the present philosophers who always get dizzy as they turn round and round in their search for the nature of things, and then the things seem to them to turn round and round and be in motion. They think the cause of this belief is not an affection within themselves, but that the nature of things really is such that nothing is at rest or stable, but everything is flowing and moving and always full of constant motion and generation. I say this because I thought of it with reference to all these words we are now considering.

Hermogenes. How is that, Socrates?

Socrates. Perhaps you did not observe that the names we just mentioned are given under the assumption that the things named are moving and flowing and being generated.

Hermogenes. No, I did not notice that at all.

Socrates. Surely the first one we mentioned is subject to such assumptions.

Hermogenes. What is the word ?

Socrates. Wisdom (*φρόνησις*); for it is perception (*νόησις*) of motion (*φορᾶς*) and flowing (*ῥοῦ*); or it might be understood as benefit (*ὄνησις*) of motion (*φορᾶς*); in either case it has to do with motion. And *γνώμη* (thought), if you please, certainly denotes contemplation and consideration of generation (*γονῆς νώμησις*); for to consider is the same as to contemplate. Or, if you please, *νόησις* (intelligence) is merely *ἔσις* (desire) *τοῦ νεοῦ* (of the new); but that things are new shows that they are always being generated; therefore the soul's desire for generation is declared by the giver of the name *νεόεσις*; for in an-

tiquity the name was not *νόησις*, but two epsilons had to be spoken instead of the eta.

Socrates. *Σωφροσύνη* (self-restraint) is *σωτηρία* (salvation) of *φρόνησις* (wisdom), which we have just been discussing. And *ἐπιστήμη* (knowledge) indicates that the soul which is of any account accompanies (*ἕπεται*) things in their motion, neither falling behind them nor running in front of them; therefore we ought to insert an epsilon and call it *ἐπεϊστήμη*. *Σύνεσις* (intelligence) in its turn is a kind of reckoning together; when one says *συνιέναι* (understand), the same thing as *ἐπίστασθαι* is said; for *συνιέναι* means that the soul goes with things. Certainly *σοφία* (wisdom) denotes the touching of motion. This word is very obscure and of foreign origin; but we must remember that the poets often say of something which begins to advance *ἐσύθη* (it rushed). There was a famous Laconian whose name was *Σοῦς* (Rush), for this is the Laconian word for rapid motion. Now *σοφία* signifies the touching (*ἐπαφή*) of this rapid motion, the assumption being that things are in motion. And the word *ἀγαθόν* (good) is intended to denote the admirable (*ἀγαστόν*) in all nature. For since all things are in motion, they possess quickness and slowness; now not all that is swift, but only part of it, is admirable; this name *ἀγαθόν* is therefore given to the admirable (*ἀγαστόν*) part of the swift (*θοοῦ*).It is easy to conjecture that the word *δικαιασύνη* applies to the understanding (*σύνεσις*) of the just (*τοῦ δαίον*) but the word *δίκαιον* (just) is itself difficult. Up to a certain point, you see, many men seem to agree about it, but beyond that they differ. For those who think the universe is in motion believe that the greater part of it is of such a nature as to be a mere receptacle, and that there is some element which passes through all this, by means of which all created things are generated. And this element must be very rapid and very subtle; for it could not pass through all the universe unless it were very subtle, so that nothing could keep it out, and it must be very swift, so that all other things are relatively at rest. Since, then, it superintends and passes through (*διαϊόν*) all other things, this is rightly called by the name *δίκαιον*, the sound of the kappa being added merely for the sake of euphony.

Socrates. Up to this point, as I said just now, many men agree about justice (*δίκαιον*); and I, Hermogenes, being very much in earnest about it, have persistently asked questions and have been told in secret teachings that this is justice, or the cause—for that through which creation takes place is a cause—and some one told me that it was for this reason rightly called Zeus (*Δία*). But when, after hearing this, I nevertheless ask them quietly,

"What then, my most excellent friend, if this is true, is justice?" they think I am asking too many questions and am leaping over the trenches.[12] They say I have been told enough; they try to satisfy me by saying all sorts of different things, and they no longer agree. For one says the sun is justice, for the sun alone superintends all things, passing through and burning (*διαϊόντα καὶ καίοντα*) them. Then when I am pleased and tell this to some one, thinking it is a fine answer, he laughs at me and asks if I think there is no justice among men when the sun has set. So I beg him to tell me what he thinks it is, and he says

"Fire." But this is not easy to understand. He says it is not actual fire, but heat in the abstract that is in the fire. Another man says he laughs at all these notions, and that justice is what Anaxagoras says it is, mind; for mind, he says, is ruled only by itself, is mixed with nothing, orders all things, and passes through them. Then, my friend, I am far more perplexed than before I undertook to learn about the nature of justice. But I think the name—and that was the subject of our investigation—was given for the reasons I have mentioned.

Hermogenes. I think, Socrates, you must have heard this from some one and are not inventing it yourself.

Socrates. And how about the rest of my talk?

Hermogenes. I do not at all think you had heard that.

Socrates. Listen then; perhaps I may deceive you into thinking that all I am going to say is my own. What remains to consider after justice? I think we have not yet discussed courage. It is plain enough that injustice (*ἀδικία*) is really a mere hindrance of that which passes through (*τοῦ διαϊόντος*, but the word *ἀδρεία* (courage) implies that courage got its name in battle, and if the universe is flowing, a battle in the universe can be nothing else than an opposite current or flow (*ῥοή*). Now if we remove the delta from the word *ἀνδρεία*, the word *ἀνρεία* signifies exactly that activity.

Socrates. Of course it is clear that not the current opposed to every current is courage, but only that opposed to the current which is contrary to justice; for otherwise courage would not be praised. The words *ἄρρεν* (male) and *ἀνήρ* (man) refer, like *ἀνδρεία*, to the upward (*ἄνω*) current or flow. The word *γυνή* (woman) seems to me to be much the same as *γονή* (birth). I think *θῆλυ* (female) is derived from *θηλή* (teat); and is not *θηλή*, Hermogenes, so called because it makes things flourish (*τεθηλέναι*), like plants wet with showers?

[12] A trench was the limit of the leap for the pentathletes.

Hermogenes. Very likely, Socrates.

Socrates. And again, the word *θάλλειν* (flourish) seems to me to figure the rapid and sudden growth of the young. Something of that sort the namegiver has reproduced in the name, which he compounded of *θεῖν* (run) and *ἅλλεσθαι* (jump). You do not seem to notice how I rush along outside of the race-course, when I get on smooth ground. But we still have plenty of subjects left which seem to be serious.

Hermogenes. True.

Socrates. One of which is to see what the word *τέχνη* (art, science) means.

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Does not this denote possession of mind, if you remove the tau and insert omicron between the chi and the nu and the nu and the eta (making *ἐχονόη*)?

Hermogenes. It does it very poorly, Socrates.

Socrates. My friend, you do not bear in mind that the original words have before now been completely buried by those who wished to dress them up, for they have added and subtracted letters for the sake of euphony and have distorted the words in every way for ornamentation or merely in the lapse of time. Do you not, for instance, think it absurd that the letter rho is inserted in the word *κάαπτρον* (mirror)? I think that sort of thing is the work of people who care nothing for truth, but only for the shape of their mouths; so they keep adding to the original words until finally no human being can understand what in the world the word means. So the sphinx, for instance, is called sphinx, instead of phix, and there are many other examples.

Hermogenes. Yes, that is true, Socrates.

Socrates. And if we are permitted to insert and remove any letters we please in words, it will be perfectly easy to fit any name to anything.

Hermogenes. True.

Socrates. Yes, quite true. But I think you, as a wise director, must observe the rule of moderation and probability.

Hermogenes. I should like to do so.

Socrates. And I, too, Hermogenes. But do not, my friend, demand too much precision, lest you "enfeeble me of my sight."*Hom. Il. 6.265* For now that *τέχνη* (art) is disposed of, I am nearing the loftiest height of my subject, when once we have investigated *μηχανή*(contrivance). For I think *μηχανή* signifies *ἄνειν ἐπὶ πολύ* (much accomplishment); for *μῆκος* (length) has about the same meaning as *τὸ πολύ* (much), and the name *μηχανή* is composed of these two, *μῆκος* and *ἄνειν*. But, as I was just saying, we must go on to the loftiest height of our subject;

we must search for the meaning of the words *ἀρετή* (virtue) and *κακία* (wickedness). Now one of them I cannot yet see; but the other seems to be quite clear, since it agrees with everything we have said before. For inasmuch as all things are in motion, everything that moves badly (*κακῶς ἰόν*) would be evil (*κακία*); and when this evil motion in relation to its environment exists in the soul, it receives the general name *κακία* (evil) in the special sense of wickedness. But the nature of evil motion (*κακῶς ἰέναι*) is made clear, I think, also in the word *δειλία* (cowardice), which we have not yet discussed. We passed it by, when we ought to have examined it after *ἀνδρεία* (courage); and I fancy we passed over a good many other words. Now the meaning of *δειλία* is a strong bond of the soul; for *λίαν* (excessively) is, in a way, expressive of strength; so *δειλία* would be the excessive or greatest bond (*δεσμός, δεῖν*) of the soul; and so, too, *ἀπορία* (perplexity) is an evil, as is everything, apparently, which hinders motion and progress (*πορεύεσθαι*). This, then, seems to be the meaning of evil motion (*κακῶς ἰέναι*), that advance is halting and impeded; and the soul that is infected by it becomes filled with wickedness (*κακία*). If these are the reasons for the name of wickedness, virtue (*ἀρετή*) would be the opposite of this; it would signify first ease of motion, and secondly that the flow of the good soul is always unimpeded, and therefore it has received this name, which designates that which always flows (*ἀεὶ ῥέον*) without let or hindrance. It is properly called *ἀειρεϊτή*, or perhaps also *αἰρετή*, indicating that this condition is especially to be chosen; but it has been compressed and is pronounced *ἀρετή*. Perhaps you will say this is another invention of mine; but I say if what I said just now about *κακία* is right, this about the name of *ἀρετή* is right too.

Hermogenes. But what is the meaning of the word *κακόν* which you used in many of your derivations?

Socrates. By Zeus, I think it is a strange word and hard to understand; so I apply to it that contrivance of mine.

Hermogenes. What contrivance?

Socrates. The claim of foreign origin, which I advance in this case as in those others.

Hermogenes. Well, probably you are right. But, if you please, let us drop these words and try to discover the reasons for the words *καλόν* (beautiful, noble) and *αἰσχρόν* (base).

Socrates. I think the meaning of *αἰσχρόν* is clear, and this also agrees with what has been said before. For the giver of names ap-

pears to me throughout to denounce that which hinders and restrains things from flowing, and in this instance he gave to that which always restrains the flow (*ἀεὶ ἴσχει τὸν ῥοῦν*) this name *ἀεισχοροῦν*, which is now compressed and pronounced *αἰσχρόν*.

Hermogenes. What about *καλόν*?

Socrates. That is harder to understand, and yet it expresses its meaning: it has been altered merely in accent and in the length of the O.

Hermogenes. How is that?

Socrates. I think this word denotes intellect.

Hermogenes. What do you mean?

Socrates. Why, what do you think is the cause why anything is called by a name? Is it not the power which gave the name?

Hermogenes. Why, certainly.

Socrates. And is not that power the intellect either of gods or of men or both?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. Are not that which called things by name and that which calls them by name (*τὸ καλοῦν*) the same thing, namely intellect?

Hermogenes. Yes, clearly.

Socrates. And are not all works which are done by mind and intelligence worthy of praise, and those that are not done by them worthy of blame?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Does not the medical power perform medical works and the power of carpentry works of carpentry? Do you agree to that?

Hermogenes. I agree.

Socrates. And the beautiful performs beautiful works?

Hermogenes. It must do so.

Socrates. And the beautiful is, we say, intellect?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Then this name, the beautiful, is rightly given to mind, since it accomplishes the works which we call beautiful and in which we delight.

Hermogenes. Evidently.

Socrates. What further words of this sort are left for us?

Hermogenes. Those that are related to the good and the beautiful, such as *συμφέροντα* (advantageous), *λυσιτελοῦντα* (profitable), *ὠφέλιμα* (useful), *κερδαλέα* (gainful), and their opposites.

Socrates. You might by this time be able to find the meaning of *συμφέροντα* by yourself in the light of the previous explanations, for it

appears to be own brother to *ἐπιστήμη*. It means nothing else but the motion (*φορά*) of the soul in company with the world, and naturally things which are done by such a power are called *συμφέροντα* and *σύμφορα* because they are carried round with (*συμπεριφέρεσθαι*) the world. But *κερδαλέον* is from *κέρδος* (gain). If you restore nu in the word *κέρδος* in place of the delta, the meaning is plain; it signifies good, but in another way. Because it passes through and is mingled (*κεράννυται*) with all things, he who named it gave it this name which indicates that function; but he inserted a delta instead of nu and said *κέρδος*.

Hermogenes. And what is *λυσιτελοῦν*?

Socrates. I do not think, Hermogenes, the name-giver gives the meaning to *λυσιτελοῦν* which it has in the language of tradesfolk, when profit sets free (*ἀπολύει*) the sum invested, but he means that because it is the swiftest thing in the world it does not allow things to remain at rest and does not allow the motion to come to any end (*τέλος*) of movement or to stop or pause, but always, if any end of the motion is attempted, it sets it free, making it unceasing and immortal. It is in this sense, I think, that the good is dubbed *λυσιτελοῦν*, for it frees (*λύει*) the end (*τέλος*) of the motion. But the word *ὠφέλιμον* is a foreign one, which Homer often uses in the verbal form *ὀφέλλειν*. This is a synonym of "increase" and "create."

Hermogenes. What shall be our explanations of the opposites of these?

Socrates. Those of them that are mere negatives, need, I think, no discussion.

Hermogenes. Which are those?

Socrates. Disadvantageous, useless, unprofitable, and ungainful.

Hermogenes. True.

Socrates. But *βλαβερόν* (harmful) and *ζημιῶδες* (hurtful) do need it.

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. And *βλαβερόν* means that which harms (*βλάπτον*) the flow (*ῥοῦν*); but *βλάπτον* means wishing to fasten (*ἅπτειν*), and *ἅπτειν* is the same thing as *δεῖν* (bind), which the name-giver constantly finds fault with. Now *τὸ βουλόμενον ἅπτειν ῥοῦν* (that which wishes to fasten the flow) would most correctly be called *βουλαπτεροῦν*, but is called *βλαβερόν* merely, as I think, to make it prettier.

Hermogenes. Elaborate names these are, Socrates, that result from your method. Just now, when you pronounced *βουλαπτεροῦν*, you looked as if you had made up your mouth to whistle the flute-prelude

of the hymn to Athena.

Socrates. Not I, Hermogenes, am responsible, but those who gave the name.

Hermogenes. True. Well, what is the origin of *ζημιῶδες*?

Socrates. What can the origin of *ζημιῶδες* be? See, Hermogenes, how true my words are when I say that by adding and taking away letters people alter the sense of words so that even by very slight changes they sometimes make them mean the opposite of what they meant before; as, for instance, in the case of the word *δέον* (obligation, right), for that just occurred to me and I was reminded of it by what I was going to say to you, that this fine modern language of ours has turned *δέον* and also *ζημιῶδες* round, so that each has the opposite of its original meaning, whereas the ancient language shows clearly the real sense of both words.

Hermogenes. What do you mean?

Socrates. I will tell you. You know that our ancestors made good use of the sounds of iota and delta, and that is especially true of the women, who are most addicted to preserving old forms of speech. But nowadays people change iota to eta or epsilon, and delta to zeta, thinking they have a grander sound.

Hermogenes. How is that?

Socrates. For instance, in the earliest times they called day *ἰμέρα*, others said *ἐμέρα*, and now they say *ἡμέρα*.

Hermogenes. That is true.

Socrates. Only the ancient word discloses the intention of the name-giver, don't you know? For day comes out of darkness to men; they welcome it and long (*ἰμείρουσι*) for it, and so they called it *ἰμέρα*.

Hermogenes. That is clear.

Socrates. But now *ἡμέρα* is masquerading so that you could not guess its meaning. Why, some people think day is called *ἡμέρα* because it makes things gentle (*ἥμερα*).

Hermogenes. I believe they do.

Socrates. And you know the ancients called *ζυγόν* (yoke) *δυογόν*.

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. And *ζυγόν* conveys no clear meaning, but the name *δυογόν* is quite properly given to that which binds two together for the purpose of draught; now, however, we say *ζυγόν*. There are a great many other such instances.

Hermogenes. Yes, that is plain.

Socrates. Similarly the word *δέον* (obligation) at first, when spoken in this way, denotes the opposite of all words connected with the good;

for although it is a form of good, *δέον* seems to be a bond (*δεσμός*) and hindrance of motion, own brother, as it were, to*βλαβερόν*.

Hermogenes. Yes, Socrates, it certainly does seem so.

Socrates. But it does not, if you employ the ancient word, which is more likely to be right than the present one. You will find that it agrees with the previous words for "good," if instead of the epsilon you restore the iota, as it was in old times for *διόν* (going through), not *δέον*, signifies good, which the name-giver praises. And so the giver of names does not contradict himself, but *δέον* (obligation, right), *ὠφέλιμον* (useful), *λυσιτελοῦν* (profitable), *κερδαλέον* (gainful), *ἀγαθόν* (good), *ξυμφέρον* (advantageous), and *εὔπορον* (prosperous), are plainly identical, signifying under different names the principle of arrangement and motion which has constantly been praised, whereas the principle of constraint and bondage is found fault with. And likewise in the case of *ζημιῶδες*, if you restore the ancient delta in place of the zeta, you will see that the name, pronounced *δημιῶδες*, was given to that which binds motion (*δοῦντι τὸ ἰόν*).

Hermogenes. What of *ἡδονή* (pleasure) and *λύπη* (pain) and *ἐπιθυμία* (desire), and the like, Socrates?

Socrates. I do not think they are at all difficult, Hermogenes, for *ἡδονή* appears to have this name because it is the action that tends towards advantage (*ἡ πρὸς τὴν ὄνησιν τείνουσα*); the delta is inserted, so that we say *ἡδονή* instead of *ἡονή*. *Λύπη* appears to have received its name from the dissolution (*διάλυσις*) of the body which takes place through pain. *Ἀνία* (sorrow) is that which hinders motion (*ἰέναι*). *Ἀλγηδών* (distress) is, I think, a foreign word, derived from *ἀλγεινός* (distressing). *Ὀδύνη* (grief) appears to be so called from the putting on of pain (*τῆς ἐνδύσεως τῆς λύπης*). *Ἀχθηδών* (vexation) has a name, as anyone can see, made in the likeness of the weight (*ἄχθος*, burden) which vexation imposes upon motion. *Χαρά* (joy) seems to have its name from the plenteous diffusion (*διάχυσις*) of the flow of the soul. *Τέρψις* (delight) is from *τερπνόν* (delightful); and *τερπνόν* is called from the creeping (*ἕρψις*) of the soul, which is likened to a breath (*πνοή*), and would properly be called *ἕρπνουν*, but the name has been changed in course of time to *τερπνόν*. *Εὐφροσύνη*(mirth) needs no explanation, for it is clear to anyone that from the motion of the soul in harmony (*εὖ*) with the universe, it received the name *εὐφεροσύνη*, as it rightfully is; but we call it *ευφροσύνη*. Nor is there any difficulty about *ἐπιθυμία* (desire), for this name was evidently given to the power that goes (*ἰοῦσα*) into the soul (*θυμός*). And *θυμός* has its name from the raging (*θύσις*) and boiling of the soul.

Socrates. The name *ἵμερος* (longing) was given to the stream (*ῥοῦς*) which most draws the soul; for because it flows with a rush (*ἰέμενος*) and with a desire for things and thus draws the soul on through the impulse of its flowing, all this power gives it the name of *ἵμερος*. And the word *πόθος* (yearning) signifies that it pertains not to that which is present, but to that which is elsewhere (*ἄλλοθί που*) or absent, and therefore the same feeling which is called *ἵμερος* when its object is present, is called *πόθος* when it is absent. And *ἔρως* (love) is so called because it flows in (*ἐσρεῖ*) from without, and this flowing is not inherent in him who has it, but is introduced through the eyes; for this reason it was in ancient times called *ἔσρος*, from *ἐσρεῖν*—for we used to employ omicron instead of omega—but now it is called *ἔρως* through the change of omicron to omega. Well, what more is there that you want to examine?

Hermogenes. What is your view about *δόξα* (opinion) and the like?

Socrates. *Δόξα* is derived either from the pursuit (*δίωξις*) which the soul carries on as it pursues the knowledge of the nature of things, or from the shooting of the bow (*τόξον*); the latter is more likely; at any rate *οἴησις* (belief) supports this view, for it appears to mean the motion (*οἴσις*) of the soul towards the essential nature of every individual thing, just as *βουλή* (intention) denotes shooting (*βολή*) and *βούλεσθαι* (wish), as well as *βουλεύεσθαι* (plan), denotes aiming at something. All these words seem to follow *δόξα* and to express the idea of shooting, just as *ἀβουλία* (ill-advisedness), on the other hand, appears to be a failure to hit, as if a person did not shoot or hit that which he shot at or wished or planned or desired.

Hermogenes. I think you are hurrying things a bit, Socrates.

Socrates. Yes, for I am running the last lap now. But I think I must still explain *ἀνάγκη* (compulsion) and *ἑκούσιον* (voluntary) because they naturally come next. Now by the word *ἑκούσιον* is expressed the yielding (*εἶκον*) and not opposing, but, as I say, yielding to the motion which is in accordance with the will; but the compulsory (*τὸ ἀναγκαῖον*) and resistant, being contrary to the will, is associated with error and ignorance; so it is likened to walking through ravines (*ἄγκη*), because they are hard to traverse, rough, and rugged, and retard motion; the word *ἀναγκαῖον* may, then, originate in a comparison with progress through a ravine. But let us not cease to use my strength, so long as it lasts and do not you cease from asking questions.

Hermogenes. I ask, then, about the greatest and noblest words, truth (*ἀλήθεια*), falsehood (*ψεῦδος*), being (*τὸ ὄν*), and why name, the subject of our whole discourse, has the name *ὄνομα*.

Socrates. Does the word *μαίσθαι* (search) mean anything to you?

Hermogenes. Yes, it means seek.

Socrates. The word *ὄνομα* seems to be a word composed from a sentence signifying "this is a being about which our search is." You can recognize that more readily in the adjective *ὀνομαστόν*, for that says clearly that this is *ὅν οὗ μάσμα ἐστίν* (being of which the search is). And *ἀλήθεια* (truth) is like the others; for the divine motion of the universe is, I think, called by this name, *ἀλήθεια*, because it is a divine wandering *θεία ἄλη*. But *ψεῦδος* (falsehood) is the opposite of motion; for once more that which is held back and forced to be quiet is found fault with, and it is compared to slumberers (*εὕουσι*); but the addition of the psi conceals the meaning of the word. The words *τὸ ὄν* (being) and *οὐσία* (existence) agree with *ἀληθής* with the loss of iota, for they mean going (*ἰόν*). And *οὐκ ὄν* (not being) means *οὐκ ἰόν* (not going), and indeed some people pronounce it so.

Hermogenes. I think you have knocked these words to pieces manfully, Socrates; but if anyone should ask you what propriety or correctness there was in these words that you have employed—*ἰόν* and *ῥέον* and *δοῦν*—

Socrates. What answer should I make? Is that your meaning?

Hermogenes. Yes, exactly.

Socrates. We acquired just now one way of making an answer with a semblance of sense in it.

Hermogenes. What way was that?

Socrates. Saying, if there is a word we do not know about, that it is of foreign origin. Now this may be true of some of them, and also on account of the lapse of time it may be impossible to find out about the earliest words; for since words get twisted in all sorts of ways, it would not be in the least wonderful if the ancient Greek word should be identical with the modern foreign one.

Hermogenes. That is not unlikely.

Socrates. It is indeed quite probable. However, we must play the game[13] and investigate these questions vigorously. But let us bear in mind that if a person asks about the words by means of which names are formed, and again about those by means of which those words were formed, and keeps on doing this indefinitely, he who answers his questions will at last give up; will he not?

Hermogenes. Yes, I think so.

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[13] A proverbial expression.

Socrates. Now at what point will he be right in giving up and stopping? Will it not be when he reaches the names which are the elements of the other names and words? For these, if they are the elements, can no longer rightly appear to be composed of other names. For instance, we said just now that *ἀγαθόν* was composed of *ἀγαστόν* and *θοόν*; and perhaps we might say that *θοόν* was composed of other words, and those of still others; but if we ever get hold of a word which is no longer composed of other words, we should be right ill saying that we had at last reached an element, and that we must no longer refer to other words for its derivation.

Hermogenes. I think you are right.

Socrates. Are, then, these words about which you are now asking elements, and must we henceforth investigate their correctness by some other method?

Hermogenes. Probably.

Socrates. Yes, probably, Hermogenes; at any rate, all the previous words were traced back to these. But if this be true, as I think it is, come to my aid again and help me in the investigation, that I may not say anything foolish in declaring what principle must underlie the correctness of the earliest names.

Hermogenes. Go on, and I will help you to the best of my ability.

Socrates. I think you agree with me that there is but one principle of correctness in all names, the earliest as well as the latest, and that none of them is any more a name than the rest.

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Now the correctness of all the names we have discussed was based upon the intention of showing the nature of the things named.

Hermogenes. Yes, of course.

Socrates. And this principle of correctness must be present in all names, the earliest as well as the later ones, if they are really to be names.

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. But the later ones, apparently, were able to accomplish this by means of the earlier ones.

Hermogenes. Evidently.

Socrates. Well, then, how can the earliest names, which are not as yet based upon any others, make clear to us the nature of things, so far as that is possible, which they must do if they are to be names at all? Answer me this question: If we had no voice or tongue, and wished to make things clear to one another, should we not try, as dumb

people actually do, to make signs with our hands and head and person generally?

Hermogenes. Yes. What other method is there, Socrates?

Socrates. If we wished to designate that which is above and is light, we should, I fancy, raise our hand towards heaven in imitation of the nature of the thing in question; but if the things to be designated were below or heavy, we should extend our hands towards the ground; and if we wished to mention a galloping horse or any other animal, we should, of course, make our bodily attitudes as much like theirs as possible.

Hermogenes. I think you are quite right; there is no other way.

Socrates. For the expression of anything, I fancy, would be accomplished by bodily imitation of that which was to be expressed.

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. And when we wish to express anything by voice or tongue or mouth, will not our expression by these means be accomplished in any given instance when an imitation of something is accomplished by them?

Hermogenes. I think that is inevitable.

Socrates. A name, then, it appears, is a vocal imitation of that which is imitated, and he who imitates with his voice names that which he imitates.

Hermogenes. I think that is correct.

Socrates. By Zeus, I do not think it is quite correct, yet, my friend.

Hermogenes. Why not?

Socrates. We should be obliged to agree that people who imitate sheep and cocks and other animals were naming those which they imitate.

Hermogenes. Yes, so we should.

Socrates. And do you think that is correct?

Hermogenes. No, I do not; but, Socrates, what sort of an imitation is a name?

Socrates. In the first place we shall not, in my opinion, be making names, if we imitate things as we do in music, although musical imitation also is vocal; and secondly we shall make no names by imitating that which music imitates. What I mean is this: all objects have sound and shape, and many have color, have they not?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Well then, the art of naming is not employed in the imitation of those qualities, and has nothing to do with them. The

arts which are concerned with them are music and design, are they not?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. Here is another point. Has not each thing an essential nature, just as it has a color and the other qualities we just mentioned? Indeed, in the first place, have not color and sound and all other things which may properly be said to exist, each and all an essential nature?

Hermogenes. I think so.

Socrates. Well, then, if anyone could imitate this essential nature of each thing by means of letters and syllables, he would show what each thing really is, would he not?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. And what will you call him who can do this, as you called the others musician and painter? What will you call this man?

Hermogenes. I think, Socrates, he is what we have been looking for all along, the name-maker.

Socrates. If that is the case, is it our next duty to consider whether in these names about which you were asking—flow, motion, and restraint—the namemaker grasps with his letters and syllables the reality of the things named and imitates their essential nature, or not?

Hermogenes. Certainly.

Socrates. Well now, let us see whether those are the only primary names, or there are others.

Hermogenes. I think there are others.

Socrates. Yes, most likely there are. Now what is the method of division with which the imitator begins his imitation? Since the imitation of the essential nature is made with letters and syllables, would not the most correct way be for us to separate the letters first, just as those who undertake the practice of rhythms separate first the qualities of the letters, then those of the syllables, and then, but not till then, come to the study of rhythms?

Hermogenes. Yes.

Socrates. Must not we, too, separate first the vowels, then in their several classes the consonants or mutes, as they are called by those who specialize in phonetics, and also the letters which are neither vowels nor mutes, as well as the various classes that exist among the vowels themselves? And when we have made all these divisions properly, we must in turn give names to the things which ought to have them, if

there are any names to which they can all, like the letters, be referred, from which it is possible to see what their nature is and whether there are any classes among them, as there are among letters. When we have properly examined all these points, we must know how to apply each letter with reference to its fitness, whether one letter is to be applied to one thing or many are to be combined; just as painters, when they wish to produce an imitation, sometimes use only red, sometimes some other color, and sometimes mix many colors, as when they are making a picture of a man or something of that sort, employing each color, I suppose, as they think the particular picture demands it. In just this way we, too, shall apply letters to things, using one letter for one thing, when that seems to be required, or many letters together, forming syllables, as they are called, and in turn combining syllables, and by their combination forming nouns and verbs. And from nouns and verbs again we shall finally construct something great and fair and complete. Just as in our comparison we made the picture by the art of painting, so now we shall make language by the art of naming, or of rhetoric, or whatever it be.

Socrates. No, not we; I said that too hastily. For the ancients gave language its existing composite character; and we, if we are to examine all these matters with scientific ability, must take it to pieces as they put it together and see whether the words, both the earliest and the later, are given systematically or not; for if they are strung together at haphazard, it is a poor, unmethodical performance, my dear Hermogenes.

Hermogenes. By Zeus, Socrates, may be it is.

Socrates. Well, do you believe you could take them to pieces in that way? I do not believe I could.

Hermogenes. Then I am sure I could not.

Socrates. Shall we give up then? Or shall we do the best we can and try to see if we are able to understand even a little about them, and, just as we said to the gods a while ago that we knew nothing about the truth but were guessing at human opinion about them, so now, before we proceed, shall we say to ourselves that if anyone, whether we or someone else, is to make any analysis of names, he will have to analyze them in the way we have described, and we shall have to study them, as the saying is, with all our might? Do you agree, or not?

Hermogenes. Yes, I agree most heartily.

Socrates. It will, I imagine, seem ridiculous that things are made manifest through imitation in letters and syllables; nevertheless it cannot be otherwise. For there is no better theory upon which we can base

the truth of the earliest names, unless you think we had better follow the example of the tragic poets, who, when they are in a dilemma, have recourse to the introduction of gods on machines. So we may get out of trouble by saying that the gods gave the earliest names, and therefore they are right. Is that the best theory for us? Or perhaps this one, that we got the earliest names from some foreign folk and the foreigners are more ancient than we are? Or that it is impossible to investigate them because of their antiquity, as is also the case with the foreign words?

Socrates. All these are merely very clever evasions on the part of those who refuse to offer any rational theory of the correctness of the earliest names. And yet if anyone is, no matter why, ignorant of the correctness of the earliest names, he cannot know about that of the later, since they can be explained only by means of the earliest, about which he is ignorant. No, it is clear that anyone who claims to have scientific knowledge of names must be able first of all to explain the earliest names perfectly, or he can be sure that what he says about the later will be nonsense. Or do you disagree?

Hermogenes. No, Socrates, not in the least.

Socrates. Now I think my notions about the earliest names are quite outrageous and ridiculous. I will impart them to you, if you like; if you can find anything better, please try to impart it to me.

Hermogenes. I will do so. Go on, and do not be afraid.

Socrates. First, then, the letter rho seems to me to be an instrument expressing all motion. We have not as yet said why motion has the name *κίνησις*; but it evidently should be *ἴεσις*, for in old times we did not employ eta, but epsilon. And the beginning of *κίνησις* is from *κίειν*, a foreign word equivalent to *ἰέναι* (go). So we should find that the ancient word corresponding to our modern form would be *ἴεσις*; but now by the employment of the foreign word *κίειν*, change of epsilon to eta, and the insertion of nu it has become *κίνησις*, though it ought to be *κιείνεσις* or *εἶσις*. And *στάσις* (rest) signifies the negation of motion, but is called *στάσις* for euphony. Well, the letter rho, as I was saying, appeared to be a fine instrument expressive of motion to the name-giver who wished to imitate rapidity, and he often applies it to motion. In the first place, in the words *ῥεῖν* (flow) and *ῥοή* (current) he imitates their rapidity by this letter, then in *τρόμος* (trembling) and in *τρέχειν* (run), and also in such words as *κρούειν* (strike), *θραύειν* (break), *ἐρείκειν* (rend), *θρύπτειν* (crush),*κερματίζειν* (crumble), *ῥυμβεῖν* (whirl), he expresses the action of them all chiefly by means of the letter rho; for he observed, I suppose, that the tongue

is least at rest and most agitated in pronouncing this letter, and that is probably the reason why he employed it for these words. Iota again, he employs for everything subtle, which can most readily pass through all things.

Socrates. Therefore he imitates the nature of *ἰέναι* (go) and *ἵεσθαι* (hasten) by means of iota, just as he has imitated all such notions as *ψυχρόν* (cold, shivering), *ζέον* (seething), *σείεσθαι* (shake), and *σεισμός* (shock) by means of phi, psi, sigma, and zeta, because those letters are pronounced with much breath. Whenever he imitates that which resembles blowing, the giver of names always appears to use for the most part such letters. And again he appears to have thought that the compression and pressure of the tongue in the pronunciation of delta and tau was naturally fitted to imitate the notion of binding and rest. And perceiving that the tongue has a gliding movement most in the pronunciation of lambda, he made the words *λεῖα* (level), *ὀλισθάναιν* (glide) itself, *λιπαρόν* (sleek), *κολλῶδες* (glutinous), and the like to conform to it. Where the gliding of the tongue is stopped by the sound of gamma he reproduced the nature of *γλισχρόν* (glutinous), *γλυκύ* (sweet), and *γλοιῶδες* (gluey). And again, perceiving that nu is an internal sound, he made the words *ἔνδον* (inside) and *ἐντός* (within), assimilating the meanings to the letters, and alpha again he assigned to greatness, and eta to length, because the letters are large. He needed the sign *O* for the expression of *γόγγυλον* (round), and made it the chief element of the word. And in this way the lawgiver appears to apply the other letters, making by letters and syllables a name for each and every thing, and from these names he compounds all the rest by imitation. This, Hermogenes, appears to me to be the theory of the correctness of names, unless, indeed, Cratylus has some other view.

Hermogenes. Truly, Socrates, as I said in the beginning, Cratylus often troubles me a good deal; he declares that there is such a thing as correctness of names, but does not say clearly what it is; and so I cannot tell whether he speaks so obscurely about it on any given occasion intentionally or unintentionally. So now, Cratylus, tell me, in the presence of Socrates, do you like what Socrates says about names, or have you a better theory to propose? And if you have, tell us about it; then you will either learn from Socrates or instruct both him and me.

Cratylus. But, Hermogenes, do you think it is an easy matter to learn or teach any subject so quickly, especially so important an one as this, which appears to me to be one of the most important?

Hermogenes. No, by Zeus, I do not. But I think Hesiod is right in saying:"If you can only add little to little, it is worth while."*Hes. WD 359* So now if you can make even a little progress, do not shirk the trouble, but oblige Socrates—you owe it to him—and me.

Socrates. For that matter, Cratylus, I would not positively affirm any of the things I have said. I merely expressed the opinions which I reached with the help of Hermogenes. So far as I am concerned, you need not hesitate, and if your view is better than mine, I will accept it. And I should not be at all surprised if it were better; for I think you have not only investigated such matters yourself but have been taught about them by others. So if you have any better theory to propound, put me down as one of your pupils in the course on the correctness of names.

Cratylus. Yes, Socrates, I have, as you say, paid attention to these matters, and perhaps I might make you my pupil. However, I am afraid the opposite is the case, and I am impelled to say to you what Achilles says in the "Prayers" to Ajax. He says:"Ajax, descendant of Zeus, son of Telamon, chief of thy people,All thou hast uttered is good in my sight and pleases my spirit."*Hom. Il. 9.644 f* And so, Socrates, your oracular utterances seem to me to be much to my mind, whether you are inspired by Euthyphro or some other Muse has dwelt within you all along without our knowing it.

Socrates. My excellent Cratylus, I myself have been marvelling at my own wisdom all along, and I cannot believe in it. So I think we ought to reexamine my utterances. For the worst of all deceptions is self-deception. How can it help being terrible, when the deceiver is always present and never stirs from the spot? So I think we must turn back repeatedly to what we have said and must try, as the poet says, to look "both forwards and backwards."*Hom. Il. 1.343; 3.109* Then let us now see what we have said. Correctness of a name, we say, is the quality of showing the nature of the thing named. Shall we call that a satisfactory statement?

Cratylus. I am perfectly satisfied with it, Socrates.

Socrates. Names, then, are given with a view to instruction?

Cratylus. Certainly.

Socrates. Shall we, then; say that this instruction is an art and has its artisans?

Cratylus. Certainly.

Socrates. Who are they?

Cratylus. The lawgivers, as you said in the beginning.

Socrates. Shall we declare that this art arises in men like the other arts, or not? What I mean is this: Some painters are better, and others worse, are they not?

Cratylus. Certainly.

Socrates. And the better produce better works—that is, their paintings—and the others worse works? And likewise some builders build better houses and others worse?

Cratylus. Yes.

Socrates. Then do some lawgivers produce better, and others worse works?

Cratylus. No; at that point I cease to agree.

Socrates. Then you do not think that some laws are better, and some worse?

Cratylus. No, I do not.

Socrates. And you do not, it appears, think that one name is better, and another worse?

Cratylus. No, I do not.

Socrates. Then all names are correct?

Cratylus. All that are really names.

Socrates. How about the name of our friend Hermogenes, which was mentioned a while ago? Shall we say that it is not his name at all, unless he belongs to the race of Hermes, or that it is his name, but is incorrect?

Cratylus. I think, Socrates, that it is not his name at all; it appears to be his, but is really the name of some one else who possesses the nature that makes the name clear.

Socrates. And when anyone says that our friend is Hermogenes, is he not even speaking falsely? For perhaps it is not even possible to say that he is Hermogenes, if he is not.

Cratylus. What do you mean?

Socrates. Do you mean to say that it is impossible to speak falsehood at all? For there are, my dear Cratylus, many who do so, and who have done so in the past.

Cratylus. Why, Socrates, how could anyone who says that which he says, say that which is not? Is not falsehood saying that which is not?

Socrates. Your reasoning is too clever for me at my age, my friend. However, tell me this: Do you think it is possible to speak falsehood,

but not to say it?

Cratylus. Neither to speak nor to say it.

Socrates. Nor utter it or use it as a form of address? For instance, if some one should meet you in hospitable fashion, should grasp your hand and say,

"Well met, my friend from Athens, son of Smicrion, Hermogenes," would he be saying or speaking or uttering or addressing these words not to you, but to Hermogenes—or to nobody?

Cratylus. I think, Socrates, the man would be producing sounds without sense.

Socrates. Even that reply is welcome; for I can ask whether the words he produced would be true, or false, or partly true and partly false. Even that would suffice.

Cratylus. I should say that the man in such a case was merely making a noise, going through purposeless motions, as if he were beating a bronze pot.

Socrates. Let us see, Cratylus, if we cannot come to terms somehow. You would agree, would you not, that the name is one thing and the thing of which it is the name is another?

Cratylus. Yes, I should.

Socrates. And you agree that the name is an imitation of the thing named?

Cratylus. Most assuredly.

Socrates. And you agree that paintings also are imitations, though in a different way, of things?

Cratylus. Yes.

Socrates. Well then—for perhaps I do not understand, and you may be right—can both of these imitations, the paintings and the names, be assigned and applied to the things which they imitate, or not?

Cratylus. They can.

Socrates. First, then, consider this question: Can we assign the likeness of the man to the man and that of the woman to the woman, and so forth?

Cratylus. Certainly.

Socrates. And can we conversely attribute that of the man to the woman, and the woman's to the man?

Cratylus. That is also possible.

Socrates. And are these assignments both correct, or only the former?

Cratylus. The former.

Socrates. The assignment, in short, which attributes to each that

which belongs to it and is like it.

Cratylus. That is my view.

Socrates. To put an end to contentious argument between you and me, since we are friends, let me state my position. I call that kind of assignment in the case of both imitations paintings and names—correct, and in the case of names not only correct, but true; and the other kind, which gives and applies the unlike imitation, I call incorrect and, in the case of names, false.

Cratylus. But it may be, Socrates, that this incorrect assignment is possible in the case of paintings, and not in the case of names, which must be always correctly assigned.

Socrates. What do you mean? What difference is there between the two? Can I not step up to a man and say to him,

"This is your portrait," and show him perhaps his own likeness or, perhaps, that of a woman? And by "show" I mean bring before the sense of sight.

Cratylus. Certainly.

Socrates. Well, then, can I not step up to the same man again and say, "This is your name"? A name is an imitation, just as a picture is. Very well; can I not say to him,

"This is your name," and then bring before his sense of hearing perhaps the imitation of himself, saying that it is a man, or perhaps the imitation of the female of the human species, saying that it is a woman? Do you not believe that this is possible and sometimes happens?

Cratylus. I am willing to concede it, Socrates, and grant that you are right.

Socrates. That is a good thing for you to do, my friend, if I am right; for now we need no longer argue about the matter. If, then, some such assignment of names takes place, we will call one kind speaking truth, and the other speaking falsehood. But if this is accepted, and if it is possible to assign names incorrectly and to give to objects not the names that befit them, but sometimes those that are unfitting, it would be possible to treat verbs in the same way. And if verbs and nouns can be assigned in this way, the same must be true of sentences; for sentences are, I conceive, a combination of verbs and nouns. What do you say to that, Cratylus?

Cratylus. I agree; I think you are right.

Socrates. If, then, we compare the earliest words to sketches, it is possible in them, as in pictures, to reproduce all the colors and shapes, or not all; some may be wanting, and some may be added, and they

may be too many or too large. Is not that true?

Cratylus. Yes, it is.

Socrates. Then he who reproduces all, produces good sketches and pictures, and he who adds or takes away produces also sketches and pictures, but bad ones?

Cratylus. Yes.

Socrates. And how about him who imitates the nature of things by means of letters and syllables? By the same principle, if he gives all that is appropriate, the image—that is to say, the name—will be good, and if he sometimes omits a little, it will be an image, but not a good one; and therefore some names are well and others badly made. Is that not true?

Cratylus. Perhaps.

Socrates. Perhaps, then, one artisan of names will be good, and another bad?

Cratylus. Yes.

Socrates. The name of such an artisan was lawgiver?

Cratylus. Yes.

Socrates. Perhaps, then, by Zeus, as is the case in the other arts, one lawgiver may be good and another bad, if we accept our previous conclusions.

Cratylus. That is true. But you see, Socrates, when by the science of grammar we assign these letters—alpha, beta, and the rest—to names, if we take away or add or transpose any letter, it is not true that the name is written, but written incorrectly; it is not written at all, but immediately becomes a different word, if any such thing happens to it.

Socrates. Perhaps we are not considering the matter in the right way.

Cratylus. Why not?

Socrates. It may be that what you say would be true of those things which must necessarily consist of a certain number or cease to exist at all, as ten, for instance, or any number you like, if you add or subtract anything is immediately another number; but this is not the kind of correctness which applies to quality or to images in general; on the contrary, the image must not by any means reproduce all the qualities of that which it imitates, if it is to be an image. See if I am not right. Would there be two things, Cratylus and the image of Cratylus, if some god should not merely imitate your color and form, as painters do, but should also make all the inner parts like yours, should reproduce the same flexibility and warmth, should put into them motion, life, and intellect, such as exist in you, and in short, should place beside you

a duplicate of all your qualities? Would there be in such an event Cratylus and an image of Cratylus, or two Cratyluses?

Cratylus. I should say, Socrates, two Cratyluses.

Socrates. Then don't you see, my friend, that we must look for some other principle of correctness in images and in names, of which we were speaking, and must not insist that they are no longer images if anything be wanting or be added? Do you not perceive how far images are from possessing the same qualities as the originals which they imitate?

Cratylus. Yes, I do.

Socrates. Surely, Cratylus, the effect produced by the names upon the things of which they are the names would be ridiculous, if they were to be entirely like them in every respect. For everything would be duplicated, and no one could tell in any case which was the real thing and which the name.

Cratylus. Quite true.

Socrates. Then do not be faint-hearted, but have the courage to admit that one name may be correctly and another incorrectly given; do not insist that it must have all the letters and be exactly the same as the thing named, but grant that an inappropriate letter may be employed. But if a letter, then grant that also a noun in a clause, and if a noun, then also a clause in a sentence may be employed which is not appropriate to the things in question, and the thing may none the less be named and described, so long as the intrinsic quality of the thing named is retained, as is the case in the names of the letters of the alphabet, if you remember what Hermogenes and I were saying a while ago.

Cratylus. Yes, I remember.

Socrates. Very well, then. So long as this intrinsic quality is present, even though the name have not all the proper letters, the thing will still be named; well, when it has all the proper letters; badly, when it has only a few of them. Let us, then, grant this, my friend, or we shall get into trouble, like the belated night wanderers in the road at Aegina,[14] and in very truth we shall be found to have arrived too late; otherwise you must look for some other principle of correctness in names, and must not admit that a name is the representation of a thing in syllables and letters. For if you maintain both positions, you cannot help contradicting yourself.

Cratylus. Well, Socrates, I think what you say is reasonable, and I

[14]This seems to refer to some story unknown to us.

accept it.

Socrates. Then since we are agreed about this, let us consider the next point. If a name, we say, is to be a good one, it must have the proper letters?

Cratylus. Yes.

Socrates. And the proper letters are those which are like the things named?

Cratylus. Yes, certainly.

Socrates. That is, then, the method by which wellgiven names are given. But if any name is not well given, the greater part of it may perhaps, if it is to be an image at all, be made up of proper and like letters, but it may contain some inappropriate element, and is on that account not good or well made. Is that our view?

Cratylus. I suppose, Socrates, there is no use in keeping up my contention; but I am not satisfied that it can be a name and not be well given.

Socrates. Are you not satisfied that the name is the representation of a thing?

Cratylus. Yes.

Socrates. And do you not think it is true that some names are composed of earlier ones and others are primary?

Cratylus. Yes.

Socrates. But if the primary names are to be representations of any things, can you suggest any better way of making them representations than by making them as much as possible like the things which they are to represent? Or do you prefer the theory advanced by Hermogenes and many others, who claim that names are conventional and represent things to those who established the convention and knew the things beforehand, and that convention is the sole principle of correctness in names, and it makes no difference whether we accept the existing convention or adopt an opposite one according to which small would be called great and great small? Which of these two theories do you prefer?

Cratylus. Representing by likeness the thing represented is absolutely and entirely superior to representation by chance signs.

Socrates. You are right. Then if the name is like the thing, the letters of which the primary names are to be formed must be by their very nature like the things, must they not? Let me explain. Could a painting, to revert to our previous comparison, ever be made like

any real thing, if there were no pigments out of which the painting is composed, which were by their nature like the objects which the painter's art imitates? Is not that impossible?

Cratylus. Yes, it is impossible.

Socrates. In the same way, names can never be like anything unless those elements of which the names are composed exist in the first place and possess some kind of likeness to the things which the names imitate; and the elements of which they are composed are the letters, are they not?

Cratylus. Yes.

Socrates. Then I must now ask you to consider with me the subject which Hermogenes and I discussed a while ago. Do you think I am right in saying that rho is expressive of speed, motion, and hardness, or not?

Cratylus. You are right.

Socrates. And lambda is like smoothness, softness, and the other qualities we mentioned?

Cratylus. Yes.

Socrates. You know, of course, that we call the same thing *σκληρότης* (hardness) which the Eretrians call *σκληρότηρ*?

Cratylus. Certainly.

Socrates. Have rho and sigma both a likeness to the same thing, and does the final rho mean to them just what the sigma means to us, or is there to one of us no meaning?

Cratylus. They mean the same to both.

Socrates. In so far as rho and sigma are alike, or in so far as they are not?

Cratylus. In so far as they are alike.

Socrates. And are they alike in all respects?

Cratylus. Yes; at least for the purpose of expressing motion equally.

Socrates. But how about the lambda in *σκληρότης*? Does it not express the opposite of hardness?

Cratylus. Well, perhaps it has no right to be there, Socrates; it may be like the cases that came up in your talk with Hermogenes, when you removed or inserted letters where that was necessary. I think you did right; and in this case perhaps we ought to put a rho in place of the lambda.

Socrates. Excellent. However, do we not understand one another when anyone says *σκληρόν*, using the present pronunciation, and do you not now know what I mean?

Cratylus. Yes, but that is by custom, my friend.

Socrates. In saying "custom" do you think you are saying anything

different from convention? Do you not mean by "convention" that when I speak I have a definite meaning and you recognize that I have that meaning? Is not that what you mean?

Cratylus. Yes.

Socrates. Then if you recognize my meaning when I speak, that is an indication given to you by me.

Cratylus. Yes.

Socrates. The indication comes from something which is unlike my meaning when I speak, if in your example *σκληρότης* the lambda is unlike hardness; and if this is true, did you not make a convention with yourself, since both like and unlike letters, by the influence of custom and convention, produce indication? And even if custom is entirely distinct from convention, we should henceforth be obliged to say that custom, not likeness, is the principle of indication, since custom, it appears, indicates both by the like and by the unlike. And since we grant this, Cratylus—for I take it that your silence gives consent—both convention and custom must contribute something towards the indication of our meaning when we speak. For, my friend, if you will just turn your attention to numbers, where do you think you can possibly get names to apply to each individual number on the principle of likeness, unless you allow agreement and convention on your part to control the correctness of names? I myself prefer the theory that names are, so far as is possible, like the things named; but really this attractive force of likeness is, as Hermogenes says, a poor thing, and we are compelled to employ in addition this commonplace expedient, convention, to establish the correctness of names. Probably language would be, within the bounds of possibility, most excellent when all its terms, or as many as possible, were based on likeness, that is to say, were appropriate, and most deficient under opposite conditions. But now answer the next question. What is the function of names, and what good do they accomplish?

Cratylus. I think, Socrates, their function is to instruct, and this is the simple truth, that he who knows the names knows also the things named.

Socrates. I suppose, Cratylus, you mean that when anyone knows the nature of the name—and its nature is that of the thing—he will know the thing also, since it is like the name, and the science of all things which are like each other is one and the same. It is, I fancy, on this ground that you say whoever knows names will know things also.

Cratylus. You are perfectly right.

Socrates. Now let us see what this manner of giving instruction is, to which you refer, and whether there is another method, but inferior to this, or there is no other at all. What do you think?

Cratylus. I think there is no other at all; this is both the best and the only method.

Socrates. Do you think this is also the method of discovering realities, and that he who has discovered the names has discovered also the things named; or do you think inquiry and discovery demand another method, and this belongs to instruction?

Cratylus. I most certainly think inquiry and discovery follow this same method and in the same way.

Socrates. Let us consider the matter, Cratylus. Do you not see that he who in his inquiry after things follows names and examines into the meaning of each one runs great risks of being deceived?

Cratylus. How so?

Socrates. Clearly he who first gave names, gave such names as agreed with his conception of the nature of things. That is our view, is it not?

Cratylus. Yes.

Socrates. Then if his conception was incorrect, and he gave the names according to his conception, what do you suppose will happen to us who follow him? Can we help being deceived?

Cratylus. But, Socrates, surely that is not the case. He who gave the names must necessarily have known; otherwise, as I have been saying all along, they would not be names at all. And there is a decisive proof that the name-giver did not miss the truth, one which you must accept; for otherwise his names would not be so universally consistent. Have you not yourself noticed in speaking that all names were formed by the same method and with the same end in view?

Socrates. But that, Cratylus, is no counter argument. For if the giver of names erred in the beginning and thenceforth forced all other names into agreement with his own initial error, there is nothing strange about that. It is just so sometimes in geometrical diagrams; the initial error is small and unnoticed, but all the numerous deductions are wrong, though consistent. Every one must therefore give great care and great attention to the beginning of any undertaking, to see whether his foundation is right or not. If that has been considered with proper care, everything else will follow. However, I should be

surprised if names are really consistent. Let us review our previous discussion. Names, we said, indicate nature to us, assuming that all things are in motion and flux. Do you not think they do so?

Cratylus. Yes, and they indicate it correctly.

Socrates. Let us first take up again the word *ἐπιστήμη* (knowledge) and see how ambiguous it is, seeming to indicate that it makes our soul stand still (*ἵστησιν*) at things, rather than that it is carried round with them, so it is better to speak the beginning of it as we now do than to insert the epsilon and say *ἐπεἰστήμ*; we should insert an iota rather than an epsilon. Then take *βέβαιον* (firm), which expresses position and rest, not motion. And *ἱστορία* (inquiry) means much the same, that it stops (*ἵστησιν*) the flow. And *πιστόν* (faithful) most certainly means that which stops (*ἱστόν*) motion. Then again, anyone can see that *μνήμη* (memory) expresses rest (*μονή*) in the soul, not motion. On the other hand, *ἁμαρτία* (error) and *ξυμφορά* (misfortune), if you consider merely the form of the names, will appear to be the same as *σύνεσις* (intellect) and *ἐπιστήμη* and all the other names of good significance. Moreover, *ἀμαθία* (ignorance) and *ἀκολασία* (unrestraint) also appear to be like them; for the former, *ἀμαθία*, seems to be *τοῦ ἅμα θεῷ ἰόντος πορεία* (the progress of one who goes with God), and *ἀκολασία* seems to be exactly *ἀκολουθία τοῖς πράγμασιν* (movement in company with things). And so names which we believe have the very worst meanings appear to be very like those which have the best. And I think we could, if we took pains, find many other words which would lead us to reverse our judgement and believe that the giver of names meant that things were not in progress or in motion, but were at rest.

Cratylus. But, Socrates, you see that most of the names indicate motion.

Socrates. What of that, Cratylus? Are we to count names like votes, and shall correctness rest with the majority? Are those to be the true names which are found to have that one of the two meanings which is expressed by the greater number?

Cratylus. That is not reasonable.

Socrates. No, not in the least, my friend. Now let us drop this and return to the point at which we digressed. A little while ago, you may remember, you said he who gave names must have known the things to which he gave them. Do you still hold that opinion, or not?

Cratylus. I do.

Socrates. And you say that he who gave the first names also knew

the things which he named?

Cratylus. Yes, he knew them.

Socrates. But from what names had he learned or discovered the things, if the first names had not yet been given, and if we declare that it is impossible to learn or discover things except by learning or ourselves discovering the names?

Cratylus. I think there is something in what you say, Socrates.

Socrates. How can we assert that they gave names or were lawgivers with knowledge, before any name whatsoever had been given, and before they knew any names, if things cannot be learned except through their names?

Cratylus. I think the truest theory of the matter, Socrates, is that the power which gave the first names to things is more than human, and therefore the names must necessarily be correct.

Socrates. Then, in your opinion, he who gave the names, though he was a spirit or a god, would have given names which made him contradict himself? Or do you think there is no sense in what we were saying just now?

Cratylus. But, Socrates, those that make up one of the two classes are not really names.

Socrates. Which of the two, my excellent friend; the class of those which point towards rest or of those that point towards motion? We agreed just now that the matter is not to be determined by mere numbers.

Cratylus. No; that would not be right, Socrates.

Socrates. Then since the names are in conflict, and some of them claim that they are like the truth, and others that they are, how can we decide, and upon what shall we base our decision? Certainly not upon other names differing from these, for there are none. No, it is plain that we must look for something else, not names, which shall show us which of these two kinds are the true names, which of them, that is to say, show the truth of things.

Cratylus. That is my opinion.

Socrates. Then if that is true, Cratylus, it seems that things may be learned without names.

Cratylus. So it appears.

Socrates. What other way is left by which you could expect to know them? What other than the natural and the straightest way, through each other, if they are akin, and through themselves? For that which is other and different from them would signify not them, but something other and different.

Cratylus. I think that is true.

Socrates. Stop for Heaven's sake! Did we not more than once agree that names which are rightly given are like the things named and are images of them?

Cratylus. Yes.

Socrates. Then if it be really true that things can be learned either through names or through themselves which would be the better and surer way of learning? To learn from the image whether it is itself a good imitation and also to learn the truth which it imitates, or to learn from the truth both the truth itself and whether the image is properly made?

Cratylus. I think it is certainly better to learn from the truth.

Socrates. How realities are to be learned or discovered is perhaps too great a question for you or me to determine; but it is worth while to have reached even this conclusion, that they are to be learned and sought for, not from names but much better through themselves than through names.

Cratylus. That is clear, Socrates.

Socrates. Then let us examine one further point to avoid being deceived by the fact that most of these names tend in the same direction. Suppose it should prove that although those who gave the names gave them in the belief that all things are in motion and flux—I myself think they did have that belief— still in reality that is not the case, and the namegivers themselves, having fallen into a kind of vortex, are whirled about, dragging us along with them. Consider, my worthy Cratylus, a question about which I often dream. Shall we assert that there is any absolute beauty, or good, or any other absolute existence, or not?

Cratylus. I think there is, Socrates.

Socrates. Then let us consider the absolute, not whether a particular face, or something of that sort, is beautiful, or whether all these things are in flux. Is not, in our opinion, absolute beauty always such as it is?

Cratylus. That is inevitable.

Socrates. Can we, then, if it is always passing away, correctly say that it is this, then that it is that, or must it inevitably, in the very instant while we are speaking, become something else and pass away and no longer be what it is?

Cratylus. That is inevitable.

Socrates. How, then, can that which is never in the same state

be anything? For if it is ever in the same state, then obviously at that time it is not changing; and if it is always in the same state and is always the same, how can it ever change or move without relinquishing its own form?

Cratylus. It cannot do so at all.

Socrates. No, nor can it be known by anyone. For at the moment when he who seeks to know it approaches, it becomes something else and different, so that its nature and state can no longer be known; and surely there is no knowledge which knows that which is in no state.

Cratylus. It is as you say.

Socrates. But we cannot even say that there is any knowledge, if all things are changing and nothing remains fixed; for if knowledge itself does not change and cease to be knowledge, then knowledge would remain, and there would be knowledge; but if the very essence of knowledge changes, at the moment of the change to another essence of knowledge there would be no knowledge, and if it is always changing, there will always be no knowledge, and by this reasoning there will be neither anyone to know nor anything to be known. But if there is always that which knows and that which is known—if the beautiful, the good, and all the other verities exist—I do not see how there is any likeness between these conditions of which I am now speaking and flux or motion. Now whether this is the nature of things, or the doctrine of Heracleitus and many others is true, is another question; but surely no man of sense can put himself and his soul under the control of names, and trust in names and their makers to the point of affirming that he knows anything; nor will he condemn himself and all things and say that there is no health in them, but that all things are flowing like leaky pots, or believe that all things are just like people afflicted with catarrh, flowing and running all the time. Perhaps, Cratylus, this theory is true, but perhaps it is not. Therefore you must consider courageously and thoroughly and not accept anything carelessly—for you are still young and in your prime; then, if after investigation you find the truth, impart it to me.

Cratylus. I will do so. However, I assure you, Socrates, that I have already considered the matter, and after toilsome consideration I think the doctrine of Heracleitus is much more likely to be true.

Socrates. Some other time, then, my friend, you will teach me, when you come back; but now go into the country as you have made ready to do; and Hermogenes here will go with you a bit.

Cratylus. Very well, Socrates, and I hope you also will continue to think of these matters.

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