

## ***Parmenides in Plato's Theaetetus and Sophist***

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Parmenides stands in the background in the *Theaetetus* and dominates the *Sophist*, and his role in the two dialogues is intimately connected. The paper argues that Plato embraces Parmenides but thinks he stopped short: His views must be reconciled with those of his opponent, Heraclitus. The paper divides into two main sections: the first focuses on the Parmenidean thread in the background of *Theaetetus* Part I (esp. 152e2, 180d-181b, 183c-184a, and the Digression, 172c-177c); and the second on the puzzles about not-being and being, culminating in the Battle of the Gods and the Giants in the *Sophist*. I will argue that Socrates' explication of *Theaetetus*' proposal that knowledge is perception in terms of Protagoras' Measure Doctrine and Heraclitean flux is only one way to support the proposal. An alternative is suggested at 183c2-3, and its nature is indicated by *Theaetetus*' request that Socrates treat the other side, the advocates of stability, as he promised to do. Socrates refuses, but the reader is invited to consider the possibility that Parmenides could support the objectivity of perception, as Heraclitus supported its relativism. The second section of the paper examines Plato's explicit critique of Parmenides in the *Sophist* (244b-245e), argues that it is inadequate, and then focuses on the serious critique in the Battle of the Gods and the Giants (245e-249d) (I argue that the Friends of the Forms are Eleatics). The end of the passage is crucial (249c-d): Contrary to the *Theaetetus*, which suggested that we must take sides with either Heraclitus or Parmenides (181a-b), here Plato presents a children's plea: we must have motion and rest, both together (249d3-4). This plea is not answered in the *Sophist*, which immediately claims that motion and rest are opposites that exclude each other (250a), but we are invited to ask: is Plato's Philosopher to be found somewhere in the vicinity of that answered plea?