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TWO KINDS OF BELIEF IN PLATO

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the *Sophist* (263e10–264b4), Plato distinguishes between two kinds of belief. On the one hand, there is a kind of belief, which occurs “according to thinking” (κατὰ διάνοιαν), being “the completion of thinking” (διανοίας ἀποτελεύτησις). This kind is called ‘*doxa*.’ On the other hand, there is another kind of belief, which occurs “through sense perception” (δι’ αἰσθήσεως). This kind is called ‘*phantasia*,’ perhaps best rendered as appearing.¹ The purpose of this paper is to lay bare the distinction between these two different kinds of belief.²

What distinguishes these two kinds of belief is the understanding the person possessing the respective kind of belief has of the thing the belief is about, as a consequence of the way in which each kind of belief is formed. A person having a *doxa* about something grasps the nature of the thing. It is formed through a particular kind of thinking, which sorts out how that thing is related to other things in terms of its genus and species. Forming a *doxa* requires an effort of thought, and takes time. A person having a *phantasia* about something grasps the mere appearance of the thing. It is formed by means of sense perception, on the basis of how the thing strikes the person without considering its real nature.

The *Sophist* not only accounts for the distinction between these two different kinds of belief, it also stages the distinction in its very movement. The *Sophist* is structured around the Eleatic stranger’s attempt to unfold the disguise of the sophist. The sophist has the appearance of being a wise man, and many are deceived to believe him to be so. But the Eleatic stranger pins down the sophist as an imitator of the wise man (μιμητῆς τοῦ σοφοῦ) (268c1). The sophist’s art is defined as “the contradiction-making art of the insincere and ignorant part of belief-forming art belonging to the appearance-making kind, derived from the image-making art, of the not divine but human art of production, which is distinguished in words as the wonder-making portion” (268c8–d2). The entire dialogue is devoted to laying down the prerequisites for this final definition of the sophist’s art.³ The dialogue thus displays a movement from the unconsidered belief, based on the appearance of the sophist, that he is a wise man, to the reasoned belief, based on considerations of his real being, that he is not.

As far as the characterization of *phantasia* as a belief “through sense perception” is concerned, I will argue that it picks out sense perception as a power which can provide for the

content of beliefs independently of thinking. Hence, the two characterizations “according to thinking” and “through sense perception” are exclusive in the sense that they distinguish between two kinds of belief, which come about *either* by means of thought *or* through sense perception. Hence, I will take issue with the view that *phantasia* is a species of belief on the assumption that all beliefs, including *phantasia*, require thinking.⁴

The qualification “through sense perception” is commonly held to distinguish a particular kind of beliefs, namely perceptual ones, which derive their content from sense perception. More precisely, the idea is that a *phantasia* is a belief, the predicate of which picks out a perceptible property. On this view, all beliefs are dependent on thinking, but some beliefs, like “Socrates is pale” or “Socrates is walking,” count as *phantasiai*, whereas “Socrates is wise” or “Wisdom is a virtue” count as non-perceptual beliefs.

The historical root of this reading is Aristotle’s influential discussion of Plato’s notion of *phantasia*. At *De anima* 3.3, 428^a24–^b2, Aristotle specifies the content of Platonic *phantasia* as that which is perceived non-incidentally (μὴ κατὰ συμβεβηκός), that is sensible qualities such as white and warm. Aristotle’s understanding of Plato’s notion of *phantasia* is likely to be based on *Theaetetus* 152c1–2, and to some extent on 184d7–185a3. Taken together they may be taken to suggest that *phantasia* is a belief, the content of which is confined to sensible qualities. But using Socrates’s saying at 152c1–2 that “Appearing and sense perception, then, are the same in respect of hot things, and all things of that sort”⁵ as direct evidence for Plato’s view on *phantasia* and sense perception disregards the dialectical nature of this passage. Socrates is involved in providing a theoretical underpinning for Protagoras’s “man the measure” doctrine. It would take an argument, to say the least, to establish that Socrates (and Plato) is committed to the conflation of sense perception and *phantasia*, and to the Heraclitean theory of sense perception.⁶

Moreover, if the account at *Theaetetus* 184d7–185a3 entails that the content of *phantasia* is confined to secondary qualities like warmth and colors, then even a belief like “Socrates is walking” is excluded. But there is nothing in the *Sophist* to suggest such a notion of *phantasia*. *Theaetetus* 184d7–185a3, for that matter, does not establish that sense perception is confined to qualities proper to only one sense organ. These qualities are brought into the discussion in order to contrast them with properties common to objects of different sense modalities, but which are not perceived through the sense organs at all.

So although I agree that a *phantasia* is formed through sense perception, and that it derives its content from it, I do not think that *phantasia* is confined to beliefs, the predicates of which pick out sensible qualities such as white and warm, or even perceptible features such as walking. For Plato conceives of sense perception as a rich cognitive power, which can provide for the content even of a belief like “The sophist is wise.”⁷

The claim that only one kind of belief requires thinking may sound implausible. For it is reasonable enough to assume that any belief formation requires possession of concepts, and capacity for propositional thought. But the suggested distinction between beliefs formed on the basis of thinking, and beliefs from sense-perception, turns on a particular notion of thinking. For as I shall argue from two passages in the *Theaetetus* (184b3–187a8, 189e6–190a7), the kind of thinking Plato has in mind is concerned with considering the being, or nature, of things, as exemplified by how the sophist is pinned down as an impostor. Importantly, the thinking involved is not a matter of computing propositional thought in general. Nor is it a matter of assessing the empirical support for the belief. Instead, the thinking involved in forming a *doxa* about the sophist’s alleged wisdom is concerned with coming to grips with what it is to be a sophist, and what wisdom really amounts to.⁸

My argument for this understanding of the distinction between *phantasia* and *doxa* is based on the rationale of the distinction for the overall drift of the *Sophist* (section 4), and on the particular notion of thinking in the *Theaetetus* (184b3–187a8, 189e6–190a4) (section 5). In addition, the distinction is motivated by Plato’s concern over a certain view of belief formation, which he attributes to Protagoras in the *Theaetetus* (section 3). As far as the direct textual evidence of the distinction at *Sophist* 263e10–264b4 is concerned, the claim is merely that my interpretation of the distinction is as plausible as the commonly accepted (section 2).

A distinction, or rather distinctions, between carefully thought out beliefs and beliefs, which we end up with, just going on the appearance of things, can be traced back at least to the *Republic*. However, the investigation in the *Sophist*, prepared by that in its precedent, the *Theaetetus*, articulates a distinction between two different kinds of belief, which is both more detailed and more carefully considered than the distinctions in earlier dialogues. I briefly summarize these distinctions in the concluding section 6.

2. PHANTASIA AND DOXA AT SOPHIST 263e10–264b4

The direct evidence of the distinction between *phantasia* and *doxa* at *Sophist* 263e10–264b4 is extremely concise. It is clear that a distinction between two kinds of belief is intended. But on their own, these few lines do not decide what the distinction amounts to. So rather than resting my interpretation on this inconclusive evidence, all I will show is that there is a natural reading of it in line with my interpretation.

On the commonly embraced interpretation, the Eleatic stranger first introduces the notion of belief, or judgement, which may come as an affirmation (φάσις) or a denial (ἀπόφασις) (263e12).⁹ He then points out that belief (*doxa*) comes about “according to thinking” (κατὰ διάνοιαν) (264a1). Having thus established that all beliefs require thought, the argument goes, he distinguishes between belief occurring without sense perception, and those occurring through sense perception (δι’ αἰσθήσεως) (264a4). It is the latter, then, that is dubbed *phantasia*. At 264b1–2, the stranger summarizes the distinction by characterizing *phantasia*, or more precisely, “it appears” (φαίνεται), as “a blend of sense perception and belief” (σύμμιξις αἰσθήσεως καὶ δόξης). At 264a1, as mentioned, the stranger has explained that *doxa* arises in the soul “according to thinking” (κατὰ διάνοιαν), and only a line above, at 264b1, that it is “the completion of thinking” (διανοίας ἀποτελεύτησις). On this interpretation, the distinction is between beliefs that occur through sense perception, and beliefs that occur without sense perception. Since all beliefs require thinking, *phantasia* is singled out as a belief that arises through sense perception and thinking *jointly*.

On my alternative interpretation of *Sophist* 263e10–264b4, Plato is operating with a generic notion of belief, namely affirmation (φάσις) and denial (ἀπόφασις) (263e12), which is subdivided into the two species *doxa* and *phantasia*. This generic notion is neutral on the need for thinking in forming beliefs. My claim, then, is that the term ‘*doxa*’ is used in a specific sense, singling out beliefs reached through a special kind of thinking. The challenge to this interpretation is the formula of *phantasia* as “a blend of sense perception and belief (*doxa*)” at 264b2. For if ‘*doxa*’ here is used in the specific sense, then the formula indeed suggests that thinking is involved in the formation of *phantasia*. But I conjecture that 264b2 is exceptional, and that ‘*doxa*’ here is a synonym to ‘affirmation’ and ‘denial,’ thus signifying the genus belief, not belief in the specific sense as at 264a2 and b1. So my suggestion is based on the assumption that the term ‘*doxa*’ is used both in a generic and in a specific sense. In the generic sense it covers all kinds of beliefs, regardless of whether thinking goes into their

formation. In the specific sense it refers exclusively to beliefs formed through thinking.

Sophist 264a4–6 provides some, albeit inconclusive, support for this interpretation. For the contrast, which the stranger has in mind here, seems to be between beliefs that are formed by thinking and those that are not.

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Τί δ' ὅταν μὴ καθ' αὐτὴν ἀλλὰ δι' αἰσθήσεως παρῇ τινι, τὸ τοιοῦτον αὖ πάθος
ἄρ' οἶον τε ὁρθῶς εἰπεῖν ἕτερον τι πλὴν φαντασίαν;

And what, then, when it occurs to someone not on its own, but through sense perception—what else but ‘appearing’ could we rightly call such a state? (*Sophist* 264a4–6)

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It is not plain what the supposed subject of the sentence is, and what the subject of “on its own” (καθ' αὐτὴν) is.¹⁰ In the former case, my suggestion is that the subject here too is the affirmation and denial at 263e12 rather than the *doxa* in the specific sense at 264a2. That is, the stranger sets out two different ways in which affirmation and denial may come about, by an effort of thought, or through sense perception. In the latter case, I take the subject of the expression “on its own” to be the soul at 264a1.¹¹ The point is that a *doxa*, in contrast to *phantasia*, arises in the soul through its own activity independently of the body—particularly the sense organs—, which is involved in sense perception. This independent activity is precisely thinking. Hence, I take the phrase ὅταν μὴ καθ' αὐτὴν ἀλλὰ δι' αἰσθήσεως παρῇ τινι to be an elliptical expression for the following: when affirmation or denial occurs to someone not by the soul on its own, that is, through thinking, but through sense perception.

3. DISENTANGLING *DOXA* AND *PHANTASIA*

The distinction between beliefs that are formed without thinking, and those that are formed in accordance with thinking, is prepared for in an intricate way in the *Theaetetus*. For in construing Protagoras's relativist stance, Socrates attributes to him a certain view of belief formation. According to this view, we cannot help what beliefs we end up with, because believing is a matter of being taken in by how things happen to strike us.¹² Since Plato is

involved in providing a theoretical underpinning for Protagoras's relativist stance, he most probably goes beyond what justifiably may be attributed to the historical Protagoras.

The point of presenting Protagoras in this way is to address a concern shared by Plato and Aristotle about how some of the predecessors conceived of the nature of cognition. According to Aristotle, there are two crucial assumptions in the early theories of cognition. First, "the early thinkers say that thinking and perceiving are the same thing."¹³ Second, "all of these assume that thinking is something corporeal like perceiving."¹⁴ These remarks are best explained by a certain kind of attitude towards cognitive phenomena in general, and perceptual cognition in particular. From our fragmentary knowledge of early Greek thinkers a picture emerges of people keen on the physics and physiology of perception.¹⁵ We learn about the material make-up of the sense organs and how objects impinge on them. The impression conveyed is that these thinkers conceived of cognitive processes as a matter of undergoing affections in an entirely passive manner.

Plato's and Aristotle's main target is the view that cognition comes about as a result of merely bodily processes. Both of them stress that we need to distinguish between different kinds of cognition, and that not all cognitive phenomena can be explained as a matter of undergoing affections in an entirely passive manner. The disagreement with their predecessors has its roots in worries over the part played by reason in cognition. If cognition is a matter of how the body is affected, then no room is made for a component which is not ruled by these bodily processes. Plato and Aristotle are driving at the point that we need not be taken in by the way things strike us in perception. And in order not to be taken in by the appearances, we must exercise reason.

In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates attributes to Protagoras the view that beliefs are a matter of how things strike us by implying that he conflates cognitive states that should be kept apart. It is in this context that the term '*phantasia*' is introduced into the Platonic corpus, and, I am inclined to conjecture, into Greek vocabulary. Plato occasionally makes such inventions, as the introduction into Greek vocabulary of the term 'quality' (ποιότης) at *Theaetetus* 182a9 testifies to.¹⁶ Socrates prepares the introduction of '*phantasia*' by first suggesting that Theaetetus's definition of knowledge as perception (αἴσθησις) amounts to Protagoras's relativist contention that things are as they "appear to each of us" (φαίνεται ἐκάστῳ)(152a6–8). It is against the background of this equation of perceiving (αἰσθάνεσθαι) and being

appeared to (φαίνεται) (152b12) that the term '*phantasia*' is introduced by deriving it from its verbal cognate. The introduction puts at his disposal a convenient terminology when he makes the straightforward equation of perception and *phantasia* at 152c1–2.

This equation does not go without saying if we take into account what notion of perception it is reasonable to expect from Theaetetus, the promising mathematician. For it is very unlikely that he would regard *sense* perception as the source of knowledge. It is more likely that by '*aisthesis*' he means the apprehension, and particularly apprehension by means of thought, of all sorts of things. In fact, Plato himself uses the term in this way. At *Gorgias* 479c4–5, for instance, Polus is asked whether he can “perceive” (αἰσθάνη) what follows from the argument under discussion. At *Charmides* 159a1–3, moreover, Socrates speaks about the *aisthesis* of temperance, and this turns out to be a grasp of temperance such that the person who has this grasp can spell out what temperance is. In neither case does it make sense to understand *aisthesis* as sense perception.

Instead, by equating *phantasia* and *aisthesis*, Socrates puts an interpretation on *aisthesis*, which goes beyond what Theaetetus had in mind. For without warning Socrates makes a subtle move, suggesting that *phantasia* and *aisthesis* amount to the same thing “in respect of hot things, and all things of that sort” (152c1–2), thus narrowing down the notion of *aisthesis* to sense perception.¹⁷ The rationale of this move is to put an interpretation on *aisthesis*, which together with a theory of sense perception inspired by Heraclitus, makes it free from falsehood so as to meet a crucial requirement on knowledge (152c5–6).

This subtle move is followed by an even more tacit one. For having established the locution “appears to someone”, and its nominal counterpart *phantasia*, as Protagoras’s favoured cognitive notion, he replaces the locution with “seems to someone” (δοκεῖ τινι), and its nominal counterpart *doxa*.¹⁸ This move passes almost unnoticed, as the two locutions are more or less synonymous in ordinary Greek, just as their English counterparts are. The point of mediating the identity of *aisthesis* and knowledge through *phantasia* and *doxa* is to prepare the ground for the concluding refutation of the equation of knowledge and *aisthesis*. For in the concluding argument at 184–187 Socrates disentangles *aisthesis* from both *doxa* and knowledge, showing that *aisthesis* cannot be either, since it does not attain being (οὐσία).

The reason for the move from the locution “appears to someone” (φαίνεται τινι) to the locution “seems to someone” (δοκεῖ τινι) is not clear. It may reflect a distinction made by

Protagoras himself, perhaps between sensible, and ethical, properties, but the details are uncertain.¹⁹ At any rate, the reason for the move from φαίνεται τινι to δοκεῖ τινι is not that only the locution δοκεῖ τινι expresses the doxastic attitude of holding something to be true.²⁰ For it is not until Aristotle that the non-doxastic variant of φαίνεται τινι is put to philosophical use. But although doxastic, both locutions can signal reservation on the part of the speaker: “Things seem to me to be that way (but, of course, that’s just what they seem to be).” So in order not to commit oneself too strongly to a certain view, ‘seems’ and ‘appears’ are inserted as qualifiers.²¹ One point of inserting such a qualifier is to signal that this is how it looks on the face of it, but that one has not thought the thing through, and would have to consider it carefully before taking a definite stand.

But on Socrates’s construal of Protagoras’s position, beliefs cannot be arrived at but in an entirely passive way; there is nothing more to our beliefs than the way things strike us. Hence, on Socrates’s construal, Protagoras denies that there is, or could be, any effort of thought involved in belief formation. Instead, beliefs are formed in the same way that sense impressions occur to us by things impinging upon the sense organs.

Socrates even makes a verbal mockery of Protagoras’s alleged position. For at 181b8–c7 Socrates wants Theodorus to join him in considering a particular question, namely, what kinds of motion there are. Socrates points out that it seems to him (ἐμοὶ φαίνεται) that there are two kinds of motion (181c3–4). But at 181c4–6 he goes on asking Theodorus for an awkward sounding favour:

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μὴ μέντοι μόνον ἐμοὶ δοκεῖτω, ἀλλὰ συμμετέχε καὶ σύ, ἵνα κοινῇ πάσχωμεν ἂν τι καὶ δέη.

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On a colloquial reading, Socrates asks Theodorus to share his view so that they will suffer equally in case it proves wrong. But it is odd for Socrates to ask Theodorus for this favour, rather than for the favour to join him in assessing the view. Together with the rare imperative δοκεῖτω, this oddity should suffice to signal a pun.²² In fact, Socrates’s request makes a parody of Protagoras’s position on cognition. For on Protagoras’s view of cognition, Socrates

cannot urge Theodorus to join him in making an intellectual effort. Instead, he asks him to be affected in that same way as he is:

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Let it seem not only to me, but join in you too, so that we are affected together by whatever needs be. (*Theaetetus* 181c4–6)

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Having set up the scene for the disentanglement of sense perception, *phantasia*, *doxa* and knowledge in the *Theaetetus*, Plato leaves the account of *phantasia* for the *Sophist*, whereas the treatment of *doxa* is taken care of in the *Theaetetus* itself.

4. PHANTASIA, SENSE PERCEPTION, AND APPEARANCE IN THE *SOPHIST*

A *phantasia*, on the present interpretation, is a belief formed on the basis of sense perception alone. This notion of sense perception (*aisthesis*), it should be noticed, differs both from the narrow notion attributed to Protagoras and Heraclitus in the *Theaetetus*, according to which it grasps only secondary qualities, and from the broad notion occasionally employed by Plato himself, according to which even instances of grasping logical implications count as *aisthesis*. What Plato has in mind here is a power, which makes possible a wide range of cognition, and which is shared by both human beings and non-rational animals. By exercising the senses, animals discriminate between things in the environment, and they recognize things perceived in the past. The power of sense perception explains not only how non-rational animals get along in the world, but even how human beings manage a great deal of their everyday dealings.

However, although sense perception makes it possible to recognize recurring features in the world, and to adapt oneself to them, it does not provide the cognitive means to see beyond the mere appearance of things, and to get at the being of them. Its content is limited to the way things appear to be. Since a *phantasia* derives its content from sense perception, the same limitation applies to it. But *phantasia* differs from sense perception in a crucial way. For in contrast to sense perception, a *phantasia* is an affirmation or denial, that is, a belief attitude, and carries truth value (263d6–8). This explains the characterization of *phantasia* as a blend

of sense perception and belief at *Sophist* 264b2: its content is derived from sense perception, but it has the form, and the force, of a belief.

Moreover, *phantasia* carries truth value in virtue of its propositional form, which consists in the weaving together of noun and verb (*Sophist* 262c5-d6).²³ In virtue of this propositional form, and conceptual content, a *phantasia* can be assessed in way sense perception cannot. Of course, we can assess the deliveries of the senses, judging whether they are trustworthy, consistent, and so forth. But a *phantasia* can be assessed by scrutinizing its constituent concepts. An instance of such an assessment is the questioning of the popular belief that the sophist is a wise man. The *phantasia* that the sophist is a wise man is based on how he appears to us, and even on the appearance of the very expression “The sophist is wise.” For the term σοφιστής, which is not a pejorative expression before Plato, is suggestive of the property σοφός.²⁴ In addition, if the popular view is that sophists are wise people, then a person’s understanding of what it is to be wise may be shaped by the sophist’s apparent characteristics, such as his persuasiveness, his reputation, and so forth. It is precisely by considering the being, rather than the appearance, of the sophist, and of wisdom, that the *phantasia* can be assessed and called into question.

Articulating a notion of belief formed on the basis of the mere appearance of things makes good sense for the overall drift of the investigation in the *Sophist*. For the sophist’s success in the city is due to the fact that many people go by the appearance of the sophist. That is precisely why the sophist manages to deceive them, by imitating the wise man, and making people believe that he is a wise man, who deserves to be listened to, and who is justified in charging fees for his teaching.

The first occurrence of the term *phantasia* in the *Sophist* is particularly important for the understanding of it. For although the term *phantasia* is introduced in the *Theaetetus*, the dialectical context there does not allow any substantial conclusions as to how Plato himself conceives of it. But in the *Sophist* the strategy is constructive in a straightforward sense so as to allow such conclusions. And as *phantasia* makes its first appearance at 260c9, its connection to deception and imitation is emphasized. For suggesting that his account of not-being (τὸ μὴ ὄν) will solve the problem of falsity with regard to statement (λογός), belief (δόξα), and thinking (διάνοια) (260b10–c4), the stranger at 260c6–9 singles out *phantasia* as a further item on a par with statement, belief, and thinking, distinguished by its connection to

images and deception.

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ΞΕ. Ὅντος δέ γε ψεύδους ἔστιν ἀπάτη.

ΘΕΑΙ. Ναί.

ΞΕ. Καὶ μὴν ἀπάτης οὔσης εἰδώλων τε καὶ εἰκόνων ἤδη καὶ φαντασίας πάντα ἀνάγκη μεστὰ εἶναι.

Stranger: And now if there is falsity, then there is deception.

Theaetetus: Sure.

Stranger: And further, if there is deception, then everything must be full of both images and likenesses, and then also of appearing. (*Sophist* 260c6–9)

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The point that *phantasia* is an item on a par with statement, belief, and thinking, in the sense that it is a cognitive state than can be true or false, is confirmed a few lines below, at 260e4, and at 263d6. But what is important now, *phantasia* is introduced in connection to imitation and deception, and the point of its standing in apposition (ἤδη καί) to images and likenesses in the last sentence is to distinguish *phantasia* by pointing out that it somehow follows from, or is contingent on, their being such things as images and likenesses.²⁵

The background to the stranger's concern over images is the sophist's denial that there are any images whatsoever (239c9–240a6). Although the stranger has used the example of pictorial representation, such as paintings and sculptures (235d6–236c7), it is clear that the account is meant to cover all kinds of representation, including speech (234c2–e2) and mimicry (267a6–8). Of course, the sophist does not deny that paintings, sculptures, and the like, feature in the world. But the sophist calls into question the very distinction between original and image. For he regards alleged images as perfect copies, or duplicates, of the original to the effect that image and original do not differ in being.²⁶

In the stranger's long argument against the sophist's denial of the distinction, which takes up much of the remainder of the dialogue, he pins down the sophist as exercising a particular kind of art, namely the art of making imitations, or images.²⁷ More specifically, he is a

craftsman in the art of making appearances (τέχνη φάνταστική) (235d1–236c7). This characterization of the sophist's art turns on the distinction between two different kinds of image (εἶδωλον): likeness (εἰκών) and appearance (φάντασμα). Taking his starting point in painting and sculpture, the stranger points out that a likeness is an imitation made in accordance with the proportions of the original in length, width, and depth, and with the appropriate color applied to each of its parts (235d6–e2). An appearance, by contrast, only appears to be like the original in these respects. The stranger gives an example of sculptures and paintings of colossal size, in which the effects of the viewer's perspective is accommodated by not giving the sculptures and paintings the correct proportions (235e5–236a6). For if they imitated the correct proportions, then the upper and lower parts would appear disproportionate to a perceiver, because of the difference in distance to the upper and the lower parts, respectively.

It is not entirely clear what case the stranger has in mind, but presumably he is thinking of the sculpture as an enlarged imitation of the original. In that case, if the original is beautiful in terms of its proportions, then the point is that unless the artist accommodates the visual effects of the enlargement, then the imitation will not appear beautiful. Alternatively, the stranger may have in mind a case in which the original too is of colossal size. In that case, the point would be that only the appearance would appear beautiful, since even the original would appear ugly, or at least less beautiful, because of the perspective of the viewer. As far as pictorial representation is concerned, the latter alternative is problematic, since one wonders what these originals of colossal size are supposed to be. However, as we shall see shortly, the latter alternative, if taken in an extended sense, might well be intended as far as other cases of imitation, such as speech and mimicry, are concerned.

At 236b4–7 the stranger summarises what an appearance is.

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τὸ φαινόμενον μὲν διὰ τὴν οὐκ ἐκ καλοῦ θέαν εἰκέναι τῷ καλῷ, δύναμιν δὲ εἴ
τις λάβοι τὰ τηλικαῦτα ἱκανῶς ὁρᾶν, μηδ' εἰκὸς ᾧ φησιν εἰκέναι, τί καλοῦ-
μεν; ἄρ' οὐκ, ἐπεὶ φαίνεται μὲν, εἴκει δὲ οὐ, φάντασμα;

What should we call that which appears to be like the beautiful thing because it is not

seen from an appropriate point of view, but which, if someone had the power to see objects as big as that in a satisfactory way, is not like that which it purports to be like? But since it appears, but is not like [the original], may we not call it ‘appearance’? (*Sophist* 236b4–7)

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My suggestion now is that this characterization of appearance is not limited to cases of pictorial representation. In particular, the notion of something’s being seen “not from an appropriate point of view” (οὐκ ἐκ καλοῦ) must cover the most pertinent case in the dialogue, namely the sophist’s appearance of speaking the truth and of being a wise man.

In fact, it is precisely the sophist’s art of making appearances that makes him even more successful than the philosopher among the laymen. Let us assume that a layman was presented with two sculptures of colossal size, the one a likeness of the beautiful thing, the other an appearance of it. Which one of the two would he be inclined to take to be more like the beautiful thing and, hence, to be more beautiful? The stranger’s account suggests that he would take the appearance to be more like the beautiful thing. For it is tempting for the layman, who does not take into account the visual effect of the enlargement, to take the appearance to be more like the beautiful thing. As far as the sophist’s appearance of speaking the truth and of being a wise man is concerned, that appearance is likely to be more successful even than the original, that is the philosopher, simply because the layman—unable to distinguish between the real being of the sophist and the philosopher, respectively—is taken in by the appearance of the sophist. In this case, the layman takes the sophist not only to be more like the original, but also to be the original, that is the philosopher. The reason for the sophist’s success is that he adapts himself to the layman’s prejudice and ignorant point of view.

We can now see the point of connecting *phantasia* to images and deception at 260c6–9.²⁸ For the layman’s belief that the sophist is a wise man is a belief based on the mere appearance of the sophist without getting at the being of him. In this case, the layman is deceived by the appearance of the sophist, giving rise to the *phantasia* that the sophist is a wise man. Here it should be emphasised that any consideration of whether the sophist actually is a wise man does not suffice to call the layman’s belief into question, and to replace the *phantasia* with a

doxa. For again, it is a special kind of thinking Plato has in mind. By laying bear what it is to be a sophist, in the way demonstrated in the dialogue, we can determine whether sophists are wise.

But how is this account pertinent to the characterization of *phantasia* as a belief “through sense perception” at *Sophist* 264a4? The problem is that the account of appearance (φάντασμα) in the *Sophist* does not cover the case of perceiving a thing directly, rather than through an image. Of course, the case of being deceived by the sophist’s imitation of being a wise man is an instance of perceiving the sophist directly, and coming to believe that he is something that he is not. But this case is exceptional because the sophist presents himself in a particular way, in disguise, as it were, with a view to making people believe that he is something that he is not. Even mimicry falls under the genus imitation.

At the end of the *Sophist*, the stranger puts the notion of appearance to a yet another use by introducing a further division, namely that between human production of originals and images, and divine production of originals and images (265e3–6). The sophist is sorted under human production of images, but the stranger interestingly pinpoints the fact that there are divine, or natural, images. What he has in mind are images of nature’s own making. And the examples, namely dream images, shadows, and mirror images, are labelled ‘appearances’ (φαντάσματα) (266b10–c4).²⁹ What is more, he makes the point that even in these cases the appearance presents the original in a distorted way. For instance, if we perceive a reflection of a thing in a mirror, then we perceive a reversed image of the thing (266c1–4). Although these appearances are not made in order to deceive people, they may nevertheless give rise to mistakes.

Furthermore, even when a thing is perceived directly, and not through an image, it is only some aspects of the thing that we are presented with. A good example of this phenomenon is that sensible particulars are perceived from a particular point of view, and at a particular point in time. For instance, when a bed is perceived directly, there is still a difference between how the bed appears from that perspective at the moment, and how it is in itself. There is more to the bed than is conveyed through its appearance. Although the term ‘*phantasma*’ is not put to this use in the *Sophist*, there is a clear case of such a use at *Republic* 598a7–b4. The fact that a bed appears different from different points of view, Socrates first makes clear, does not imply that the bed really is different from itself. But as far as a painting of the bed is concerned, he

asks whether it imitates “that which is at it is” (τὸ ὄν, ὡς ἔχει) or “that which appears as it appears” (τὸ φαινόμενον, ὡς φαίνεται). In short, “is it an imitation of the appearance or of the truth?” (φαντάσματος ἢ ἀληθείας οὕσα μίμησις;). And Glaucon’s answer comes without hesitation: “Of the appearance.” Hence, what is called ‘an appearance’ here is neither a reflection of the bed, nor an imitation of it. It is precisely the bed as it appears when perceived from a particular point of view that is called ‘an appearance.’

The crucial point about appearances, of whatever kind, is that they provide an incomplete view of the original in a way that gives us limited understanding of its nature. There is a simple explanation why the stranger in the *Sophist* mentions only shadows and reflections, but not things perceived directly, as he extends the class of appearances to natural appearances. Shadows and reflections are mentioned so as to provide a straightforward parallel to such man made imitations as sculptures and paintings. But since even the sophist’s appearance of being a wise man counts as human production of images, it is easy to see that the point about natural appearances can be extended to other cases too, such as the appearance of things perceived directly.

In conclusion, then, the characterization of *phantasia* as a belief occurring through sense perception at 264a4 should be fleshed out in terms of the cognitive state we end up in through sense perception. By and large, these cognitive states may serve us well in our everyday dealings, and the rift between how a thing appears to be and how it is, need not always be that significant. A *phantasia*, it should be stressed, may be true. But in other cases, such as the sophist and his teachings, it matters a great deal. As the stranger puts it at 234d2–e2, the teachings of the sophist have a particular appeal for young people. But as we grow older, we revise our beliefs, and “the appearances in words” (τὰ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις φαντάσματα) are turned upside down by experience of how things really are.

5. *DOXA*, THINKING, AND BEING IN THE *THEAETETUS*

The unfolding of the sophist’s real nature in the *Sophist* is an instance of what is commonly called Plato’s diairetic method, of which further instances are provided in the *Phaedrus*, in the *Statesman*, and in the *Philebus*. The idea is to pin down the nature of the sophist by showing how his art is related to other arts as a particular species of a certain genus, thus yielding a definition of the sophist’s art. My claim is that this kind of thinking is characteristic not only

of Plato's conception of knowledge, but of *doxa* as well. But apart from the formulae "according to thinking" and "the completion of thinking," the *Sophist* does not articulate the thought process, which gives rise to *doxa*.

However, the *Theaetetus* provides a fairly substantial account of the thought process involved in forming a belief. At *Theaetetus* 187a3–6, belief is said to be formed, not in sense perception at all, but "when it [the soul] on its own is busy about things" (ὅταν αὐτὴ καθ' αὐτὴν πραγμτεύηται περὶ τὰ ὄντα). This kind of cognitive process is fleshed out in terms of thinking at 189e7–190a4:

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τοῦτο γάρ μοι ἰνδάλλεται διανοομένη οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ διαλέγεσθαι, αὐτὴ ἑαυτὴν ἐρωτῶσα καὶ ἀποκρινομένη, καὶ φάσκουσα καὶ οὐκ φάσκουσα. ὅταν δὲ ὀρίσασα, εἴτε βραδύτερον εἴτε καὶ ὀξύτερον ἐπάξασα, τὸ αὐτὸ ἤδη φῆ καὶ μὴ διστάζη, δόξαν ταύτην τίθεμεν αὐτῆς.

It seems to me that in thinking the soul is doing nothing else than having a conversation, posing questions to itself and answering them, giving its assent and not giving its assent. And when it reaches something determinate, making the swoop either slowly or quickly, it affirms the same thing without delay and hesitation—this we lay down as its belief.

(*Theaetetus* 189e7–190a4)

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This passage portrays an elaborate exercise of thought. If Plato had in mind conditions for belief formation in general, this description is inadequate. Forming many beliefs just requires much less. Instead, this passage, together with the notorious passage at *Theaetetus* 184b3–187a8, provides an account of what the soul is supposed to do on its own in forming a particular kind of belief.

The argument in 184b3–187a8 is the final refutation of the thesis that sense perception is knowledge. It may thus seem that Socrates is contrasting sense perception to knowledge, rather than to *doxa*. But the overall strategy in the *Theaetetus* is to dismiss Theaetetus's first answer to the question what knowledge is on the grounds that sense perception does not even

amount to a belief. Having established this point in 184b3–187a8, the inquiry moves on to consider the two remaining suggestions, namely, that knowledge is a true belief and, finally, that knowledge is a true belief with an account (*logos*).

Further evidence for the claim that 184b3–187a8 is concerned with disentagling sense perception and *doxa* becomes clear in the concluding remarks of this passage. For Socrates remarks at 187a1–6 that knowledge should be looked for in what the soul does by itself when it is busy about things, rather than in sense perception. Theaetetus then suggests that he is talking about believing (*δοξάζειν*), to which Socrates readily answers: “You’re right, my friend” (*Ὅρθῶς γὰρ οἶμι, ὦ φίλε*) (187a9). And as we shall see, the details of 184b3–187a8 go well together with the account of how thinking gives rise to belief at 189e6–190a4.³⁰

But even if 184b3–187a8 is concerned with disentagling sense perception and belief, we are still faced with a decisive interpretative choice. As mentioned, one option is to take this account, together with 189e6–190a4, as a description of what goes on in forming *any* belief. One way to defend this option against the argument that 189e6–190a4 overdoes the conditions for belief formation in general, is to say that forming even the simplest belief like “This is hot” involves employment of concepts, and the capacity to frame one’s cognitive state in propositional form. And learning to master these capacities, at least from the point of view of the developing individual, is a rather complex cognitive process.

But the account at 186c2–5 of how those bodily affections reaching the soul through sense perception are processed speaks against this option:

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τὰ δὲ περὶ τούτων ἀναλογίσματα πρὸς τε οὐσίαν καὶ ὠφέλειαν μόγις καὶ ἐν χρόνῳ διὰ πολλῶν πραγμάτων καὶ παιδείας παραγίγνεται οἷς ἂν παραγίγνηται;

But concerning calculations about these [the affections reaching the soul], with regard both to their being and to their usefulness, they occur to those they do occur to with toil and over a long time, with much trouble and education, do they not? (*Theaetetus* 186c2–5)

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Although it may be granted that developing the general capacity to form beliefs may take time, it sounds awkward to say that it is a matter of toil and trouble, let alone of education. Moreover, saying that these calculations occur in this way “to those they do occur to” suggests that Socrates has in mind an exclusive notion of calculation such that not everyone comes to exercise it.³¹ So Socrates seems to be laying out conditions for forming a particular kind of belief rather than the capacity to form any belief.

Socrates’s argument that sense perception can be neither knowledge, nor even belief, crucially turns on the argument that sense perception cannot attain being (οὐσία) (186e4–5). For this reason, the correct interpretation of the notion of being in this context has been hotly contested in the scholarly debate.³² I side with the understanding of ‘being’ as what it is that makes a thing be what it is, what its nature, or essence, is.³³ My defence for this interpretation is the part played by the other “commons” (τὰ κοινά), which sense perception cannot access, such as identity, difference, number, likeness and unlikeness. It is by analyzing how these properties relate to a thing that we can come to understand its being. Hence, this kind of reasoning is not concerned with whether a certain empirical fact obtains or not.³⁴ But although this thought process goes beyond the cognitive achievement of sense perception, it is still concerned with sensible particulars. For whereas sense perception attains the appearance of sensible particulars, this kind of thinking gets at their being.

A crucial test for this interpretation lies in how it fares in the face of a stumbling block, which has caused much scholarly headache. For at 185d6–e2, Theaetetus claims that the soul through itself (δι’ αὐτῆς), without recourse to the sense organs, considers the commons with regard to everything, including such properties as colors, sounds, and tastes. Socrates agrees (185e5–7), but the claim sounds odd, since one wonders what it is that the soul can consider with regard to such sensible properties short of using the sense organs. Indeed, some scholars have even suggested that Plato here leaves the realm of sensible particulars altogether by hinting at the contemplation of Platonic Forms.³⁵

This problem is best dealt with if we understand the attainment of being as an articulate and systematic account of how a thing is to be identified by relating it to other things in a generic scheme in the way the sophist is caught in the *Sophist*. In the *Theaetetus*, this thought process is articulated in terms of considering the being of the thing under scrutiny. Considering the being of color and sound is a matter of sorting out that each is different from

the other, but identical to itself,³⁶ that both are two, but each one in number, and that there are similarities as well as dissimilarities between the two. Unity (ἕν) is the crucial property. For in order for anything to be, it must be a unity; and to be a unity crucially involves being different from other things, and being identical to itself. Furthermore, it is in virtue of similarity and dissimilarity that it can be established whether two unities relate to one another as a species to genus, or as a species to another species of the same genus. For instance, sound and color are similar in virtue of belonging to the same genus, that is, sensory quality, but dissimilar in virtue of being different species of that genus.³⁷

The point of this activity is to pin down things as being of different *kinds*, and as standing in certain relations to other kinds. The reason why the soul attains this being all by itself without recourse to the sense organs even as far as sensory qualities are concerned, is that sense perception cannot accomplish such systematic discernment of things. Sense perception makes possible discrimination of things, and even the recognition of things perceived in the past, but it does not recognize them as kinds standing in generic relations to other kinds. Hence, I agree with the contention that Socrates, or at least Plato in the background, is hinting at the contemplation or, rather, ordering, of forms, but not that he thereby leaves the realm of sensible particulars. For the purpose of it in this context is to get at the being of sensible particulars. In fact, the passage under consideration provides an answer to the worry expressed at *Parmenides* 133b4–134e6, namely, that the young Socrates's conception of forms as totally separated from the sensible particulars leads to the conclusion that the forms have no bearing whatsoever on the nature of sensible particulars.

To approach the issue from a different angle, what Plato is concerned with is the understanding of the content of beliefs. If a sensible particular is F, then it has the property F in virtue of having a share in the form F. Therefore, it matters a great deal whether or not we have a grasp of that form. For our grasp of the form F, or the lack of it, has a bearing on our understanding of the belief that something is F. For instance, if we think a person is a good statesman, then the content of that belief will be affected by what understanding we have of statesmanship. If we think that it amounts to being persuasive, and having a popular reputation, then we are likely to classify a certain kind of people as a good candidate for the post. But if we reflect on the nature of statesmanship, we may come to another conclusion.

In short, grasping the being of the thing the belief is about matters a great deal for our

cognitive capacities. For it makes possible inferences that otherwise we would not have been able to make. For instance, as the sophist has been pinned down as a mimic of the insincere and ignorant sort of the human kind of making appearances (268c8–d4), then we may immediately conclude that the sophist is not knowledgeable, let alone wise.

6. CONCLUSION

Distinctions between two kinds of belief feature in Plato's dialogues earlier than the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*. These distinctions are not accounted for in much detail, and neither do they come to the same thing as the distinction between *phantasia* and *doxa*, nor do they provide a unified account. However, they are all indicative of a distinction between carefully reasoned beliefs and beliefs, which we just end up with without much consideration.

In the simile of the divided line in the *Republic*, to begin with, Plato distinguishes between two kinds of belief, confident belief, or conviction (πίστις), and imagining, or, perhaps, conjecture (εἰκασία) (511d6–e4). The distinction is cast in terms of their respective objects: *pistis* is concerned with sensible particulars, whereas *eikasia* is concerned with images (εἰκόνες) of these, like shadows (σκιαί) and reflections (φαντάσματα) (509e1–510a3). Taken literally, both the content, and the rationale, of the latter kind of cognition, are elusive. Although from time to time we apprehend shadows and reflections, it is not clear why such cognition is significant enough to deserve a category of its own. It is tempting to take the ensuing allegory of the cave to provide the clue to its significance.³⁸ For the fettered prisoners in the cave, who perceive only the shadows of artefacts carried behind the wall, believe them to be the real things (515c1–2). A sensible way of unpacking the point of these remarks is to say that they suggest a distinction between beliefs that are based on first hand experience, and beliefs that are based on the mere appearance of things conveyed through indirect evidence, such as pictorial representations or hearsay.

In book 10 of the *Republic*, Plato makes a straightforward distinction between unreasoned and reasoned beliefs. The background is the division of the soul into three different parts, and the claim that two of them—appetite and spirit—are non-rational, whereas the third—reason—is rational in the sense that it can engage in reasoning. Importantly, the non-rational parts have beliefs as well. For instance, a straight stick that looks bent when immersed halfway into water is judged by the non-rational part to be bent, whereas the rational part

judges it to be straight by measuring it (602c10–603a8). So the point is that since only the rational part can measure it, only it can judge against the appearance that the stick is bent. It should be noticed that this distinction between beliefs belonging to the rational and the non-rational part of the soul, respectively, does not turn on the difference between the thing's being and its appearance in the way underlying the distinction between *phantasia* and *doxa*. For measuring the stick is an empirical matter, and not a matter of considering the being of the stick independently of the senses.

Furthermore, in the *Timaeus*, in contrast to the *Republic*, belief is straightforwardly denied to the non-rational part of the human soul.³⁹ For as Timaeus points out at 77b3–6, the part of the soul, which is situated between the midriff and the navel has no share of belief (δόξα), reasoning (λογισμός), and understanding (νοῦς). This implies that belief is dependent on powers, which inhere in the rational part exclusively. But although deprived of belief, even the non-rational part may take on cognitive attitudes. This is crucially so in the case of non-rational animals, but even in the case of human beings, the non-rational part is capable of cognition, albeit of a non-rational kind. Unable to understand rational considerations, the non-rational part is enticed by images (εἰδωλα) and appearances (φαντάσματα) (71a5–7). Hence, cognitively speaking the non-rational part cannot entertain *doxai*, but can be lead by appearances. These remarks suggest that in the *Timaeus* ‘*doxa*’ is used in a narrow sense: without reasoning, no *doxa*. *Phantasia* does not feature as a technical term for the cognitive state we end up in when we are lead by appearances, but a first step is taken towards introducing it, and narrowing down the notion *doxa* to a particular kind of belief.

In the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*, then, Plato explicitly introduces a distinction between beliefs based on the appearance of things and beliefs formed through considerations of their being, or nature. For the former, Plato coins the term ‘*phantasia*,’ by deriving it from the locution φαίνεται τινι in such a way as to signal that this kind of belief derives its content from sense perception. He then narrows down the term ‘*doxa*’ to a qualified kind of belief, which is formed on the basis of a special kind of thinking.⁴⁰

The failure to recognize this distinction between two kinds of belief in Plato, despite the enormous scholarly efforts devoted to the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*, is probably due to the fact that we do not operate with such a distinction any longer. We may admit that beliefs are more or less justified, but that observation suggests that beliefs differ in degree (of

justification), rather than in kind. Moreover, if we embrace the view that the formation of any belief requires possession of concepts, and capacity for propositional thought, and that these capacities are the hallmarks of thinking and rationality at large, then it is difficult to escape the conclusion that even a *phantasia* is formed through thinking, and that it is a disposition of reason in precisely that sense. But attributing such an anachronistic starting point to Plato overshadows a more specific notion of thinking, and a different way of accounting for the role of thinking in belief formation. As Plato's unfolding of the disguise of the sophist shows, this kind of thinking, giving rise to a qualified kind of belief, may well be worth serious consideration.

¹ On balance, I deem it convenient to leave the term '*phantasia*' untranslated except for quotations. All translations from the Greek are mine.

² The distinction between *phantasia* and *doxa* in the *Sophist* has received relatively little attention in the scholarly discussion. An exception is Notomi, *The Unity of Plato's Sophist*, 246–269.

³ In Rickless, "Plato's Definition(s) of Sophistry," there is a discussion of the different definitions of the sophist in the dialogue. I here assume this final definition to be the considered one.

⁴ See, e.g. Silverman, "Plato on Phantasia," 135; Notomi, *The Unity of Plato's Sophist*, 259; Lorenz, *The Brute Within*, 206–7.

⁵ Φαντασία ἄρα καὶ αἴσθησις ταῦτόν ἐν τε θερμοῖς καὶ πᾶσι τοιούτοις.

⁶ So I side with what Burnyeat dubs the reading B of the first part of the *Theaetetus*. Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato*, 7–10.

⁷ Space does not allow me to account for Plato's conception of sense perception, but I will, dogmatically, rest my argument on the assumptions that on Plato's view (i) sense perception makes possible apprehension of more than secondary qualities, and that (ii) there is an explanation, appealing to language acquisition, of how even beliefs, which contain terms for non-perceptual qualities, such as wisdom, can be formed on the basis of sense perception alone, and that (iii) together with memory, sense perception gives us a capacity to recognize and to recollect things. I hope to return to Plato's conception of sense perception on another occasion, but for a useful start, see Lorenz, *The Brute Within*, 95–110.

⁸ The expression “The sophist is wise” is ambiguous between attributing a property to an individual sophist, such as Protagoras or Gorgias, and saying that being a sophist amounts to being wise. Short of articulating this distinction, Plato may be said to illustrate the importance of getting clear about the notion of sophistry in order to determine whether an individual sophist is wise.

⁹ To be more precise, affirmation and denial inhere in statements (λόγοι), and so do judgements (δόξαι), which are the silent counterparts to statements. See *Sophist* 263e10–264a2, *Theaetetus* 190a4–7, and *Philebus* 38e1–4.

¹⁰ I here follow the MS tradition retaining καθ’αυτήν. The OCT editions, following Stobaeus’s variant of the text, adopt καθ’αυτό instead. See Wachsmuth, *Ioannis Stobei Anthologii libri duo priores*, i, 59, 1, 17. Notice, however, that Wachsmuth does not follow the version given in F and P, and actually gives καθ’αυτήν in his edition.

¹¹ For the same reading, see Hicks, *Aristotle, de anima*, 465 (comment on 428^a24): “ὅταν μὴ καθ’αυτήν [i.e. τῇ ψυχῇ αὐτῇ καθ’αυτήν].” Cf., also, *Theaetetus* 187a5–6: ὅταν αὐτὴ καθ’αυτὴν πραγμεύηται περὶ τὰ ὄντα (“when it [the soul] on its own is busy about things”).

¹² See Frede, “Observations on Perception in Plato’s Later Dialogues.”

¹³ *De anima* 3.3, 427^a21–22: οἱ γε ἀρχαῖοι τὸ φρονεῖν καὶ τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι ταὐτὸν εἶναί φασιν.

¹⁴ *De anima* 3.3, 427^a26–27: πάντες γὰρ οὗτοι τὸ νοεῖν σωματικὸν ὥσπερ τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι ὑπολαμβάνουσιν. See also *Metaphysics* 4.5, 1009^b12–17.

¹⁵ For a classic survey of this field, see Beare, *Greek Theories of Elementary Cognition*. See also *Phaedo* 96b3–9 and Aristotle, *De anima* 1.2, 405^a8–13, and discussion in Lorenz, *The Brute Within*, 4–6.

¹⁶ The other occurrences of ‘phantasia’ are at *Theaetetus* 161e8; *Sophist* 260c9, 260e4, 263d6, 264a6. The only earlier evidence of the term is at *Republic* 382e10. But the phrase οὔτε κατὰ φαντασίας is lacking in the main manuscript, A, or the Parisinus graecus 1807. Notomi defends it, but also admits that in that case *phantasia* must have been a current word at the time, although there is no earlier evidence of it (Notomi, *The Unity of Plato’s Sophist*, 262–3). Adam’s argument for its genuineness, again, can be turned against him (Adam, *The Republic of Plato*, 123). For Adam argues that its genuineness is supported by 382a1–2:

“Would a god want to deceive by words, or by presenting an appearance?” (ψεύδεσθαι θεὸς

ἐθέλοι ἂν ἢ λόγῳ ἢ ἔργῳ φάντασμα προτείνων;). But these lines could just as well—indeed, even more likely—explain its later addition.

¹⁷ See Frede, “Observations on Perception in Plato’s Later Dialogues,” 4–5.

¹⁸ The shift occurs at 158e2–6. See, further, 161c2–3, 162c8–9, 170a3–171c3, 177c6–d2, 178b9–179d5.

¹⁹ See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 4.5, 1009^a7–8 and Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicos* 7.60. See also Gomperz, *Sophistik und Rhetorik*, 205–6.

²⁰ On this point, I disagree with Jonathan Barnes. See Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 240–1.

²¹ Of course, δοκεῖ τινι may be doxastic without reservation. The same goes for φαίνεται τινι, particularly when it is construed with a participle, in which case it has, as a rule, a strongly committal sense (“It is evident that...”).

²² No translation to my knowledge captures the pun of these lines.

²³ Admittedly, Plato does not distinguish between parts of speech, on the one hand, and component parts of a sentence, on the other. In a manuscript (“Three Kinds of False Thinking in the *Theaetetus*, the *Sophist* and the *Philebus*,” 23), which Catherine Rowett has put at my disposal, she argues that the content of *phantasia* is not propositional at all, but pictorial. But this interpretation would make the Eleatic stranger’s explanation of how falsity can occur in sentences irrelevant for the explanation of false *phantasia*. But he does seem to think that it solves the puzzle of falsity in thinking, *doxa*, and *phantasia* alike (*Sophist* 263d1–6).

²⁴ For this point, see Notomi, *The Unity of Plato’s Sophist*, 43–54.

²⁵ Notomi has a good sense of the grammar at 260c9. See *The Unity of Plato’s Sophist*, 252, note 93.

²⁶ This claim would require a lengthy treatment of its own. For a very brief remark on its background, see Cherniss, “The Relation of the *Timaeus* to Plato’s Later Dialogues,” 263. For substantial discussion, see Vernant, “Image et apparence dans la théorie platonicienne de la ‘Mimêsis,’” and Patterson, *Image and Reality in Plato’s Metaphysics*.

²⁷ At 236c6–7 the stranger speaks of the art of making images (τέχνη εἰδωλοποιικῆς) instead of the art of imitation (τέχνη μιμητικῆς) as the genus. But these two notions are synonymous here, for the notion of image covers all kinds of imitation.

²⁸ The fact that only image (εἶδωλον) and likeness (εἰκών) are mentioned at 260c6–9 causes some discomfort for my interpretation, although image covers appearance in virtue of being its genus.

²⁹ This list is strikingly similar to that of the objects of *eikasia* at *Republic* 509d6–510a6.

³⁰ I cannot see how this exchange can be taken ironically so as to signal that Socrates (and Plato) does not share the view that the description of what the soul does by itself applies to believing. But see D. Frede, “The soul’s silent dialogue: a non-aporetic reading of the *Theaetetus*,” 22–4. Dorothea Frede has put forward the ironic reading of 187a1–6 in conversation with me.

³¹ An alternative is to understand “to those they do occur to” as excluding non-rational animals. For this option, see, e.g. Bostock, *Plato’s Theaetetus*, 124–25, and Lorenz, *The Brute Within*, 91. Among those taking my line (regardless of whether they take knowledge exclusively to be at issue here), see Cooper, “Plato on Sense-Perception and Knowledge (*Theaetetus* 184–186)”, 142, Silverman, “Plato on Perception and the ‘Commons,’” 171; Kanayama, “Perceiving, Considering, and Attaining Being (*Theaetetus* 184–186),” 61.

³² For a recent survey of the discussion, see Lott, “Plato on the rationality of belief. *Theaetetus* 184–187.”

³³ By implication, this is McDowell’s view (*Plato—Theaetetus*, 187–193). Sedley considers this option for the latter part of the argument (from 186a9), thus sacrificing the unity of the notion in the argument as a whole (*The Midwife of Platonism—Text and Subtext in Plato’s Theaetetus*, 109–11). Modrak understands ‘being’ in terms of essence, but sees the relevance of grasping essences exclusively for knowledge (“Perception and Judgement in the *Theaetetus*,” 48–51). For arguments against the understanding of being as the nature, or essence, of a thing, see Bostock, *Plato’s Theaetetus*, 137–142.

³⁴ On this point, I disagree with Lott’s otherwise convincing argument for what he dubs the “realist reading” of the notion of being. See Lott, “Plato on the rationality of belief. *Theaetetus* 184–187,” 346.

³⁵ See Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, 105–109. This view was famously, and conclusively, defeated in Cooper, “Plato on Sense-Perception and Knowledge (*Theaetetus* 184–186).”

³⁶ This is likely to be the idea of “affirming the same thing without delay and hesitation” (τὸ αὐτὸ ἤδη φηὶ καὶ μὴ διστάζει) at 190a3. So D. Frede, “The soul’s silent dialogue: a non-aporetic reading of the *Theaetetus*,” 28.

³⁷ The further commons mentioned, the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly (186a9), the usefulness (ὠφέλεια) (186c3), also serve to determine what a thing is in terms of its place in a hierarchy of values.

³⁸ Hence, I am somewhat more optimistic than Annas of the prospect of spelling out the distinction. See Annas, *An Introduction to Plato’s Republic*, 247–52.

³⁹ This is not the place to address the intricacies of Platonic chronology. My argument provides some support for the thesis that the *Timaeus* antedates the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*. See, also, Owen, “The Place of the *Timaeus* in Plato’s Dialogues.”

⁴⁰ Hence, I disagree with Lorenz’s thesis that in the later dialogues Plato commits himself to the view that any belief requires an exercise of reason (Lorenz, *The Brute Within*, 55–73). A noticeable feature of the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* is the absence of the thesis of the divided soul, even by implication. The point about *phantasia* is that it is a non-rational belief, not that it is a belief of a non-rational part of the soul.

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