Plato's *Sophist*

Proceedings of the Seventh Symposium
Platonicum Pragense

Edited by
Aleš Havlíček and Filip Karfík

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THE COY ERISTIC: DEFINING THE IMAGE THAT DEFINES THE SOPHIST

David Ambuel

Two assumptions

The argument of this paper is informed by two observations about the *Sophist's* dramatic structure: in contrast to the denial in all other Platonic depictions of the sophist, here the sophist is assumed to have an art. That assumption is never relinquished, even though the reason given elsewhere for declaring him artless is explicitly voiced when he is described as a kind of magician (233b–c). Secondly, the discussion is led, not by Socrates, but by an Eleatic philosopher, and is conducted following a process that adheres to an Eleatic ontology that admits no intermediate between being and absolute not-being. Without an ontological intermediary, every image is as real as any reality, and every practice an art.

I. Sophistry and Deception

Throughout the *Sophist*, the subject's slippery nature is regularly noted, and that in a double sense: the sophist is not only elusive, but also evasive. The sophist may be difficult to define and to distinguish from the philosopher. But he also plays hard to get: whether or not the sophist is inherently hard to hold apart from the philosopher, he appears to have some incentive to make it seem so. The dialogue also identifies a source for these difficulties, to be found in the puzzling concept of the image. Just how to distinguish the sophist from the philosopher, and how to define the sophist, are not by any means questions new to the *Sophist*, but the problematic and its resolution[1] are very different.

[1] If, that is, there is a resolution in the *Sophist*.

Apart from the *Sophist*, when a possible confusion of sophist with philosopher is mentioned, it is not for lack of clarity about the matter in principle. The *Apology*, for example, opens with Socrates disavowing sophistry and rueing the masses' inability to distinguish sophistry from philosophy, a confusion that he assigns in part to Aristophanes and the so-called "old accusers". They have imprinted a certain distorted image of Socrates upon the minds of the young, now grown and sitting in judgment.[2] In the *Apology*, however, we are given to understand that the confusion between philosophy and sophistry lies not in the nature of the two practices, but in the ignorance of those unable to discern the difference. The Socrates of the *Apology* specifies differences both psychological and behavioral. In regard to internal motivation, the sophist, who is interested only in persuasion and verbal victory, does not share Socrates' concern for the truth. And as for outward signs, the Socratic profession of ignorance contrasts with the sophistic profession of knowledge and wisdom,[3] which justifies the sophist's undertaking to teach and willingness to accept remuneration.

The ground for the distinction is again reflected in the *Gorgias*. The sophist, it is said, is engaged in the production of persuasion,[4] which, however, he can effectively accomplish only by relying upon audience ignorance.[5] As in the *Sophist*, a conception of the image is key to resolving the distinction. Sophistry, in the *Gorgias*, presents "the image of a portion of politics".[6] The sophist, consequently, proves hard to distinguish from the expert only to the ignorant, just as only from a poor view, inadequate information, or ignorance can we mistake an image for the thing it resembles. Keeping the two separate is to that extent a matter of understanding, that is, the ignorant fail to see the image as an appearance and not a reality. Clarity about the explanation for the difference is a similar matter of insight:

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2 Plato, *Apol.* 18b–c.

3 Which may extend to the profession of universal wisdom, an attribute, like all the earlier attributes of the sophist, that also appears in the *Sophist*.

4 Plato, *Gorg.* 453a.

5 *Ibid.,* 459a.

6 *Ibid.,* 463d.

their activities are distinct in motivation and purpose, since one is occupied with reality and the other only with appearances.

If, then, sophistic rhetoric and Socratic dialectic are distinguishable by motive and by external appearance, sophistry presents a kind of image of philosophy: rhetoric aiming only to persuade is by design deceptive,[7] and consequently the sophist must appear to be demonstrating truth, even if truth is irrelevant to the sophist's practice. Sophistry, therefore, is an image and imitation of philosophy, and it success relies on bamboozling its targets into mistaking the appearance for the real thing. This account of sophistry as image rests in turn on the metaphysical concept of the image as developed in the middle dialogues. As such, sophistry is not some species of an art of imitation, but rather the imitation of an art.

So the sophist of the *Sophist* is presented as both elusive and evasive. The earlier accounts supply a motive for the evasiveness: to maintain the deception, sophistry must appear indistinguishable from that which it imitates, politics and philosophy. The very reasons that make sophistry deceptive and an imitation also, in dialogues outside the *Sophist*, ground the assertion that sophistry imitates art but is not an art itself. The *Sophist*, by contrast, opens with the assumption, never questioned, that the sophist masters an art, a *technê*. If now in the *Sophist* we are to re-conceive sophistry as the practice of a *technê*, its evasiveness is one of a kind. The physician has no interest in disguising the nature of the medical art; bricklaying would gain nothing if it were mysteriously indefinable; sophistry, however, relies for its effectiveness on deception. The deceptiveness of sophistry as a practice does not escape the Eleatic Visitor as he prepares what will become the final attempt at definition: the sophist must be

> "*Vis.* …able to accustom the youth to the opinion that they are in every way the wisest of all men. For plainly if they did not controvert correctly, or did not appear to do so in the eyes of the youth, and if this appearance did not give them the air of greater mental poise in debate…then others would hardly be willing to give them money in order to learn the very same things.
> *Theaet.* Hardly.

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[7] Assuming, that is, a real distinction between appearance and reality, which is at issue in the *Sophist*, but not in the *Apology* or the *Gorgias*.

> *Vis.* But in fact they are willing.
> *Theaet.* Very willing.
> *Vis.* They appear, I believe, themselves to be well versed in the subjects they dispute.
> *Theaet.* Of course.
> *Vis.*They do this in fact in all subjects, did we not say so?
> *Theaet.* Yes.
> *Vis.* So to their students they appear wise in all things.
> *Theaet.* Certainly.
> *Vis.* But they are not, for this was shown to be impossible."
> (*Soph.* 233b–c)

That evasiveness, in turn, is parlayed into a deceptiveness that is intrinsic and not merely extrinsic, that is, one that is difficult to discern not only for the ignorant but by nature, if there is no distinction between appearance and reality. This is precisely what the Eleatic Visitor calls into question when doubts are cast upon the very possibility of images, and what differentiates the problem of distinguishing sophist and philosopher in the *Sophist* from the same question in other dialogues. Questioning the appearance–reality distinction affords the sophist not only the pragmatic defense of disguising his ends by verbal smoke and mirrors, but affords a theoretical defense of his productions: if there is no real distinction between image and original, then there is also none between true and false.

In its practice, sophistry must be deceptive if it is to be possible. Even though a demonstration of how statements can be false is made the key to the capture of the sophist, the deceptiveness that is attributed to sophistry is not simply the assertion that the sophist persuades others to believe to be true statements that are in fact false. The sophist may indeed do that, but the sophist might just as well persuade someone of the truth of a true statement. Or, for that matter, the sophist may be completely unaware of the truth or falsity of his contention. Insofar as all that matters is persuasion, it is of no relevance whether a given assertion that the sophist defends is true, false, or neither, nor whether the words that bring about persuasion in the souls of the audience formulate a valid argument or empty and even contradictory rhetoric. The sophist's own ignorance, a common theme elsewhere, is implied when the thought is first entertained that the sophist is to be defined in terms of the image: he is some kind

of magician and imitator (235a) as he must be, since he appears in multiple guises and professes wisdom in all things. The first six definitions of the sophist – none of which is rejected as inaccurate[8] – raise the issue of multifarious and shifting appearances that will introduce the final definition of the sophist as image-maker. The appearance now of the sophist as imitator and magician calls to mind similar remarks at the dialogue's start relating how gods and philosophers appear concealed under multiple guises:

> "… what if he is no foreign visitor, but rather some god you bring with you unawares, as in Homer's story of other gods, not least the god of strangers, who accompanies those with a share of reverence and justice to observe the insolence and good order of people? Perhaps he, one of the higher powers, accompanies you to watch over our meagerness in discussion and, being a god fond of examining, to examine us." (*Soph.* 216a–b)

But the manifold appearance also recalls the rejection of such stories about gods in the *Republic* (II,380d): since what is best is least changed, god cannot be "able to reveal himself intentionally from time to time in different characters, sometimes changing his own form into a multitude of shapes, sometimes deluding us into thinking he has done so".[9] Thus, from its opening, the *Sophist* casts a fog to problematize a distinction previously portrayed as evident. It is notable that, in formulating the question of the dialogue, Socrates, not the Eleatic Visitor, asserts the many faces of the philosopher are only appearance, since they "are imagined in a multiplicity of ways by others in their ignorance" (216c). The Visitor does not pursue the hint.

Deception, then, is associated not with any given statement that a given sophist might advance; deception resides in the practice of sophistry itself insofar as it relies on appearing to be something that it is not. It is, then, in this global way that the possibility of sophistry, as a practice that can be distinguished from politics and

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8 Only the sophist of noble descent, which appears to describe Socratic dialectic, is deemed dubious (*Soph.* 231b).

9 Translation R. E. Allen. The *Republic* passage explicitly objects to the same Homeric tales (*Od.* XVII,485) to which Socrates refers here.

philosophy, rests upon the possibility of falsity. This suggests that the sophist *qua* imitator should be defined in relation to that which he imitates – yet this is not done and it is easy to lose sight of the nature of sophistry's deception when the resolution of the problem turns not to a global definition of the image but to a specific definition of the false statement.[10]

The sophistic claim of universal wisdom that is implicit in the sophist's professed ability to speak expertly on any subject whatsoever is reason elsewhere to deny that the sophist has an art, but not here: the attempted definitions undertake to define the sophist not as the imitator of arts but an artist of imitation.

II. 235b–237a The initial division of image-making – the conflation of sophist and philosopher

The sophist's motives for evasion and escape are evident, and the role of ignorance in keeping the disguise has not disappeared in the *Sophist*. At the outset, Socrates had remarked that the philosopher (like the sophist following the multiple divisions) appeared in a confusing multiplicity of guises, not owing to what the philosopher does, but to the ignorance of those who observe the philosopher. However, the *Sophist* makes the confusion between philosopher and sophist problematic in a way not envisioned in the *Apology* or *Gorgias*, where the reality of the difference was never an issue. If the image should prove to be nothing at all,[11] and consequently the distinction between truth and falsity unreal, then the sophist is shown to be genuinely elusive

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10 That is, of one species of image.

11 Reduced, like Parmenides' way of seeming to absolute not-being. These remarks are not, however, intended here to advance any assertions about the historical Parmenides, including assertions about the nature of the distinction between the second way, the way of not-being, and the third, the way of seeming, or whether Parmenides' argument implies the third way should be construed as reducing to the second. Rather, relevant here is only how Plato makes use of Eleaticism for the purposes of the *Sophist*. (On Parmenides on not-being and ways in which the *Sophist* on not-being may be read in light of it see Denis O'Brien, *Le Non-être: Deux études sur le Sophiste de Platon*, Paris 1995. On issues pertaining to the way of seeming and its reduction to or distinction from the way of not-being, see in addi-

and indistinguishable by nature, not by artifice. If in fact there are no images ontologically distinct from reality, and so no appearance and no ignorance, then the sophist need no longer seek out a hiding place. He becomes elusive not only to the ignorant, but by the very nature of the practice of sophistry, which, as such, becomes indistinct from philosophy.

This very issue is posed by the first formulation of the final definition of the sophist, which begins with a single division before it is interrupted (237a) by the problem of how appearing and false statements are possible, since this possibility "assumes that which is not" (*hypothesthai to mê on einai*, 237a). The problem is laid out in a manner that suggests the equivalence of appearing (*phainesthai*) and seeming (*dokein*) but not being (*einai de mê*) with stating things that are not true (*to legein men atta, alêthê de mê*) (236e). It presents, in other words, an equivalence of appearance with falsity, which echos the claim in Parmenides' poem that the path of "two-headed mortals", that is, the path of seeming, is ultimately indistinguishable from the impossible path of not-being.

The Visitor characterizes appearance differently than it is characterized, for example, in the *Republic*, where appearances are neither always false, nor are they simply false: an appearance may be true in some respect, false in another. Neither the beginning of the final definition, nor its completion at the dialogue's conclusion will acknowledge the intermediate nature of phenomena and images as they are described in other dialogues. Instead, the ontological question, how to account for not-being, will be dropped, and a resolution ventured in terms of combinations of "things that are", that is marked by the failure to explain either "being" or "not being".

The Visitor's lack of conceptual clarity about resemblance is portrayed in the way in which the final division is begun and interrupted. The sophist, now in a class with conjurers and tricksters, is made out to be an image-maker or imitator. Initially, then, image making in general (*eidolopoiikê*) and imitation (*mimêtikê*) are presented as synonyms.[12] But the ensuing division does not characterize the

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tion Pierre Aubenque, *Études sur Parmenide*, Paris 1991, and Nestor-Luis Cordero, *Les Deux Chemins de Parmenide*, Paris 1984.)

12 See Plato, *Soph.* 235a, 235d, 236a.

resemblance of image to original as does the divided line of the *Republic*, where the relation between image and original represents in the first instance the ontological distinction between being and becoming, that is, reality and its phenomenal appearance. The image is dependent and derivative in a variety of respects: 1) dependent for its existence on the original, that is, without the prior existence of the original, there can be no image of it; 2) dependent in its asymmetric resemblance, that is, the image resembles the original, but in an incomplete way, since it abstracts certain aspects of the original only; 3) dependent in being conditioned, that is, the image or appearance is *in* and *of* something else, whereas the reality is what it is in and of itself. This third aspect is reflected in the assertion in the *Republic* that the appearance neither "is" nor "is not", but is somehow between being and not-being. To illustrate, if, say, we take a dog and a photograph of the dog, then 1) that photo cannot exist if the real dog does not first exist to be photographed, 2) I may recognize the dog from the photograph, but, no matter how many times I call, the photograph will not come, and 3) the photograph is what it "is" *qua* image precisely as an image *of* something else, and "in itself", if that term is applicable at all, it is not an image at all, but just a scrap of paper.

The conception of an ontological disparity between a reality, which is what it is in itself and a conditioned, malleable, and dependent appearance (that is, the conception of an intermediary between being and not-being) implies the further conception of degrees of reality, that some existences are more real than others. The notion is alluded to in the *Sophist* by the observation that the image is real, but not really real (240b). If, then, apart from the reality of the forms, each of which is what it is in and of itself, we are to posit an indefinite range of more real and less real, then there is nothing to prevent the proportional image-original relation that is exhibited in the relation of becoming to being from repeating at subsidiary levels. In the *Republic* this is in fact suggested by the structure of the divided line, and explicitly stated in the book X discussion of imitation at different removes from reality. If one can produce images that are appearances of realities, then one can also produce images of images, or images of images of images. The image–original relation can represent a relation of becoming to

being, but also an analogous proportional relation within becoming exclusively.[13]

The first step in dividing image-making, or imitation, in the *Sophist*, however, implies, not the production of a derivative resemblance, but the production either of a duplicate entity, or the production of some distinct entity. As a general art of imitation, image-making is divided into *eikastikê*, the art of making likenesses, or images that are true to the corresponding originals, and *phantastikê*, the art of making semblances, or images that are not true copies of the original. The Visitor is at a loss whether to locate the sophist as a producer of true images or a producer of false images,[14] images that are the same, or images that are other. The *Cratylus* (432a–c) explicitly rejects the criteria like those now indicated by the *eikastikê–phantastikê* division: they do not supply a possible way to judge the correctness of images (*eikona*). Were a god to make an imitation of Cratylus identical to the original in all respects, down to "motion, soul, and mind", the result would not be "Cratylus and an image of Cratylus, but two Cratyluses". No image is the same as its model in every respect and still an image, and no image is different in every respect and still an image. The image, to be an image, must be same and different at once.

Once the possibility that images exist at all is accepted as established in the dialogue's concluding passages, the Visitor will have no doubts about assigning the sophist directly to *phantastikê.* And in the earlier passage he does not reveal the reason for his uncertainty. But the division itself betrays an uncertainty whether either *eikona*

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13 The image, in Plato, is not only an image, but a metaphysical concept. As Hart observes, any interpretation of Plato's theory of the imagination "carries with it an understanding of Plato's metaphysics". See Ray L. Hart, *The Imagination in Plato*, in: *International Philosophical Quarterly,* 5, 1965, 3, p. 439. Against those, such as Grube, who claim that it is only a metaphor, as well as those, such as Shorey, who see in the image an expression of the metaphysically ineffable, see Richard Patterson, *Image and Reality in Plato's Metaphysics*, Indianapolis 1985. On the image in Plato see also D. Ambuel, *Platon: in Bildern Denken,* in: *Denken mit dem Bild*, ed. Johannes Grave and Arno Schubbach, Munich 2010.

14 In the concluding passages, the division between *eikastikê* and *phantastikê* will be maintained, but no longer as the initial bifurcation of image-making.

or *phantasmata* can represent images at all: if an image as an appearance is in some respects same and in some respects different from the original it resembles – as the sophist must be if he appears to the young and gullible to understand crafts that he in fact does not (233b) – then no image can be simply the same and true or simply different and false.

The *eikastikê–phantastikê* distinction presents a curiosity, since this division, like all diaeresis in the *Sophist,* follows the pattern inspired by an Eleatic ontology that permits no intermediary between a stark opposition of what "is" to what "is not". This correlates with the point previously mentioned: the issue of falsity as raised in the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* does allude to but never explicitly allows for the ontological distinction between being and becoming, along with the epistemological counterpart distinguishing knowing from opinion. Elsewhere, the image serves as a concept that explains, or at least represents, this distinction. Yet here the Visitor presents the question about "appearing and seeming but not being" as a problem not about an intermediary but about a limit, that is, as a problem not about what neither is in and of itself nor is not, but about what is not.

The *eikastikê–phantastikê* distinction, then, casts doubt upon any ontological distinction between image and reality, and so it prefigures the obstacle that immediately follows: the Visitor questions whether images, appearance, and falsity are possible at all. Falsity depends on a conception of not-being, and is thus barred by Eleatic metaphysics. With the aid of Eleaticism, the sophist's defenses are secure: if there is no falsity, he cannot be pinned down as a deceiver or a poor imitation of the philosopher.

III. 265a–268d: The Division of Image Arts Resumed

After the intervening argument raises, then drops the ontological question about the nature of not being and about the nature of being, and then the subsequent analysis of statements establishes the possibility of falsity, the final division to define the sophist as an imitator starts over from the beginning with the division of all arts into acquisitive and productive, and "imitation", which had been a synonym for image-making in general is now moved to occupy a lower branch. Where all prior definitions have highlighted characteristics

of the sophist under the rubric of acquisition, he is now taken as a producer.

In its first step, the final analysis of the image arts departs from the Visitor's prior method. All previous divisions proceeded by strict dichotomy, each step silently dismissing whatever at that stage the sophist "is not", and proceeding to divide in two what the sophist "is". Now both sides of the first division are laid out in parallel before proceeding again with the usual bifurcations.[15] Production comes in two types, the human and the divine, and each produces both realities as well as images of those realities. This appearance of divine productions introduces a passing moment of greater complexity into the diaeretic pattern to explain image-making. Apart from this brief appeal to the divine at the conclusion and the joke about the Visitor's identity at the dialogue's opening, the machinations of the gods have no role in the discussions of the *Sophist*. This fourfold division with the subsequent specifications describing imitation will have the effect of perpetuating the earlier ambiguities about resemblance, and that in a way which will show that the intervening acceptance that false statements are possible is not sufficient to unmask the sophist.

The reinforcement of the ambiguity begins with the introduction of the divine, a singular intrusion on the pattern of the dialogue. Although it will be dropped without further implications shortly after its introduction, the Visitor lays great stress on the matter (265c–e): he is keenly anxious for Theaetetus to accept that the natural world is not the result of some spontaneous, self-acting cause (*aitias automatês*), but of a productive intelligence (*dianoias phyousês*). Nature is the product of divine art (*theia technê*). As a result, the first division splits the art of production into divine and human production. The distinction between human and divine is a frequent Platonic metaphor, most often to symbolize some aspect of the distinction between being and becoming. While one may expect becoming to be explicated in

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15 On the structure of the divisions in the *Sophist*, and on the method as used in the *Sophist* in light of criticisms of the *Sophist's* use found in other dialogues, notably the *Politicus*, see D. Ambuel, *Image and Paradigm in Plato's Sophist*, Las Vegas 2007; cf. also K. Dorter, *Form and Good in Plato's Eleatic Dialogues: The Parmenides, Theaetetus, Sophist and Statesman,* Berkeley – Los Angeles 1994.

terms of its derivative relation to being and human activity in terms of its emulation of or participation in the divine, the structure of the *Sophist's* division effectively bars the drawing of any such relation, since human and divine are are neither connected nor ontologically compared, but simply separated and set side by side. Within the division, it appears that divinely made images are of divinely made products, and human images of human products: no path on the final division can be traced that shows human images representing divine reality.[16]

The division represents both gods and humans as the makers of products and images of their products, each within their own sphere of activity. Just as it was unclear if any ontological comparison can be made between divine and human production, it is equally unclear if any can be made between the production of original entities and the production of images. As already mentioned, the initial concept of the relation between an image and its model was a proportional concept that could obtain in two ways, either between an image and a reality that is not an appearance of something else, or between an image and an appearance. The further possibility remains that it neither, as suggested by the division between *eikastikê* and *phantastikê.* If falsity is other-being, and not an aspect of what is neither being nor not-being, then perhaps the image is either the true duplication of the produced original, or it is the production of something other than the original.

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[16] Following, that is, the pattern of the division. Of course a human painter, who paints a human image of a human product, such as a house (266c), can also make images of the natural products that are, it is agreed, made by divine art, such as animals and humans. The Visitor, however, offers only the illustration of the house painting, "a man-made dream fashioned for those who are awake". There is also a certain connection made of human to divine, as pointed out by Noburu Notomi, at 265e, where it is stated that the human art of *poiêtikê* that produces real things assembles its products out of the products of divine art. It is, of course, never suggested that any creation of entity, through human or divine art, creates with no materials, and both types of products, human and divine, have equal ontological standing as real entities in themselves. In short, the human, as much as the divine is *autopoiêtikê* (266a), an art of producing things themselves: in the divided line of the *Republic*, the shadow cast by an object is the image of an image; here, it is the image of a reality.

The possibilities for representing a relation of image as appearance to original as independent reality are further restricted here, since the *Sophist* locates the object of this division under the heading "production". In the *Republic,* as in the *Timaeus,* reality is the model for creation, but itself uncreated.[17] The demiurge of the *Timaeus*, as indeed the craftsman of *Republic X*, looks first to fixed form in order to then produce its image. Form, however, as what is in itself, and never of something else, is never produced. As in the *Timaeus*, the "demiurge of the universe" in the *Republic* (VII,530a),[18] creates visible celestial bodies, but not unchanging reality. Were the *Sophist* to follow the ontological constraints of other dialogues, image-making in general could not be one division constituting half of production, since production *is* image-making, and the original equivalence of imitation to image-making (235a–c) would be more fitting than its relocation to a lower segment on the division, where the sophist is divided from an unnamed type of imitator who, in contrast to the sophist, imitates "with knowledge". Yet both gods and humans produce some sort of entities other than images, and one is at a loss to say just what those entities are. The producers of things in the *Sophist* produce realities, *onta*, but that observation is itself ambiguous, and it cannot be easily concluded that these *onta* are "real" in the same sense that the forms are considered real, since 1) the dialogue began, then abandoned the attempt to understand "being", a problem found to be equally perplexing with "not-being", and now 2) distinguishes, but does not explain the relation of image-making and entity-making.

The "realities" that productive artists make are marked in the first division of the final definition with a word that occurs only here: *autopoiêtikê*. The production of that which is not an image is the production of things that are *auta*, things themselves. These "things themselves" present once more the same ambiguity: labelled independent realities and separated into human and divine, the examples that illustrate the products of *autopoiêtikê* when taken together

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17 Unless, that is, one wants to count the form of the bed that is described in *Republic X* as made by god, a question I leave aside here.

18 I am grateful to Tom Robinson for bringing this passage to my attention.

constitute the class of entities that make up the objects of opinion (*pistis*) in the divided line – plants, animals, elements, and artifacts. In short, the products of *autopoiêtikê* are all entities within the phenomenal world, nominally described as independent realities, which now raises the question which, if either, of the two image relations is now represented. Does image stand to *onta* here as image to appearance, or as image to reality?

Thus, the account in the *Sophist*, at least nominally, allows for the production of the unproduced. Artisans produce realities that are not images, but the only examples given of such productions are drawn from phenomenal existence. The *Sophist*, then, represents either a shift in conception or a shift in meaning. Either the "being" of that which is real is re-conceived and expanded so as to engulf the domain of becoming that previously was opposed to it; or else "being" appears here in a loose and equivocal fashion, so as to leave the distinction undefined.

One possible conclusion that might be drawn from the *Sophist's* discussion of images, falsity, and statements is that Plato has now abandoned or at least radically revised the middle dialogues' theory of forms. Here is found an all encompassing "great kind" called "difference", perhaps even a newly discovered form, that emerges together with an extension of the kinds of entities acknowledged as real. Realities (*ta onta*) now include not only forms, but also those entities previously opposed to "being" as "becoming". If that is the case, then the image is no longer properly called "less than real" or "real but not really real" (240b); rather, images are all "real" just as any other reality, only "other than" something else that is real.[19]

While such an interpretation holds considerable appeal for a certain philosophical temperament, it is very difficult to fit to the text. The problem of images is introduced by raising an ontological question (the nature of being, meaning of absolute not being, and possibility of an ontological intermediary) that is neither answered nor repudiated, but simply dismissed. If the image-original relation as conceived in the *Republic* is now dropped in the *Sophist*, it is most curious that it reappears in the *Timaeus*. And if Plato did mean in the

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[19] This of course does not explain resemblance of two particulars in virtue of something in common, the core conception of the image relation that is dropped to forge the conclusion.

Sophist to reject the conception he once defended, we might expect that he would in fact reject it. This the *Sophist* never does, but instead persists in toying with ambiguities and thinly veiled allusions to the missing intermediary as it explores imitation without resemblance.

And so the final definition presenting the sophist as a dissembling image-maker is couched in language of ontological intermediacy while obscuring the status of the image as intermediary with pointed ambiguities. By placing the examination of sophistry in the context of Eleatic metaphysics, the dialogue highlights the philosophical difficulties that attend Eleatic ontology. Absent all shades of grey between the black and white of being and not-being, there is no resemblance relation that permits a distinction of sophistry as an inherently deceptive manipulation of belief from philosophy as a pursuit of knowledge. Whatever is in any sense, simply is. Within the structure of the *Sophist*, two consequences ensue: first, that it is recognized that the task posed in the dialogue requires an account of the image, and, secondly, the account follows through a procedure that is inadequate precisely because it fails to allow for the possibility of the image.

IV. Two Types of Imitation

The sophist ultimately fails to hide by the ruse of denying the possibility of images, and in the succeeding steps of the division is rendered with familiar attributes: the sophist is a dissembling imitator whose method proceeds without knowledge. That this identification will not yet succeed in distinguishing sophist from philosopher becomes clear when one turns to inquire what the imitator mimics. Absent in the *Sophist* is any definitive indication of what the sophist imitates or how the imitation relates to its object. Socrates' initial request for definitions distinguishing three types is echoed in the concluding words, where it is stated that the sophist (*sophistikon*) imitates the wise (*sophon*) (268c). In a way, this conclusion reiterates and confirms the starting confusion. Consider *Phaedrus* (278d), where Socrates asserts it would be improper to call the dialectician "wise" (*sophon*), a word that ought to be reserved only for a god, but rather a "lover of wisdom or something of that sort" (*ê philosophon ê toiouton ti*). In that regard, if the *sophistikos* is an imitator of the *sophos*, he is another *philosophos*.

Of course the sophist appears as an imitator of the politician in the *Gorgias* (463d), of the dialectician in the *Phaedrus* (276a), and of the philosopher in the *Republic*, but in the *Sophist* the philosopher has not been defined, and the Visitor has only hinted that the philosopher might be found as one who dialectically divides according to kinds properly. Just what this means, and whether we are entitled to infer that the sophist's image-making is a kind of false dividing, we never learn. We will learn only – and that in the *Politicus* (287c)[20] – that the method of division used throughout the *Sophist*, namely strict dichotomy, is artless and ignores proper division "at the natural joints", in which case it would follow that, if the sophist is indeed a producer of false images, then the sophist identified in the division is not the real thing but a sophistic image of the sophist. And a sophistic image of the sophist would be one in which the distinction between sophist and philosopher is undermined, permitting the sophist to perpetuate the deception needed to practice sophistry.

In other passages where the sophist is described or alluded to as an imitator, the sophist stands to the philosopher as appearance does to reality, that is, the sophist imitates the appearance of the reality that the philosopher imitates, precisely the relation that the *Sophist* obscures even as a conception of imitation is advanced.

Thus, in the *Phaedrus* (276e ff.), where the dialectician's rhetoric is distinguished from the sophist's, the dialectician's art in contrast to the base rhetorician's knack proceeds with an understanding of the soul that will be hearing it and from knowledge of the subject matter. That knowledge is said to involve the knowledge of how to divide properly by kinds.[21]

The discussion of imitation in *Republic X* takes the artisan as a metaphor for the philosopher and the painter for the sophist.[22] Both are imitators, but the sophist, as an imitator of an imitator, operates

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20 Cf. Plato, *Phdr.* 265e.

21 Plato, *Phdr.* 277b, the same claim made now by the Visitor about the philosopher.

22 In this images, the painter is not only called a sophist in a play on words (*Resp.* 596c), but is also described with some of the familiar characteristics of reproach attributed to the sophist: appearing to make all things, but only by imitation and without knowledge, like a person carrying a mirror about.

at one remove from the artisan. This is the ground why Socrates in Book X bars from the imagined city not imitation as such,[23] but that which is *merely* imitative (X,595a). The artisan who imitates essential form does not make a reality, but "something of such sort as what is real" (X,597a), which, therefore is somewhat "indistinct relative to the truth". The artisan makes an image, but the other kind of imitation is at a further remove from the truth yet, imitating not the nature itself, but that nature's appearance in an image.

Republic X implies, as did the *Sophist* initially (235a–b), that all image-making is imitation. But in doing so, the *Republic* makes imitation twofold. When the concluding definition is resumed in the *Sophist*, imitation is shifted to become one type under *phantastikê*, the making of false or deceptive images, and, once at the end of the division, it remains unclear what the sophist imitates, and therefore how or even whether sophist and philosopher can be held apart. Of course it has been concluded by this point that the sophist cannot hide the distinction by claiming that all appearance is true. But even upon rejecting such a nominalistic relativism, the unintended consequence of Eleaticism that made its revision necessary, the sophist and philosopher become difficult to distinguish in another sense. Their difference has been clarified in one way only to be problematized in another.

On such an account, both sophist and philosopher are a kind of image-maker, and perhaps imitator. Insofar as the image is "between" reality and its opposite, no image is simply true or simply false. The *Republic* distinguishes kinds of imitation and endorses the pedagogic value of images that resemble truth and danger of images that do not. This is, to an extent, like the *eidôla – phantasmata* distinction, yet it is also unlike that distinction, since the relation of image to truth is one of resemblance: no image simply is true, or it would not be an image, but a clone; and no image is simply false, or there would be no resemblance that could deceive.

Since, then, the resemblance of the image is a question of degree, and sophist and philosopher alike are image-makers, it might be expected there is no clean demarcation between the two. The

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23 Certain forms of imitation are expressly adopted for the city: cf. Plato, *Resp.* III,394d–398b, 401b–402c.

image-making skills of the sophist are characterized as being practiced "without knowledge". If the philosopher to whom the sophist is to be compared is Socrates, his own dialectical enterprise is self –characterized as lacking in knowledge. The middle dialogues may award the philosopher a more robust knowledge than Socrates does himself, and both the *Phaedrus* and the final summary of the *Sophist* accord the philosopher knowledge that the sophist does not possess. Still, in the *Phaedrus* Socrates balks at calling the dialectician wise, which is an attribute reserved for a god; the dialectician is at best a lover of wisdom (*Phdr.* 278d). The dialogue has left us in the dark as to the relation of imitation to imitated. Sophist and philosopher coalesce: either 1) the image like the reality is a fully endowed entity, not less real, but just other, in which case the products made by philosopher and sophist respectively resemble in nature. Otherwise 2) the image is a resemblance situated between being and its opposite, and so, since all resemblances are true in some respect and not true in some respect, again as image makers the philosopher and sophist appear similar. The knowledge of the philosopher and the ignorance of the sophist is perhaps at best, like truer and falser images, not an absolute but a relative difference.

V. Locating the imitated

Going once more through the steps in the concluding division, one finds that all elements of the contrast between philosopher and sophist mentioned here are made in other dialogues as well. However, the elements of the relation sophist – philosopher are scattered within the division, not joining to form the coherent picture of the other dialogues, but compromising any attempt at specifying the relation using this division as a model. The several attributes mentioned would lead to three distinct locations on the completed division.[24]

1) The philosopher is a lover of truth, while the sophist deals in deception. In light of this, the philosopher might be a practitioner of *eikastikê* as opposed to *phantastikê*, which would fashion the

[24] The division is outlined in chart format below, to facilitate an overview.

philosopher as another image-maker, but not an imitator. 2) It is also said that the sophist's productions are brought forth without knowledge, but the philosophers with. Then the philosopher is indeed an imitator, to be located within the unnamed branch of the division that is separated from imitation without knowledge, but, as an imitator, the philosopher is a knowledgeable maker of *phantastikê*, false images and the sophist an ignorant make of false images. 3) Or finally, if the sophist is an imitator of the philosopher, then the two ought not to be image-makers on an equal footing. Instead, the philosopher would need to be ranked as the producer of that which the sophist imitates. Since the sophist produces man-made images, the philosopher would be a maker of human realities, a cousin to the carpenters and cobblers.

Each of the three possibilities is untenable, in the first place due to conflicts internal to the portrayal of the philosopher in contrast with the sophist: any decision about where to peg the philosopher recognizes one of the philosopher's attributes, but excludes others. In addition, each available choice bespeaks the *Sophist's* aporetic structure, that is, its failure to attain the sought-after explanation of resemblance.

Consider the three mentioned characteristics of the philosopher, taking them in reverse order. The third possibility, that the philosopher is a maker of realities – a producer, as it were, of the unproduced – runs up against the lack of a distinction between the imitation of reality and the imitation of appearance. It might succeed in locating the philosopher as an artisan a notch above the sophist, where the Visitor appears to want him situated. But then an impasse is reached: either 1) the sophist is an imitator of realities, not images, reopening in another way the issue of the conceptual distance separating philosopher from sophist, since they would then both be engaged with realities, or 2) those "realities" – shoes, furniture, etc. – are not themselves called images because no true distinction can be made between reality and image, and "being" has grown to engulf "becoming", in which case the distinction in ontological level between philosopher and sophist is not made by assigning the philosopher this position after all. Or 3) artifacts are called "realities" (*onta*) only in a rather inexact *façon de parler*. Opting for this latter, even apart from the objectionable ambiguities, has other difficulties, since the diaeretic design that bifurcates and sets side by side divinely and humanly

produced phenomenal entities has effectively blocked any means to represent the human imitation of the divine.

To pursue the second alternative for situating the philosopher *vis à vis* the sophist finds no happier result. If the philosopher is an imitator with knowledge and the sophist without, the two remain, at least ontologically, on par. The sophist is then not the imitator of the philosopher, but both produce the same kind of imitation. That has, then, the curious consequence that the imitator who possesses knowledge knowingly renders false images.[25] Moreover, the philosopher and the sophist would not be distinguishable by their products. Much as it is observed in the *Meno* that true opinion, as long as it remains in one's possession, serves as well as knowledge, one could observe here that the generated false image is a false image, whether knowingly or unwittingly generated.

In that case it might be proposed to assign the philosopher to *eikastikê*, rather than *phantastikê*, the maker of "true" rather than "false" images. On the face of things, that promises to provide the way to make a clean cut between philosopher and sophist. But the division, reliant as it is upon a procedure infused with Eleaticism, precludes the possibility of images that it is meant to illustrate, since it neither allows for nor explains resemblance. An "image" that duplicates an original in every respect is not an image but a copy; an "image" in no respect true to the original is no image at all. The image must be both true and false, if it is to be a resemblance and so to be "real but not really real". And in that case, sophist and philosopher cannot be easily or distinctly opposed by an appeal to their products. Once captured, the sophist need not play coy, in order to remain elusive.

VI. Imitation and Idealism

The confusions notwithstanding, the conclusion that falsity is indeed possible makes a separation of philosopher from sophist conceivable only to intimate anew that the results of their respective activities are indissociable. In fact their characteristic distinguishing marks – and

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25 Whether that would be the philosopher or some as yet unnamed profession, it would be, at least to the Platonist, a bizarre undertaking. There would be grounds for making this occupation, if possible, baser than sophistry: the sophist deceives, but is to some extent ignorant of what he does.

on this point the *Sophist* coincides with other dialogues – are less material and more cognitive in nature: the dividing point between the imitation of reality and the imitation of appearance resides in the fact that the philosopher knows in some sense what it is the philosopher seeks to imitate, while the sophist lacks knowledge and is acquainted only with the appearance. To extend the same considerations to those who are engaged in conversation by the philosopher or sophist, the philosopher must understand others' minds, since he seeks to discover truth and to avoid deception, but the sophist need understand only how others are affected, since he seeks only to persuade.

Falsity aside, one is led, consequently, to wonder whether the attempts to hold the sophist apart from others tends toward an idealism. Should one infer that images can be distinguished from realities only insofar as they are constituted by the minds of the maker and the viewer? The dog portrait, after all, is only an image of a dog and not a mere scrap of paper, when *seen as* an image. Both in production and acquisition, the image is what it is through cognition. The intention and abilities of the image-maker contribute to the quality and effect of the image, and the skilled image-maker must understand something of the psychology of image acquisition. On the other end, what is understood of the seen image and whether or not it is mistaken for a reality is in turn itself a result of the cognitive state and capacities of the person apprehending the image. This is precisely the reason why the sophist and the philosopher, despite their differing motivations and goals, both require capabilities directly related to the production and acquisition of images. In these two respects, "what" the image is, is a product of the maker and viewer both, an idealistic aspect not inconsistent with the claim that the image is "real but not really real". But if the "nature" of the image ultimately lies in the soul of the beholder, then the distinction of the better or truer image from its opposite remains a subjective one, and the acknowledgement of the possibility of falsity cannot escape the epistemological relativism that the denial of falsity threatened to impose.

Even with its acknowledgement of falsity, the *Sophist* does not afford clear passage toward insight into its object of inquiry. And so the *Sophist* ends in *aporia*. It is an aporetic conclusion that shows, negatively, the inadequacy of Eleatic metaphysics, revealed in particular in Eleaticism's utility as a cover for sophistry. The elements of the aporetic conclusion are mostly trails well travelled in the Platonic

dialogues. Socrates' trial and execution, the characteristics of sophistry, and its artless imitation of philosophy are themes that never lose a critical relevance and timeliness for Plato. Yet even if the *Sophist* is not a metaphysical revolution and ends in aporia, there are indications in the argument that it does more than present old familiarities in new dialectical formulations.

VII. Being and Imagination

The *Republic* presents separate metaphors to describe the image-original relation: a metaphor of resemblance in the divided line in Book VI, and a metaphor of imitation in the artist analogy in Book X. The former is primarily an ontological metaphor, the latter epistemological, and the *Republic* does little to indicate how the two might be integrated. Furthermore, in the *Republic*, the image is presented above all as an ontological concept and employed to illustrate the ontological disparity between phenomenal appearance and reality, while little is offered to explain how real and less real are related beyond a metaphorical appeal to resemblance and participation.

Now in the *Sophist*, that emphasis is reversed, and an inkling of idealism arises, sharpened by the Eleatic–inspired absence of any account of resemblance, together with the ambiguity about whether there is any *ontological* distinction between image and reality to be drawn at all. The *Sophist's* account of images in relation to the *Republic* metaphors can be read as twofold. First, there is the reversal of emphasis: the *Sophist* stresses the cognitive (imitation) over the ontological (resemblance) to the point of casting doubt on the ontological distinction altogether. If it is a simple reversal, then, in the absence of the ontological element, even the addition of the account of falsity does not secure a definition of the sophist as distinguished from the philosopher. At the same time, the ambiguities about resemblance that are present in the reversal do not indicate a rejection of the *Republic* ontology, and the *Sophist* can also be read as going beyond an earlier incomplete account of the image by highlighting the necessary cognitive element in the explication of the ontology of the image.

That the image cannot be adequately construed without an ontology of the image is reaffirmed in the *Sophist* by the aporetic elements of the dialogue's structure. But the *Sophist* also positively, if not

expressly, indicates that the ontological account of the image cannot be adequately construed without a sufficient epistemology.

As intermediate between being and not being, the image *qua* image is without nature in itself, but is "of a sort", a conditioned existence, the existence of which is relative to a multiplicity of other phenomena. The image is not a *ti*, a this, but a *toiouton*, a such. It is not a thing that resembles another thing, but its nature is resemblance and therefore relational. This means that it is not a pure construct of the mind, but, as image, is determinable (in many, but not arbitrary respects) while not in itself determined. For the image to be an image some determination has to be made in some respect, and no determination is absolute. The image that is seen is always "seen as".

If, then, phenomena *qua* images are determinable in multiple ways, but never of themselves determined, the formulation of the ontology requires an interpretation of that process of determination beyond the metaphorical. Although the image itself is presented as an intermediary between being and not-being, determining the ontological relation between image and original requires in turn another intermediary, and that a cognitive one. In other words, to construe phenomena as images demands a conception of the imagination.

There is a sense in which the ontology of resemblance is neither absent nor concealed in the *Sophist*, but points toward its completion. Despite the introduction of "kinds" of the greatest generality and abstraction accompanied by discussion of their interweaving, all subsequent illustrations of combinations, of true and false statements, and, finally, of real entities and their images are drawn from the phenomenal world of becoming and change, that is, the things that occupy the lower segments of the divided line: animals, plants, material things, artifacts, people, flying things, sitting things. The interweaving of words in judgments does not represent some ontological novelty about how the forms can combine. The communion of forms in phenomenal appearances is presented in the *Republic* as well: the form itself is one, an account that holds "for just and unjust, good and evil, and all the forms: each in itself is one, but by communion with actions and bodies and each other, they make their appearance everywhere, and each appears many".[26] The analysis prefigures, not

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26 Plato, *Resp.* V,476a. Trans. R. E. Allen.

a new accounting of relations among forms, but a kind of logic of the imagination.[27]

Of course, Plato does not introduce any explicit conception of the imagination as a power of mind distinct from others. However, in the *Republic*, the object of opinion (*doxa*), as the power of true and false judgment, is images, that is, opinion is always directed to images, namely, to becoming as that which is between being and not-being. Now in the *Sophist*, a conception of *phantasia* is sketched as a specific type of *doxa.*

Phantasia is introduced at *Theaetetus* (152c) as an abstract noun corresponding to the verb *phainesthai*. There, in the context of Theaetetus' first definition that knowledge is sensation or perception, *phantasia* and *aisthesis* are equated, but, in the context of that definition, *aisthesis* is also equivalent in meaning to *doxa*. *Phantasia* occurs again in the *Theaetetus* at 161e together with *doxa*. While the two terms are not explicitly made synonymous, both are said to be subject to refutation, indicating that, like *doxa*, *phantasia* has an element of judgment, and is not to be reduced to some simpler state of awareness or seeming that is prior to affirmation or denial (as the power of *eikasia* in the *Republic* could possibly be interpreted).[28] In the *Sophist*, the term *phantasia* is joined with opinion (*doxa*) at 260e, and subsequently is explained at 264a–b as a particular type of judgment. *Phantasia* is sensation (*aisthêsis*) mixed with opinion

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27 While the emphasis here is on the conception of the image, not the analysis of falsity, this is to propose a reading that departs from a common reading of the *Sophist's* analysis of false statement as a shift in intellectual focus from the ontology of the middle dialogues. J. Szaif (*Platons Begriff der Wahrheit*, Freiburg 1998), for example, building on Burnyeat's reading (*The Theaetetus of Plato*, Indianapolis – Cambridge 1990) of the *Theaetetus*, sees in the *Sophist* an account of truth and falsity of judgments that is distinct from and not to be reconciled with a conception of ontological truth found in the middle dialogues. The path proposed here suggests a reading that makes possible a continuity, not a break.

28 Plato, *Resp.* VI,510a–b. *Eikasia* designates the most obscure images: shadows and reflections. Nevertheless, the objects of *eikasia* still form a part of the division that as a whole is also labeled "the opinable" (*to doxaston*), and, furthermore, the denizens of the cave pass judgments about shadows (VII,517c–d).

(*doxa*), that is, sensation that gives rise to an affirmation or denial, which can be contrasted with thought (*dianoia*) apart from sensation leading to affirmation or denial. The workings of *phantasia* and *doxa* form the basis for mechanisms of sophistry.

As some species of artist of imitation, the sophist's brushes are words and his canvas the soul. His images are *logoi* – verbal constructions, and thus the concluding definition of the sophist is preceded by an examination of the possibility of *logoi*. The investigation of *logoi* and false statements has nothing to say about being and not-being as such. That undertaking has failed, about which the Visitor reminds us at 258e, but it has much to say pertaining to the matter of images.

For the sophist's verbal images to be possible, or for that matter, for the philosopher's as well, false judgement must be possible. In the *Sophist's* analysis of false statements, the possibility of true statement and of false statement arise together: both depend on the possibility of making meaningful judgments.

The analysis of falsity in the *Sophist* is an involved subject, and the brief remarks here are not to explore its multiple dimensions, but are restricted to looking at it only in regard to the representation of the image, and that to call attention to one thread running through it, a thread that traces connections in thought employed to justify the possibility of falsity. It should first be noted, however, that a reading that seeks to situate the discussion of statements in the context of the image, precludes a reading according to which the analysis of falsity is a response to a confusion that arises with the metaphysics of forms and participation of the middle dialogues. The problem of falsity is raised in the *Theaetetus* with a curious argument: whoever holds a belief believes either something that person knows or something he does not know. But it is impossible either to think that something you do not know is something else you do not know or that it is something else that you do know (188a–c). The confusion unfolds in a series of puzzles about false judgment that will be taken up in the *Sophist* in the form of the puzzle about the possibility of images. It may appear that Socrates at this point lacks an understanding of attribution that the Visitor subsequently discovers in the *Sophist.* It seems to hinge on the notion that knowledge must always be apprehension, the direct knowledge what something is, and failure to understand that one can attribute

a property to something in some respect, and do so falsely, without self-contradiction. It has been represented as a confusion of "knowing what" with "knowing that", of "knowledge by acquaintance" with "propositional knowledge", or of an "is" of existence with an "is" of predication.[29] Then the unpersuasive argument that knowing must always be knowing something and knowing something that *is* can confuse only out of a kind of ontological identification based on participation of the subject in a form, and Socrates is shown groping

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29 It is an interpretive tactic that envisions logical progress in exchange for metaphysical regress. In Owen's words, "Platonists who doubt that they are Spectators of Being must settle for the knowledge that they are investigators of the verb 'to be'." (G. E. L. Owen, *Plato on Not-Being*, in: G. Vlastos [ed.], *Plato I: Metaphysics and Epistemology*, Garden City [NY] 1971, p. 223.) The approach not only chooses to disregard the metaphysical cues in the *Sophist*, it also suffers from the weakness of solving a problem that was not in need of solving. The distinction of form from participant in the middle dialogues already provides a way to distinguish different respects in virtue of which the subject of discourse may be said to be, and therefore, with that, a way to conceptualize the possibility of true and false statements. Where the possibility of falsity is questioned, Plato regularly portrays such doubts as simple sophistry. (See, for example, *Euthyd.* 298c–d, *Phil.* 14c–d.) Prominent in the interpretive tradition that finds in the *Sophist* an inquiry, not into "being" but into "to be" are Owen, and Frede (*Prädikation und Existenzaussage*, Göttingen 1967). For a lucid analysis and critique of the logico-analytical style of interpreting the *Sophist*, see Francisco Fronterotta's contribution to this volume.

The business of the *Sophist* is to examine not logical but metaphysical error. This is recognized by O'Brien who gives a detailed reading, unsurpassed in its sensitivity to language, that, like the logico-analytical reading sees the introduction of a new distinction to remedy a prior confusion, but, unlike the logico-analytical reading, finds it to be a metaphysical distinction in response to a metaphysical lack. In O'Brien's reading, puzzles over absolute not-being, a concept that Plato like Parmenides rejects, arise from construing absolute not-being as the only sense of not-being. If that is the situation with Parmenides, in the *Sophist* Plato introduces "alterity" as a possible meaning of not-being that avoids the paradoxes about falsity born of Eleaticism.

In contrast to those interpretations of the *Sophist* that begin with a solution to then launch the search for a problem, the reading offered here takes the issues of falsity and of the image as coordinated and jointly deriving from the presently sought-after nature of sophistry.

toward the discovery of a theory of predication that will remedy the confusion.

Yet there are plenty of instances where Plato does not doubt the possibility of judgment, true and false, or see such doubt as anything but sophistry. In *Republic V*, for example, a discussion of roles of men and women is employed to demonstrate that identity or opposition in nature does not mean sameness or difference in every respect. (*Resp.* V,454c) A distinction between character and thing characterized (such as that between form and particular) is sufficient to account for this, and false judgment becomes an issue only if it is assumed that the only kind of cognition is a kind of knowledge that is the direct apprehension of entity, or if one assumes a kind of relativistic nominalism, such as was attributed to Protagoras in the *Theaetetus*, or such as implied by the denial of a distinction between reality and appearance that the sophist hides behind in the *Sophist*. The issue of sophistry sets up the issue of falsity.

For meaningful judgments to be possible at all, both true and false judgment must be possible. Meaningful judgment, in turn, relies on combinations, and indeed a kind of combination that involves limited possibilities of synthesis. To deny to any possibility of communion in judgment would destroy all discourse: "those who will not allow anything to be called by the other's name are absurd" because "they are compelled to use 'being', and 'apart', and 'from others', and 'in itself', … and are powerless to refrain from them and to avoid connecting them in their account" (252b–c). Universal combination of all, on the other hand, likewise would prevent all meaningful discourse. Theaetetus, who has not forgotten the previous day's lesson on the implications of Heraclitean ontology jumps to assert that universal communion leads to contradiction: "motion itself would rest altogether and rest itself would in turn be in motion" (252d).

Judgment, then, rests both on the possibility of drawing the connections of limited communion and, since it is limited, on discerning and defining limits, which is precisely what the soul does in speech and and thinking.[30] (And it seems to be what, according to

[30] A noteworthy curiosity of terminology: in the *Sophist*, the Visitor employs *dianoia* in the passage 263a–c both as a term that is either equivalent to or designates a type of *doxa*, but also as a source of *doxa*–judgment (*doxa*)

the Eleatic Visitor, we are trying to do, and what the philosopher does better than others, in dividing by kinds.) Moreover, to judge by the examples offered, if not by any explicit assertion, speech and judging are representations of phenomena. The image, conceived as resemblance, represents the corresponding ground for cognition through such limited synthesis – a resemblance that as such is determinable but not of itself determined. It is not by accident that the conception of combination (*koinônia*), which is employed to explicate how samenesses and differences interweave in thought and judgment, is initially introduced in the dialogue as a power of soul (248a), when the Visitor, examining the contentions of the "Friends of the Forms" urges that knowing *(to gignôskein)* and being known *(to gignôskesthai)* are a kind of action and affection respectively. In light of the nature of combining, opinion – both *doxa* through *dianoia* and *doxa* through *phantasia* – is a seeing as, because combining is a necessary condition for judging (and seeing) which is never simple and direct apprehension of reality, but always a seeing something as something.

Corresponding to the ontological characteristics of the image, which is the object of all judgment and discourse, the *logos* is always *of* something (262e) and *of* some sort, namely, qualified as true or false (263b) in respect of the manner of combination. The cognitive act of judging always is a synthesizing of elements, and so no statement simply states something but only states something *as*. Consequently, it is asserted that *with respect to* each thing (each of the *onta*, the things that "are" or "appear") both things that are (*onta*) are many and things that are not (*ouk onta*) are many. In this way, then, regardless of terminology, entities – *onta* – are described here as images – conditioned and relational.

The *Sophist*, not abandoning the earlier metaphysics, points to gap in it, and in so doing, points in the direction of the *Timaeus* and its attempt to complete the bridge. For the image to "be" an image

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is the completion of *dianoia*. In the divided line of the *Republic*, of course, *dianoia* is situated with knowledge, not judgment, and this is reflected in the *Theaetetus* (206d), where Socrates (not the Visitor) describes speech in nearly the same words as does the Visitor, namely as a vocal stream flowing through the mouth, however, not as equivalent to *dianoia*, but as an image of it, the imprinted judgment (*doxa*) like an image in a mirror or in water.

requires an ontological account of becoming as a deficient resemblance of being. But for the image to "be" an image, it must also be seen as an image. Resemblance and imitation are disjoint in the *Republic*. Now in the *Sophist*, although the distinction of judgment from knowledge is obscured, a more developed account of cognition begins to take shape. Judgment does not remain a power of opinions about images, separate and distinct from knowledge as a power to know reality. Rather, judgment, as *of* images, which are ultimately images of reality, must function as a power to connect image with reality and reality with image, recognizing affinities and disparities that can be attributed to images with more or less truth or falsity.

Resemblance and imitation are more explicitly tied together in the cosmogony of the *Timaeus*: the demiurge looks to eternal form, and then creates its resemblance in an act of imitation. Where the *Republic* makes becoming an intermediate between being and not being, the *Sophist* hints at the recognition, made explicit in the *Timaeus*, that this is an ontology requiring in addition another sort of intermediate between being and becoming.[31] And in that regard, true and false statements may be thought as the result of a kind of productive and reproductive imagination. They are a synthesis of putting things together in certain ways. The key to performing such synthesis, illustrated by the analysis of true and false judgment, is the recognition and representation of sameness and difference.

Thus in the *Timaeus* the soul functions as a power intermediate between being and becoming: the demiurge makes the soul a "third form of being, intermediate and compounded of both" (35a), that is, compounded from both indivisible reality that always remains the same (*tês ameristou kai aei kata tauta echousês ousias*) and from divisible becoming (*gignomenês meristês*). In virtue of its composition

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[31] The *Republic* does ascribe a kind of intermediacy to mathematical objects. It has been observed that the soul in the *Timaeus*, apart from its psychic powers, is also described in geometrical terms, as stressed by Filip Karfik: "Man darf auch nicht vergessen, dass die Seele – samt dem Umlauf des Selben – als eine Mischung teils aus dem Intelligiblen und teils aus dem Körperlichen besteht (35a1–b1): sie ist weder rein intelligibel noch ganz körperlich, sonder etwas dazwischen, nämlich ein mathematisches Wesen." (F. Karfik, *Die Beseelung des Kosmos: Untersuchungen zur Seelenlehre und Theologie in Platons Phaidon und Timaios*, München 2004.)

out of sameness and difference, whenever the soul touches either becoming, that is, "being that is scattered" (*ousian skedatên*) or reality, that is, "undivided being" (*ameriston*) then the soul is "moved throughout its entire being" (*kinoumenê dia pasês heautês*) and determines "with what something is the same and from what it is different, and in what respect, and in what place, and in what way, and at what time" (*hotôi t' an ti tauton êi kai hotou an heteron, pros hoti te malista kai hopêi kai hopôs kai hopote*) things become, are, and are acted on (37a–b).

The *Sophist* does make "sameness" and "difference" central to the functioning of all judgment, but does not, like the *Timaeus*, declare the pair the very stuff of soul.[32] Instead "sameness" and "difference" appear among the nondescript "greatest kinds". That very greatness may incline one to take them as newly introduced Platonic forms. It is evident that in the *Timaeus*, "sameness" and "difference" do not behave as forms ought, but rather more like powers: they rotate within as the "circle of the same"and the "circle of the

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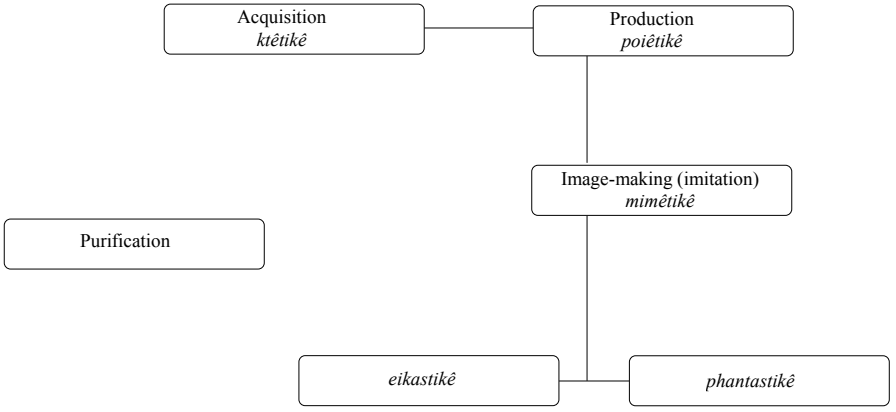
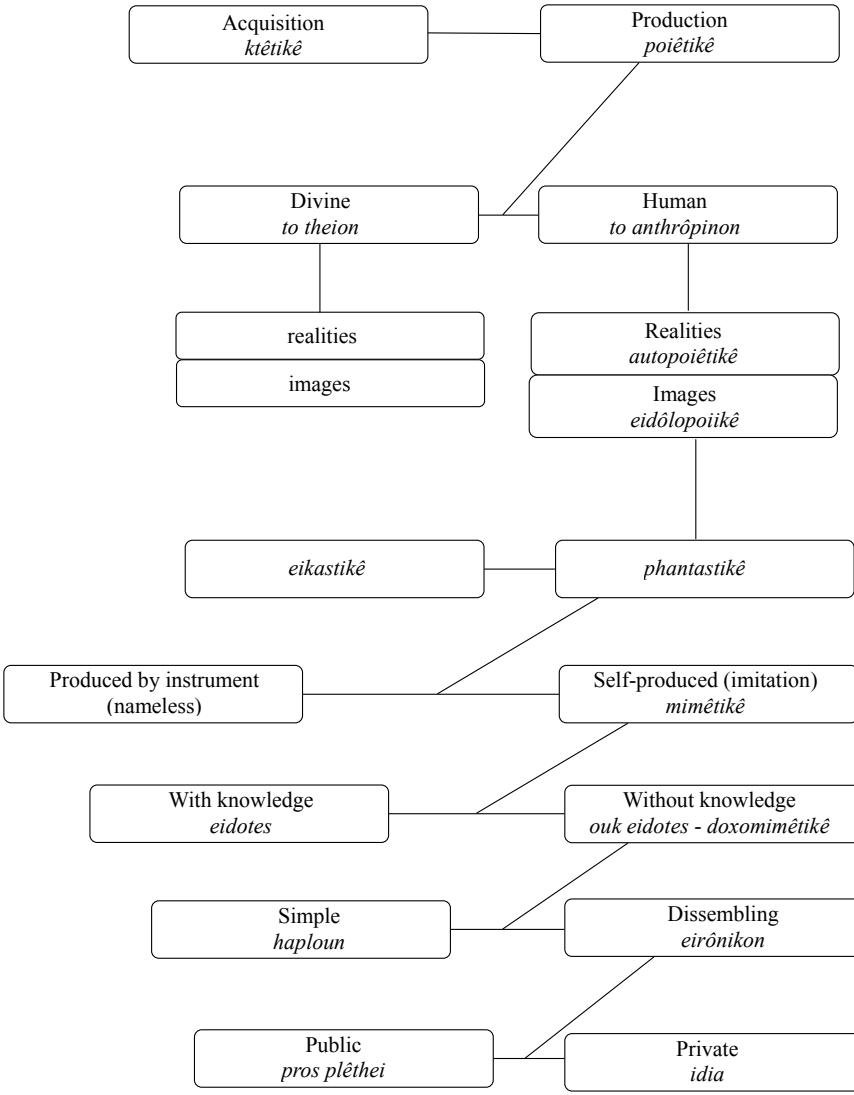
32 This is meant to point to one philosophical aspect, and not to imply a global interpretation of the *Timaeus*. While sameness and difference are the very stuff of soul, they are not in the *Timaeus* exclusively powers of soul. For an analysis of sameness and difference at different ontological levels – becoming, soul, and intelligible being – in the *Timaeus*, see L. Brisson, *Le Même et* l'Autre, Sankt Augustin 1994. The intermediacy of soul in the *Timaeus* comes about through its being made by the demiurge out of the two types of being (indivisible sameness and divisible becoming) that exist in some sense prior to soul. As Karfik notes: "Den drei intelligiblen Genera von Sein, Identität und Differenz entsprechen drei im Bereich des Körperlichen entstehende Genera von Sein, Identität und Differenz (35a1–6). Dies setzt voraus, dass zwischen dem Intelligiblen und dem Entstehenden eine Art Beziehung besteht, die der vorkosmischen Beziehung zwischen den Ideen der vier Elemente einerseits und deren spurenartigen Abbildungen in der Chora andererseits analog ist…" (F. Karfik, *op. cit.,* p. 205). And so the above sketch of an advance toward integrating resemblance and imitation selects a certain theme while remaining something of an abstraction from the differentiated detail of the *Timaeus*, which includes the act of the demiurge in fabricating soul out of constituents that, in some sense, pre-exist. As Karfik also observes, the distinction of world soul from the activity of the *nous* that is the demiurge in the *Timaeus* disappears in the *Nomoi*: "So scheint in den *Nomoi* die regelmässige Bewegung der Weltseele mit einem sich bewegendem *nous* zusammenzufliessen" (*ibid.,* p. 243).

other", bringing about cognition, both knowledge, and judgment and conviction (*doxai kai pisteis*). (37c) But in the *Sophist* sameness and difference are not much besides plain great, that is, rather empty abstractions and therefore rather un-formlike. Unlike "odd", "beautiful", "ugly", or the forms in general, neither sameness nor difference can be understood as designating any distinct nature in itself. In that respect as concepts "sameness" and "difference" are suited as tools for cognition: not distinct in themselves, but that by which things can be associated or distinguished. They are relations that obtain between what is distinguished and then deemed same or different. And where sameness or difference obtain, they do not obtain as such, but only in respect of some distinct nature. 3 and 5 are same with respect to oddness; Socrates and Helen of Troy are different with respect to physical beauty.

Sameness and difference, as it were, forge links among particularities, none of which is anything definite in itself, bind them into quasi-unities, and in doing so link the particular to the universal, the suchness of becoming to the nature of reality. This cannot be done apart from an act of mind. As long as the distinction between reality and appearance is concealed, the sophist need not feign coyness to hide his deception; but even acknowledging the distinction does not bring the sophist to light, apart from a complementary account of the construction of the image in judgement from the undetermined possibilities of appearance. Where sameness and difference are used in the *Sophist* to build a logic of judgment, they reappear in the *Timaeus* the constituents of soul, which in turn is identified as that which binds becoming to being. In that regard, the logic of judgment is a logic of the imagination, and Plato's image, as problematized and rethought in the *Sophist*, introduces shades of the imagination as the power it will become for subsequent philosophical thought: the power to cross in both directions the divide between the particular and the universal.

Final division (beginning): 235b–237a



Final division (concluding): 265a–268d