THE SOPHIST'S PUZZLING *EPISTÊMÊ* IN THE *SOPHIST**

ABSTRACT

Against prevailing interpretations, this article contends that Plato's Sophist *and* Statesman *accord the sophist a kind of 'knowing-how' (*epistêmê*). In* Soph. *233c10–d2, the Visitor and Theaetetus agree that the sophist has not truth but a* δοξαστικὴ ἐπιστήμη. *This phrase cannot mean 'a seeming knowledge', for* –ικός *adjectives formed from verbs express the ability to perform the action denoted by the verb—here,* δοξάζω. *Although not a first-order, subject-area knowledge, sophistry is a second-order knowledge of how to form and use judgements (*doxai*). Other acknowledgements of the sophist's* epistêmê *and the ascription to him of* τέχνη, *'craft/expertise', confirm that the Visitor's conclusion is not to be dismissed as irony. To critics who argue from the* Gorgias *and from other works that Plato must consider the Visitor's conclusion an error, the author replies: 1) other dialogues do not control the Visitor dialogues; 2) the Visitor does not validly demonstrate that the sophist lacks all knowledge; 3) by admitting sensibles into Being, the Visitor and Theaetetus allow the objects of* epistêmê *to include things in the embodied world, even likenesses. Non-philosophers'* epistêmê *in the Visitor dialogues is not implicated in the difficulties that critics have raised about epistemology in the so-called Two Worlds dialogues. On this new ontology, even the sophist, if guided by philosophical rulers, can benefit citizens by employing his elenctic expertise as Socrates did, aiding their growth toward virtue.*

Keywords: sophist; *epistêmê*; *technê*; *doxa*; -ικός adjectives; imitation

In Plato's *Sophist*, the Eleatic Visitor's first six definitions of the sophist culminate in the conclusion that the sophist, although not having truth, has 'a kind of doxastic knowledge, δοξαστικὴν … ἐπιστήμην, about everything' (233c10–11). Does the sophist really have *epistêmê* and, if so, what are the implications for epistemology in the Visitor dialogues? Translators tend to render δοξαστική as 'seeming', entailing that the sophist does not really have *epistêmê*, but this translation cannot be right. δοξαστική means 'having to do with forming or using beliefs derived from appearances', *doxai*. The sophist, then, is accorded an *epistêmê*.

This paper aims to contribute to the investigation of Plato's later epistemology by examining what follows if we take this puzzling passage literally. In Part I, I defend translating δοξαστική as 'able to formulate judgements'. In Part II, I argue that the Visitor and Theaetetus agree that the sophist has an *epistêmê*. I do not accept the view that Plato undercuts their agreement. In Part III, I consider implications of their agreement, looking at epistemological consequences of admitting sensibles among the 'things that are'. This admission provides a basis on which even the sophist and other non-philosophers can have *epistêmê*. As a result, what I call 'the Bridge Problem' (= BP), raised by many critics of the *Republic*, does not arise. In the *Republic*, Socrates sets *epistêmê* over 'things that are,' *sc*. intelligibles, and *doxa* over

'things that are and are not', *sc.* sensibles and their accidents (477a–b). But if cognitive powers cannot bridge the gap between intelligibles and sensibles so as to cognize both, it becomes mysterious how philosophers or dialecticians can apply their knowledge to a city or how non-philosophers can have craft knowledge. It lies beyond the boundaries of this paper to discuss whether so-called 'Two Worlds' (= TW) dialogues themselves contain what is needed to solve BP.[1] In any case, by admitting sensibles into 'being', the Visitor and Theaetetus allow *epistêmê* of statesmanship to guide a city and craftsmen to have *epistêmê*. In Part IV, I suggest that on this basis Plato rehabilitates craft knowledge and even leaves it open that the sophist may contribute if guided by a knowing ruler.

I. ΔΟΞΑΣΤΙΚΗ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΗ: KNOWLEDGE HOW TO FORMULATE *DOXAI*

The Visitor and Theaetetus agree that the sophist has a *technê* (221d). They clarify this expertise as one by which the sophist makes his followers think that he knows everything. In 233a5–6 the Visitor speaks of the sophist as someone who disputes without knowing the subject matter, and at 233c6–8 the two agree that, although sophists appear wise in everything to their students, they are not so. It is a puzzle, then, what the Visitor means when he concludes that the sophist has a kind of knowledge (*epistêmê*): 'Accordingly', says the Visitor, 'the sophist has been revealed by us as having a kind of δοξαστική *epistêmê* about everything, but not truth' (233c10–11). Given that δοξαστική is semantically connected to δόξα, many—including Schleiermacher, Campbell, Cornford and Notomi—translate δοξαστική as 'apparent/seeming'. Others—such as White, Rowe, Ammann and Esses—opt for 'belief-based'. Movia and Crivelli go for both. None of these translations is correct.

δοξαστική cannot mean 'seeming' or 'apparent'. As LSJ indicate, this adjective is derived from the verb δοξάζω, which means 'to form or hold a *doxa*'. –ικός adjectives formed from verbs express the capability of performing the action denoted by the verb.[2] δοξαστικός means 'capable of forming *doxai*'. The only translation I have found that conveys this sense with no undercutting qualification is Fronterotta's 'capace di produrre opinioni'.[3] The earliest well-attested appearance of δοξαστικός is in Isocrates' *Against the Sophists* (17). There we read that oratory is the work of a soul that is brave and *doxastikê*. The orator does not have a 'seeming' or 'apparent' soul. He has a soul able to form *doxai*, 'judgements', which for Isocrates are the best cognitive states we can reach about practical matters. Plato uses and even coins many –ικός verbal adjectives. In our dialogue, εἰκαστική and φανταστική are rendered by translators as 'image-making' and 'appearance-making'. A *technê* that is ἀπατητική (264d6) is not 'based on or arising from deception'; it is a *technê* of producing deception. If the Visitor wanted to say that the sophist's *epistêmê* is 'apparent' or 'seeming', he would

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[1] By TW dialogues are generally meant the *Phaedo*, the *Symposium*, the *Republic*, the *Phaedrus*, Socrates' dream in the *Cratylus*, and the *Timaeus*. For a review of the question, see J. Moss, *Plato's Epistemology. Being and Seeming* (Oxford, 2021), 18–26.

[2] Cf. R. Kühner – B. Gerth, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache* (Hannover, 1890–1904), 1.371 (§417.9); A.N. Ammann, *-ικός bei Platon. Ableitung und Bedeutung mit Materialsammlung* (Freiburg [Switzerland], 1953), 260–3.

[3] F. Fronterotta, *Platone: Sofista* (Milan, 2007), 287. The few others who opt for 'opinion-producing' or 'opining' either mistranslate οὐκ ἀλήθειαν as 'not true' or subsequently lapse into 'apparent' and 'opinion-based' (Centrone).

call it δοκοῦσαν (cf. *Phlb*. 51a5, *Grg*. 464a3–4, *Tht*. 176c6, *Leg*. 691a6, 886b7) or δόξουσαν (*Soph*. 236a5–6). All these considerations tell also against 'reputed', found in Cornford and others, for that presupposes δοξαστήν (cf. *Phdr*. 248b5).

Among other dialogues, δοξαστικός appears only in the *Theaetetus*. The person who can explain all the parts of a wagon 'has added an account to true *doxa* and instead of *doxastikos* has become expert and *epistêmon* about the being of a wagon' (207c2). The descriptor, 'based on beliefs', could not apply to this person. Rather, he had been performing the action, δοξάζειν, forming or using beliefs about the wagon, but now he has knowledge. Aristotle provides support: 'there being two parts of the soul that possess reason, it'—namely, *phronêsis*—'must be the excellence of one of the two, that is, of that part which forms opinions', τοῦ δοξαστικοῦ (*Eth. Nic.* 1140b25–6, transl. Ross-Urmson). τὸ δοξαστικόν is the part of the soul that does the work of δοξάζειν, as the αἰσθητικόν is the part that perceives (*De an.* 413b30). Cherniss translated Plutarch's δοξαστικῆς (*An. Procr.* 1017A) and δοξαστικόν (1024A) as 'opinionative', that is, productive of *doxa*.

Translations that amount to 'belief-based knowledge' fail for two reasons. First, 'belief-*based*' is not a definition of δοξαστικός. Second, 'belief-based knowledge' is a false idea. It cannot be knowledge, the content of which is beliefs, since beliefs are not knowledge. Beliefs cannot provide the *ground of justification* that a cognitive state is knowledge because they can be of the false, while knowledge is always of the true (*Resp*. 533c3–5, 476d, 479d, and the gist of the *Theaetetus*). We need more, at least grounding in a fact: 'belief-based knowledge involves immediate acquaintance with the fact believed, as in everyday observation.'[4] One might think that the sophist has knowledge *about* beliefs, but the ground of such knowledge would be truths about the beliefs. Socrates will speak of *technai* and *epistêmai* that use *doxai* about changeable things (*Phlb*. 59a–b), but the contribution to knowledge is made not by *doxa* but by perceptions from which *doxa* is formed (*Phd*. 96b7–9; cf. *Resp*. 523c5, *Tht*. 201b9, *Soph*. 263a2). From the statement of Alexander of Aphrodisias that 'we are said to know, εἰδέναι, both the things that we grasp through perception and judgement and the immediate premises' (*apud* Simpl. *In Ph*. 12.18–20), Burnyeat commented on δι' αἰσθήσεως καὶ δόξης: 'This phrase had better be a hendiadys, on pain of allowing the absurdity of knowledge gained through δόξα.'[5] Belief comes through persuasion, but knowledge resists persuasion (*Ti*. 51e). 'Belief-based knowledge' is a non-starter.

II. THE SOPHIST'S *EPISTÊMÊ*

One might object that I am ignoring clues that the sophist cannot have *epistêmê*. First, we already saw the Visitor lump the sophist together with someone 'lacking knowledge' (233a6), and he concludes that the sophist does not have truth (233c11). On the way to this conclusion, he argues that sophists appear to dispute knowledgeably on any subject (233c1–4) and 'therefore appear wise with respect to everything' (πάντα … σοφοὶ … φαίνονται, 233c6). But because this is impossible, sophists are not so (οὐκ ὄντες γε, 233c8). Are not what? The predicate up until now has been

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[4] L.J. Cohen, 'Belief and acceptance', *Mind* 98 (1989), 367–89, at 387.
[5] M. Burnyeat, '*Epistêmê*', in B. Morison and E. Ieradiakonou (edd.), *Epistêmê, etc.: Essays in Honour of Jonathan Barnes* (Oxford, 2011), 3–29, at 16 n. 44.

'wise with respect to everything'. Cornford, White and Gill give us 'not wise' *tout court* at 233c8, but that rendering drops πάντα. It does not follow, as Rosen observed, 'that, if the sophist does not know everything, then he knows nothing. This is an illegitimate inference …'[6] The sophist needs to know some truths, for example who and where the young men are (222a), and, as a 'teacher' of antilogic (232b8–9), he must know about language and forms of argument. At 233c10, then, the qualifier 'about everything' (περὶ πάντων) needs to qualify both ἐπιστήμην, 233c10, and ἀλήθειαν, 233c11. The sophist has δοξαστικὴν ἐπιστήμην about everything but not truth about everything. We are left with no incongruities when we understand the sophist's *epistêmê* in the sense of 'knowing how' as the cognitive basis of *technê*, as often in Plato. The sophist knows how to manipulate language so as to produce and use *doxai* about any subject, and about said subject he may know some facts.

Rosen's observation deserves to be carried further. Despite announcing 'has been revealed' (233c11), the Visitor has not demonstrated that the sophist has no *epistêmê* of subjects about which he disputes. It is invalid to infer from 'no one can know, ἐπίστασθαι, everything' (233a3), that the sophist lacks *epistêmê* (ἀνεπιστήμων ὤν, 233a6) every time he disputes with a person who has it (πρός γε τὸν ἐπιστάμενον, 233a5). Of course, since he disputes about everything (233c5), the sophist will probably face this cognitive disadvantage often. At the end of the dialogue, though, the Visitor defines sophists as 'unknowing' imitators *simpliciter* (οὐκ εἰδότες, 267b8; οὐκ ἐν τοῖς εἰδόσιν, 267e5–6). He has dropped without argument the 'about everything' qualifier he had granted in 233. If it is dropped because the final definition is a new definition, then it is only stipulated that the sophist is an unknowing imitator *simpliciter*. In the comparison made in 235e–236c between sophists and makers of copies who alter proportions, it was not established that those artists imitate without any knowledge. Theaetetus seems to realize that 'not knowing' in 267 is merely stipulated, for he summarizes 'we posited, ἔθεμεν, that he does not know' (268c1), not 'it has been revealed'. The sophist has not been validly denied *epistêmê* about *some* subjects that he imitates or disputes, and it is not proved that he lacks *epistêmê* about methods of disputation. Room is left for the sophist to know how to formulate *doxai* that make 'our soul form false judgements' (ψευδῆ δοξάζειν, 240d3).

One may retort that the Visitor has not established premises from which to infer that the sophist does have an *epistêmê*. It is a good bet, though, that the Visitor assumes a tacit premise—namely, if one has *technê*, one has *epistêmê*. By introducing the paradigm of the angler, who they agree has *technê*, the Visitor prompts Theaetetus to consider the sophist too as having *technê*. As noted above, the sophist's *technê* is affirmed at the beginning of the First Definition (221d1–6), and it remains throughout the *Sophist* and into the *Statesman* (cf. 291c4). Even a banausic *technê* has its corresponding *epistêmê* (*Plt.* 258d8–e1). *Technê* and *epistêmê* are often interchanged in Plato, and often in the Visitor's mouth.[7] Explaining the recurring interchangeability of *technê* and *epistêmê*, Snell called *epistêmê* the theoretical side of a practical ability, for it directs the repeatable activity of an expertise.[8] Conversely, *technê* is *epistêmê* of a

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[6] S. Rosen, *Plato's* Sophist. *The Drama of Original and Image* (New Haven, CT, 1983), 163.

[7] Cf. *Soph.* 257c–d, *Plt.* 258d–e, 264d–e, 267a, 300e; at *Plt.* 258c–d and 264d–e, *epistêmê* is replaced by *technê*. M.-L. Gill, Philosophos. *Plato's Missing Dialogue* (Oxford, 2012), 178 notes that ἐπιστῆμαι in *Plt.* 258b6–8 correspond to what in the *Sophist* had been divided as *technai*.

[8] B. Snell, *Die Ausdrücke für den Begriff des Wissens in der vorplatonischen Philosophie* (Berlin, 1924), 87.

determinate practical subject matter, applied so as to produce concrete results (*Ion* 537d–e, 538b4–6, *Tht.* 146d–e). The Visitor invokes this conception when he contrasts the person who has musical *technê* and knows with the unmusical person, who does not understand, μὴ συνιείς (*Soph.* 253b1–3).

The Visitor at four other places speaks as though the sophist does have *epistêmê*. First, he pins down 'noble sophistry' as a kind of teaching (229b–231b). Successful teaching implies knowledge. Second, the Visitor asks, what 'if someone should say that he knows how, ἐπίστασθαι, not to speak or contradict, but by one expertise to make and do all things?' (233d9–10). ἀλλά contrasts this hypothetical assertion of universal know-how to a claim already made. That claim was made at 232b, that the sophist has expertise in contradicting. Third, in the *Statesman*, stating that after the sophist it is necessary to examine the statesman, the Visitor asks 'whether they should posit', θετέον, that 'this one also', καὶ τοῦτον—that is, the statesman—is 'one of those who have *epistêmê*' (*Plt.* 258b2–5). καὶ τοῦτον implies that they had considered the former one too, the sophist, to have *epistêmê*.[9] Fourth, as we noted, the Visitor compares the sophist to sculptors and painters of large works (235e5–6). These artists alter proportions of their subjects so that the parts will appear correctly proportioned to viewers at a distance. The Visitor says that these artists 'say goodbye to truth', χαίρειν τὸ ἀληθὲς ἐάσαντες (236a4), or (more idiomatically) 'pay no heed to'. This idiom suggests that these artists have some cognition of the true proportions, which they choose not to apply. They know a field of design principles so as to produce proportions 'as is fitting for appearance' to people from whose position 'an accurate portrayal will not be perceived as accurate'.[10] For the analogy to work, the sophist too needs to invent images knowing that they look like their originals.

The Visitor's descriptions of the sophist as sorcerer, γόης (234c5, 235a1, 235a8, 241b7, *Plt.* 291c3, 303c4), and conjuror, θαυματοποιός (*Soph.* 235b5), suppose that the sophist imitates by intent. Dividing the *technê* of imitating, μιμητική, into two, the Visitor assigns the sophist the *technê* of 'producing appearances', τέχνην … φανταστικήν (236c4). Having a *technê*, the sophist should have an *epistêmê* analogous to that of these artists and magicians. As Rosen pointed out ([n. 6], 176), to treat the sophist's representations as intentional 'means that the sophist can see enough of the "original" or intrinsically true situation to know that his claims to knowledge are false'. The Visitor's stipulation that sophists imitate but do not *know* (267c–e) undercuts his own artist analogy. I suspect again that the solution is that the sophist's ignorance of a given subject area is not ignorance of everything.

As the Visitor seeks to define sophistry, he assimilates it to divination and rhetoric, which in turn he says count as *epistêmê* and/or *technê*. The Visitor includes sophistry under the *technê* of the magician, which is associated with *epistêmê* of divination (μαντική, *Plt.* 290c). He folds sophistry into rhetoric in the *Sophist* when in his first definition he fixes a 'persuasion-making *technê*' of catching humans. This comprises subskills of persuasion, with the sophist's art falling into the part of persuasion that

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[9] Gill (n. 7), 178 agrees that this accords the sophist an *epistêmê*, but, she says, the Visitor makes a mistake unnoticed by his audience: 'The Stranger never credited the sophist with knowledge, only with art or expertise (*technê*).' Gill does not discuss the sophist's δοξαστικὴ ἐπιστήμη.

[10] D. Esses, 'Philosophic appearance and sophistic essence in Plato's *Sophist*: a new reading of the definitions', *AncPhil* 39 (2019), 295–317, at 305; similarly, J. Beere, 'Faking wisdom: the expertise of sophistic in Plato's *Sophist*', *OSAPh* 57 (2019), 153–90, at 161–5, who names artists whom Plato may have meant.

is plied 'in private' (222c5–d5). In other dialogues, magic falls within the mantic *technê* (*Symp.* 203a1), and Eros is magician, sophist and philosophizer (203d7–8). As does noble sophistry (*Soph.* 230e–231b), the mantic *technê* (*Cra.* 405a7–b4) and magic (*Resp.* 413d7) help to purge souls. With sophistry's being a kind of magic, and magic a species of the *technê/epistêmê* of divination, sophistry turns out to be a *technê* and *epistêmê*. Although these features do not recur in the final definition, each shows a side of the sophist that Theaetetus and the Visitor recognized, and none of them is shown as false.[11] In the *Statesman*, persuasion is worked by rhetoric, itself an *epistêmê* (304a1, 304c10–d6). Although rhetoric needs to be directed by the ruler's *epistêmê* if it is to persuade the citizens to be just (304a1–2, 304e1), sophists who are not directed by the rulers yet have *technê* (291c4). We cannot deny that the Visitor treats sophistry as an *epistêmê*.

Against my case, however, one could suppose that Plato uses 'loose terminology' when he applies *epistêmê* words to non-philosophers (Moss [n. 1], 191). Or, given the *Republic*'s cleavage between objects of *doxa* and objects of *epistêmê*, one could with Apelt take the sophist's *epistêmê* to be posited ironically.[12] These moves aim to insulate TW epistemology against possible counterexamples. I make two rejoinders. First, it begs the question to assume that theory in other dialogues controls the Visitor dialogues. Second, one has to explain away too many passages. All through the corpus we encounter *epistêmê* of things in our world, from craftsmen's *epistêmê* in the *Apology* (22d) to *epistêmê* of the countryside in the *Laws* (763b2). Socrates does not stick with a restricted scope of *epistêmê* even throughout the *Republic*: he ascribes *epistêmê* to Guardians in training (540a6), flute players (602a1), and other craftspeople (424b–c) who have not studied dialectic and thus do not have *epistêmê* of Forms. When the Visitor asks 'how could someone without *epistêmê* make a sound objection against the person with *epistêmê*?' (*Soph.* 233a5–6), one supposes that the sophist's interlocutor in most cases is not a dialectician. Fine notes that we should not discount uses of *epistêmê* and *doxa* outside of theoretical passages, since '[h]ow Plato uses the terms when he is not theorizing about them provides some guidance at least about what he takes the concepts … to be … and, in turn, imposes constraints … on his conception of them'.[13] Non-philosophers' *epistêmê* is insufficient for happiness, not because it is not *epistêmê* but because it is not 'of' the highest goods.

In the *Gorgias*, rhetoric and sophistry are not expertise because they lack knowledge of the nature of what they work on (463b–465e). Picking up Socrates' criticism, Lesley Brown argues that the Visitor's analysis is simply wrong, and 'Plato cannot have intended the reader to think that the sophist has a *technê*'. Brown contends that sophistry lacks the Platonic requirements for a *technê*—namely, a unique goal, reasoned procedures and single subject matter—and that not all the Visitor's dichotomies are properly divided, because the sophist is not a genuine kind.[14]

I do not find that the 'authorial voice' signals rejection of the Visitor's treatment of sophistry as a *technê*. To Socrates' question at the beginning of the dialogue, the Visitor

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[11] Cf. Rosen (n. 6), 133; B. Centrone, *Platone. Sofista* (Turin, 2008), xxiv–xxv.

[12] O. Apelt, *Platonis Sophista* (Leipzig, 1897), 104.

[13] G. Fine, '*Epistêmê* and *doxa*, knowledge and belief, in the *Phaedo*', in F. Leigh (ed.), *Themes in Plato, Aristotle, and Hellenistic Philosophy. Keeling Lectures 2011–18* (London, 2021), 27–46, at 31 n. 17.

[14] L. Brown, 'Definition and division in Plato's *Sophist*', in D. Charles (ed.), *Definition in Greek Philosophy* (Oxford, 2010), 151–71, at 164–8.

answers that his fellow Eleatics thought that sophist, statesman and philosopher are three kinds, γένη (217a7–b2). He goes on to identify the γένος of the sophist as the subject of the ensuing investigation (218d4–5). By choosing the angler as a model of sophist and by asking Theaetetus whether the angler is an expert, the Visitor introduces the notion that the sophist has a *technê* (218e4–219a7). The sophist's *technê* is reaffirmed (for example 236c4, 240c–d, 241b7, 264d6) and remains at the close; from 265a5 τέχνη stands behind the –ική adjectives of the final definition, among which δοξαστικῆς (268c9), 'able to produce *doxai*', is restated. The sophist has a 'proper nature', οἰκείαν φύσιν (264e3–265a1), from which it follows that 'sophist' is supposed to be a kind. Sophistry is a *technê* in the *Statesman* (291c4).

Outside the Visitor dialogues too, sophist is a kind and has a *technê*. Socrates speaks of the 'kind' of sophists (*Cra.* 398e2, *Ti.* 19e2), and he considers antilogic, which lies at the core of the sophist's expertise, a *technê* (*Resp.* 454a2, *Phdr.* 261c10–d7). Aristotle allows that πειραστικὴ ἐπιστήμη, 'knowledge of putting people to the test', may be had even by 'someone who does not know, so that it is clear that peirastic is *epistêmê* of no defined subject', οὐδενὸς ὡρισμένου (*Soph. el.* 172a28). Peirastic is like sophistry's elenctic skill in being a know-how that cuts across subject areas. Aristotle speaks of sophistical arguments as a *genos* that the sophist must study, of the sophist as having a *technê* (*Soph. el.* 165a27–37), and of eristic, part of antilogic in the Visitor's division (*Soph.* 225c9), as a *technê* (*Soph. el.* 183b36–184a4).

The objection lodged by Brown and others, however, is not that the Visitor does not consider the sophist to belong to a kind and have a *technê*, but that we can see from descriptions of kind and *technê* in other dialogues that the Visitor is wrong. Again we have the contentious assumption that Socrates' words in one dialogue express authorial views that undercut views of a different leading interlocutor in a different (and presumably later) dialogue. Why can we not have 'a revision in Plato's own thinking' (Beere [n. 10], 154)? In the *Sophist*, the Visitor voices the historic discoveries that saying is more than naming (*Soph.* 262c–d) and that false statement is possible on a right understanding of 'not being' (*Soph.* 237a). As Brown herself has noted, he also makes the 'path-breaking … move … to attempt to give a formula which delimits everything that is'.[15] I find it strange to suppose that Plato puts path-breaking material in the Visitor's mouth *and* saddles him with assumptions about *technê* that overthrow both dialogues' projects. I say 'both' because, on Brown's principle that each professional kind is biconditional with one distinctive *technê* or *epistêmê* ([n. 14], 162–4, 167), statesmanship too is problematized as *technê* or *epistêmê*. Socrates even undercuts that principle in the *Republic* when he allows that someone may practice more than one *technê*, even if not optimally (370b4–5). Moreover, if TW is true, the statesman's required virtues (*Plt.* 294a8, 294e10, 296c10, 296e3–4, 297a–b, 301d1–2) seem attainable only by a philosopher, since they must be based on knowledge, not on opinion (300c–e, 301b). The *Statesman* identifies no knowledge or expertise that statesmanship has but philosophy lacks; at most, statesmanship directs people while other theoretical arts such as calculation do not (259e–260c). Since the Visitor admits that sophistry and statesmanship are 'kinds' hard to distinguish from philosophy (*Soph.* 217b1–4), yet persists in treating them as *technê/epistêmê*, we cannot show that Plato prompts us to deny them the status of expertise. I suspect that Plato is still pushing his vision of philosopher-statesmen (cf. *Resp.*

473c11–d6, *Ep.* 7 326a–b), according to which statesmanship must be an *epistêmê*. The difference in the Visitor dialogues is that this vision is more accommodated to daily life than in the TW dialogues. If even sophists can have some *epistêmê*, BP is overcome, and a state guided by knowing rulers and built by knowing followers may be possible.

Barney summarizes the Socratic conception of *technê* as 'a specialised kind of knowledge that leads to reliable practical success and provides some benefit'.[16] Socrates in the *Gorgias* and elsewhere lays out the following requirements for an undertaking (ἐπιτήδευμα, *Grg.* 463a6) to qualify as a *technê*:

(1)　Knowledge. If one has *technê*, one can give an account of the nature of its object and procedures and of the cause of the effect (*Grg.* 464b–465a, 500a–b, 501a).
(2)　Distinctness. A *technê* or *epistêmê* is defined by a proper subject area (μάθημα or πρᾶγμα) and product (ἔργον, implied at *Grg.* 453e–454a, explicit in *Chrm.* 165c–166a, *Ion* 537c–d).
(3)　Teleology. The undertaking should be ordered toward a goal (*Grg.* 503e–504a).
(4)　Benefit. The undertaking should benefit the practitioner and objects/clients (*Grg.* 511e–512a; cf. *Resp.* 341d).
(5)　Reliability. A *technê* does not err (*Resp.* 341e–342b; cf. *Chrm.* 171b–172a), although a practitioner who works on embodied objects may not secure benefit every time (*Chrm.* 164b–c).

Requirement (1) is not necessary for (5), for a 'routine', τριβή, not based on knowledge can be plied the same way every time as long as the practitioner remembers the procedure (*Grg.* 501a).

For his part, the Visitor does not set forth a theory of *technê*, although he adduces many crafts as examples. What he does say is consistent with (3) and (5). He weakens (2), for although he says that *technai* and *epistêmai* get their names from the *ergon*, work or function (*Soph.* 218c2; cf. 221b2), and from the subject over which they are set (ἐπί τῳ, *Soph.* 257c10–d1; cf. *Plt.* 284a5), and that there can be no contamination among *technai* (*Plt.* 268a), he does not stipulate that every *ergon* must be the product of one and only one *technê*. In addition, the Visitor does not accept (1). On the picture we get in the *Republic*, (1) entails that only someone who knows intelligibles will have *technê*, since to give an account of the nature requires knowledge of the Form (cf. *Resp.* 476b6–7 with 490b1–3). Because only dialectic attempts to grasp fully the being of each thing, only the dialectician would seem able to have *technai* (*Resp.* 533a8–c8, 534b3–4, *Phdr.* 277b–c). Moreover, on TW, to achieve a benefit, not by knack and chance but by craft and reliably, the practitioner must assess benefit, and that requires knowledge of good and evil—again, knowledge proper to the dialectician alone (*Resp.* 534b–c).[17] Hence, BP. The Visitor on the other hand admits *technai* based on knowledge of sensibles, such as the arts of making things pleasing (*Soph.* 223a1) or beating time for rowers (*Plt.* 260e2; cf. selling, *Soph.* 224 and *Plt.* 260c). He can admit them because, as we shall see, he does not hold TW epistemology; people can know without knowing dialectic. Since we do not know that earlier dialogues control, we cannot conclude that Plato means us to think the Visitor's treatment of *technê* mistaken.

Consider too that (2) is not rigorously carried through in Plato. Brown problematizes her own critique when she observes that it is not clear in Plato by what method a *technê*

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[16] R. Barney, '*Technê* as a model for virtue in Plato', in T.K. Johansen (ed.), *Productive Knowledge in Ancient Philosophy. The Concept of* Technê (Cambridge, 2021), 62–85, at 63.
[17] On this point, see P. Woodruff, 'Plato's early theory of knowledge', in S. Everson (ed.), *Companions to Ancient Thought 1. Epistemology* (Cambridge, 1990), 60–84, at 71–3.

is to be defined or 'what role subject-matter has in the delineation of a *technê*' ([n. 14], 168). Practitioners of different arts can share a given subskill, as philosopher and sophist can use image-making and antilogic, and they can produce some of the same outcomes. Even Eros and Hades, says Socrates, are both sophist and philosopher (*Symp*. 203d7–8; *Cra*. 403e–404a). As we saw, Socrates puts orators and sophists in the same kind in the *Cratylus* (398e2), and in the *Theaetetus* he grants orators a *technê* by which they can persuade people to form judgements (δοξάζειν) about what the orators wish (201a8–b6). Sophists do the same, for refutation can persuade (*Soph*. 259a2–3).

Trickier is the question: does the Visitor's account admit (4), namely that sophistry produces benefit? We might think that, if sophistry does not benefit, it is not a *technê*. The first three definitions put money-making under the sophist's *technê*. Money-making is not named in the final definition, but it is nowhere rejected; the Visitor's bifurcation of arts into acquisitive and productive does not entail that producers do not make money. The sophist may benefit himself at least in that way; even Socrates considers wealth as such a good (*Ap*. 30b, *Resp*. 357c). Moreover, the noble sophist benefits himself if he improves his associates. This raises the question: does sophistry benefit others? Observing that the sophist is described as an 'ironical' or 'insincere imitator' (268a8) for concealing the ignorance he fears he has, Robinson concludes that he acts from 'bad faith' and therefore that Socrates' brand of elenctic activities cannot form part of sophistry as defined here.[18] Arguing that 'sophistry noble in lineage' (231b8) of the sixth definition fits a Socratic philosopher more than a sophist, Notomi holds that the sixth definition's content is excluded from the final definition by the method of division.[19] On these accounts, 'noble sophistry' will fall outside the final definition, and thus sophistic refutation will not benefit in the way in which Socratic refutation does.

In my view, the sixth definition does contribute to the final definition of the sophist. 'Noble sophistry' resembles Socrates' enterprise but is not identical to it, for it is repeatedly defined as professional teaching, while Socrates admits only rarely to 'informing' someone (for example *Ap*. 35c2, *La*. 195a7).[20] 'Noble in lineage' marks out this elenctic practice as a privileged species of sophistry. No term in the final definition debars elenctic sophistry from doing its designated work, not even 'insincere', for refuters who conceal their ignorance may by exposing contradictions disabuse others of false conceits of knowledge. That work, forcing someone to contradict himself, remains in the final definition (268b4–5; ἐναντιοποιολογικῆς, 268c8), but 'eristic' from the fifth definition does not. It is not established, then, *pace* Zaks, that sophistry cannot include a 'noble' kind that benefits others as well as the sophist.[21] Against Notomi, the contribution of noble sophistry to cleansing (230d3) places it within 'productive' *technê* of the final division, because, as Zaks has showed, cleansing is a first step in production.[22] On the Visitor's account, the sophist's *technê* stands.[23]

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[18] T. Robinson, 'Protagoras and the definition of "sophist" in the *Sophist*', in B. Bossi and T.M. Robinson (edd.), *Plato's* Sophist *Revisited* (Berlin and Boston, 2013), 3–13, at 11–12.

[19] N. Notomi, *The Unity of Plato's Sophist. Between the Sophist and the Philosopher* (Cambridge, 1999), 64–7, 274–8.

[20] On the methods of Socrates and 'noble sophistry', see N. Zaks, 'Socratic *elenchus* in the *Sophist*', *Apeiron* 51 (2018), 371–90 and Esses (n. 10).

[21] N. Zaks, 'Éristique et réfutation socratique dans le *Sophiste* de Platon', in S. Delcomminette and G. Lachance (edd.), *L'Éristique. Définitions, caractérisations et historicité* (Brussels, 2021), 267–88.

[22] N. Zaks, 'Διακριτική as a ποιητικὴ τέχνη in the *Sophist*', *CQ* 70 (2020), 432–4.

[23] Recent defences of the sophist's *technê* include Beere (n. 10), 182–7 and I.-K. Jeng, 'On the final definition of the sophist: *Sophist* 265a10–268d5', *RevMeta* 72 (2019), 661–84, at 676–8.

From what Platonic interlocutors say, we may identify the sophist's expertise as the skill of persuading uncritical people to form beliefs about all things, including the belief that the sophist is just and wise in a domain (*Soph.* 267c–268c, *Hp. mi.* 363c–d). While philosophers can be viewed as madmen (*Soph.* 216d2), sophists, likened to magicians and wonder-workers, succeed in winning over many with their skilful and charming (234b1) imitations. Sophists may well do better than philosophers at (5) above, that is, securing an outcome.

Like peirastic *epistêmê*, sophistry produces its product, *doxai* based on resemblances, across subject areas. It is not a first-order expertise. It is a second-order expertise about how to manipulate propositions about things or systems. The sophist's *technê* influences our souls to form false judgements (240d1–4). The sophist 'produces judgements, and he trains us in the art of persuading others to accept our judgements' (Rosen [n. 6], 310). Socrates' *technê* of midwifery is a second-order expertise, producing cognitive effects by working with people's *doxai* on a range of subjects. Plato admits second-order *technai*, which are not defined by a first-order subject area and product but rather by their capacity to engender and examine *doxai* about first-order domains. As knowledge of producing and using *doxai*, sophistry is a second-order *technê*.

In order to create *doxa* through exploiting contradictions by the *technê* of antilogic (ascribed to the sophist from the Fifth Definition, 225b–233b, all the way to ἐναντιοποιολογικῆς, 'contrary-speech-producing [expertise]' [White], 268c8), the sophist needs knowledge of equivocity of words and equipollent arguments. The Visitor explicitly contrasts lawyers' antilogic, practised 'at random and without *technê*' (225c1), with the sophist's antilogic wielded with *technê* (ἔντεχνον, 225c7). Just as a conjuror, θαυματοποιός, could explain how he performs his tricks, so the sophist, whom the Visitor puts into the kind of conjurors (235b5), should be able to give an explanatory account of how he can form and implant *doxai*. He has *epistêmê*, know-how, to clear away prior resistant *doxai* through antilogic (cf. 'forcing the interlocutor to contradict himself', 268b4–5), to imitate good and true things such as justice and virtue (267c2–3), and to teach others to dispute about the same (232b8–9).

III. *EPISTÊMÊ* IN THE VISITOR DIALOGUES

Now we need to probe what follows from the sophist's having *epistêmê* of formulating *doxai*. The Visitor and Theaetetus agree on many things about *epistêmê* that are affirmed by Socrates in earlier dialogues. *Epistêmê* is a:

- power, δύναμις, *Soph.* 248c–d; *Plt.* 261d1
- state or condition, πάθημα, implicit at *Soph.* 228e6, where ignorance is this
- concomitant of γνῶσις, 'knowledge', *Soph.* 248c–d, 253b3
- body of knowledge that is learned, *Soph.* 257c10–d1
- resident of the top of the cognitive hierarchy, along with *phronêsis* and *nous*, 'understanding and intellect', *Soph.* 249c7, and superior to *doxa*, *Soph.* 267e1–3
- cognitive grasp of kinds, *Soph.* 253c–e, and of what we would call immanent universals, including actions denominated by verbs, *Soph.* 226b8–9

Against the backdrop of his discussions of false *doxa*, the Visitor leaves it unstated but apparently axiomatic that *epistêmê* cannot be false. Although he does not voice the Socratic requirement that one with *epistêmê* give an account of what she knows (*Phd.*

76b5–6, *Symp*. 202a5–7), the Visitor's search for accounts of things under investigation are consistent with it.

On the other hand, the Visitor's account of *epistêmê* is not entangled in BP raised by many students of TW dialogues. I cannot say whether Plato intended to defuse BP; the characters in TW dialogues do not bring it up, so that Jessica Moss can infer that 'Plato himself evidently thinks it no problem at all' ([n. 1], 123). Sometime after the *Republic*, however, Plato confronts a version of BP. Parmenides says that, if one posits that Forms exist 'themselves by themselves' (*Prm*. 133a9), even the gods' *epistêmê*, which is the 'most accurate', could not know *us* (134d9–e1). In the *Philebus*, Socrates and Protarchus agree that *technai* and *epistêmai* about changeable things are necessary 'if any of us is going to find his way home' (62a–b). Some *technai* use *doxai* about changeable things (58e5–59a8). Changeables do not ground 'the most accurate truth' (59a11–b1), and they do not supply to *epistêmê* 'the most true' object (59b7–8). Socrates' qualifiers leave room for non-superlative truth about changeables.

One way to avoid BP is to supply an ontology that avoids the epistemological consequences that stir up BP. The Visitor and Theaetetus introduce such an ontology by admitting not-being into Being (*Soph*. 258c3–4; cf. 'We forced not being to be', *Plt*. 284b8). Their definition of 'beings' as things that have power, δύναμις, admits bodies as well as intelligibles (*Soph*. 247d–248c), changeable as well as unchangeable things (249d3–4), into 'being'.[24] This removes the ontological gap in TW dialogues between that which is fully 'being' and that which 'is and is not' (*Resp*. 477a3–7). With sensibles and their accidents admitted into Being, craftsmen can have *epistêmê*, and philosophers can apply *epistêmê* to city affairs. Although the Visitor does not explain how particulars are related to kinds, his move to allow them to be objects of *epistêmê* is consistent both with universals' being immanent and with particulars' being beings.[25] *Epistêmê* of number, for example, can be set over numbers by themselves and numbers in sensibles (*Plt*. 299e1–3). The *epistêmê* of kingship grounds rulers' governance of the city by *technê* (*Plt*. 284c1–3, 297a–b, 301d1–2), not possible if *epistêmê* cognizes only Forms. The new ontology moreover allows sophistry to escape the stock interdiction against a *technê* of not-being (cf. Sext. Emp. *Math*. 1.265), for similitudes are not not-being.

Ex altera parte, 'beings' can now be objects of *doxa*, something problematic for TW epistemology. Timaeus refused to allow a reasoned account of the object of *doxa* (28a1–3). The Visitor, on the other hand, presents 'Theaetetus sits' as a true account. It expresses a true *doxa* because Theaetetus' sitting qualifies as 'being'. The account 'states the things that are, *as*' or '*that* they are', τὰ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν (*Soph*. 263b4). Because separation between Being and Becoming, maintained by the Friends of the Forms (χωρίς, *Soph*. 248a7) and in TW dialogues, is no longer on the table, cognitive faculties are no longer distinguished by the ontological status of their objects. In the Visitor's analysis of knowledge, craft and the city, BP does not arise. The fact that even the sophist has some knowledge helps us see this.

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[24] Cf. C. Kahn, review of M.-L. Gill, Philosophos. *Plato's Missing Dialogue* (Oxford, 2012), *Mind* 123 (2014), 1191–5, at 1193.

[25] This view is defended on different assumptions by Gill (n. 7) and C. Kahn, *Plato and the Post-Socratic Dialogue. The Return to the Philosophy of Nature* (Cambridge, 2013), 107.

IV. CRAFT KNOWLEDGE

The Visitor does not resurrect the Craft Analogy of virtue as presented in the Socratic dialogues, for, setting courage and moderation in antithesis in the *Statesman* (306–11), he denies the Unity of Virtue and Virtue is Knowledge theses. He calls for knowledge of justice and virtue at the end of the *Sophist*, but he does not argue that virtue *is* knowledge. For virtue one needs breeding, character, right government and other things mentioned in middle-period dialogues. As in early dialogues, however, Plato focusses on the notion of *epistêmê* as the cognitive ground of a craft, and he retains the Craft Analogy of politics. In the city that the Visitor describes, rulers, like doctors or sea captains, must combine *technê* with *doxai* to apply their *epistêmê* to embodied things (*Plt.* 300c9–d1, 309c). As in early dialogues, where even poetry was a *technê* (*Ion* 532c–d), there are not now theoretical barriers to non-philosophers' *technê* and *epistêmê*. Although the definition of the statesman was sought mainly for practice in dialectic (*Plt.* 285–7), and few will acquire rulers' *epistêmê* (292e–293a, 297b–c), one wonders whether with this more confident picture of *epistêmê* in the state Plato hopes to spur change. As Hathaway said, 'Plato seems to flirt, even in late dialogues, with the to him tantalizing possibility of an architectonic craft-knowledge that fits all our actions and other crafts into a system of coordinated means to a determinate end …'[26] In the *Laws*, non-philosophers have *epistêmai* (639b, 689b2, 901d6, 968e2). As we saw in the *Philebus*, Socrates admits inexact *epistêmai* of things that come to be and pass away. That which had been agreed about *epistêmê* in the Visitor dialogues holds.

In late Plato, *epistêmê* is 'of' kinds or universals, the ontological status of which is not clarified but which are not separated from embodied things. It produces results reliably, although failure and imprecision may attend occasions of its employment. It cannot be false. Plato's willingness to allow an *epistêmê* even to the sophist shows that *epistêmê* is not now only of Forms. Thus, no longer mysterious as it was in dialogues that denied *epistêmê* of sensibles, craftsmen's 'knowledge how to' forms part of what the city needs for a good life.

In Part II, I suggested that a sophist could benefit others. That seems possible when we consider that in the *Statesman* 'that part of rhetoric which is in partnership with kingship persuades people of what is just', for the ruler's *epistêmê* 'should control the [*epistêmê*] which is capable of persuading', that is, rhetoric (*Plt.* 304a1–2, 304c7–d3). Like other technicians (cf. *Chrm.* 171d–175a, *Euthyd.* 288e–290d) and like the orator, could not a sophist 'of noble lineage' use the elenchus for benefit if directed by the ruler's *epistêmê*, or if like Eros and Hades he were also a philosopher? None of the terms in the final definition (*Soph.* 268c8–d2) entails harm-doing. By shifting from the art of acquiring to the art of making in the Sixth Definition, the Visitor turns the spotlight on value added. Even Socrates in the *Phaedrus* (266–9) allows that sophists know things about their craft by which they achieve its ends. If the sophist learns (*Resp.* 493b1, 493b5) what is reputed in a rightly governed city to be just, he might add value by disputing about weighty matters (*Soph.* 232c) so as to enchant hearers with 'noble doctrines', as poets can do with hymns (*Leg.* 664b4–6).

At this point in his career, Plato is working on the relation of language to reality. 'Sophist' appears nowhere in the *Philebus* and only once in the *Laws*, of atheists

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[26] R. Hathaway, review of T. Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory. The Early and Middle Dialogues* (Oxford, 1977), *RMeta* 31 (1978), 674–5.

(908d7). Plato is no longer making sophistry a target. I suspect that one reason is because Plato recognizes that in our embodied state we can have craft *epistêmê*, but *epistêmê* of axiological realities like the Good remains an ideal. The necessity to show incorporeal things by *logos* (*Plt.* 285e–286a, 287a3) problematizes the distance between philosopher and sophist.[27] Hard to distinguish from each other, philosopher and sophist both grapple with the slippage inherent in *logos*.

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[27] Cf. F. Trabattoni, *Essays on Plato's Epistemology* (Leuven, 2016), 265–87.