

## Plato's Appearance/Assent Account of Belief

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### I. Belief and Appearance

The snake looks dangerous. Your heart races and your hairs stand on end as if you were in the presence of danger; you even take a few steps back. Does it follow that you *believe* that the snake is dangerous?

According to the Stoics and Sceptics, the answer is no. For these Hellenistic philosophers hold that there is something that has representational content similar to the belief that the snake is dangerous, and that can play a similar role to that belief in causing behavior and emotion, but is not a belief: the appearance or impression, *phantasia*, of the snake as dangerous. Animals and children react to appearances without strictly speaking believing that things are they as appear. According to the Sceptics, on a widespread interpretation, adult humans can do the same.<sup>1</sup> Thus if you are a dog, a child, or a good Sceptic following what Sextus calls the “conduct of life” (*biōtikē tērēsis*), when you step back you are simply yielding passively to the appearance of the snake (*Outlines of Pyrrhonism [PH] I.19, 22-24*). Someone who believes that the snake is dangerous, by contrast, has added something further to the appearance: active affirmation or assent (*sunkatathesis*, *PH I.7, I.13*; *kataphēsis*, *PH I.192*). They have judged that the appearance is true (I.26). They have thereby assented to something non-evident, something not contained within the appearance (*adēlon*, *PH I.13, 16*): namely, they have posited the snake’s dangerousness as really existing (*hōs huparchon tithetai*, *PH I.14*), or as existing *in nature* (*phusis*, *PH I 27, 78, 140*).

In other words, Stoics and Sceptics distinguish belief (or perhaps in the Pyrrhonian Sceptic’s case, belief in the narrow sense), from a representationally and functionally similar but sub-doxastic state: passive yielding to appearance. Faced with an appearance of *x* as *F* there are three very different ways to respond. First, you may consider the question of whether *x* is *F* but decide that you cannot answer it, and thus decide to suspend judgment: in this case, the appearance will not directly move you (although you may choose to act as if it were true). Second you may affirm that *x* is *F*, actively assenting to the appearance as true, or deny that *x* is *F*, actively rejecting the appearance as false; in these cases, you will have a full-fledged belief (or a belief in the narrow sense). Third, however, you can bypass this whole process and simply let the appearance affect you. If you do, the resulting state will be much like a belief in its motivational and affective consequences – you will be disposed to feel and act as if *x* were *F* – and we might say with Sextus that you have in some sense assented to the appearance, although only passively, “involuntarily,” or by default.<sup>2</sup> (In what follows I will reserve ‘assent’ for the active case, contrasting it with ‘yielding’.)

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<sup>1</sup> The Academic Sceptic Arcesilaus says that the Sceptic acts on impulses that arise naturally in response to appearances (*phantasiai*), while avoiding assent (*sunkatathesis*) to those appearances, and thereby avoiding *doxa* (Plutarch, *Adversus Colotem* 1122a-d). Sextus seems to hold a similar view, although he sometimes says that the Sceptic involuntarily assents to appearances, or holds *dogmata* in a wide sense (see citations below). The question of whether or not the Pyrrhonian Sceptic has beliefs (*doxai dogmata*) is much debated: for a range of views see Burnyeat and Frede eds. 1997. The Stoics deny that a rational creature (adult human) ever acts on *phantasia* alone; once we have attained reason all our actions, and indeed emotions and perceptions, presuppose assent (see e.g. Sextus, *Adversus Mathematicos [M]* 6.151-2; Stobaeus 2.111.18-112.8). For good discussion of the points of contact between the two schools on these issues see Vogt 2012a.

<sup>2</sup> “We do not overthrow the *pathos*-producing impression which leads us involuntarily toward assent (*ta kata phantasian pathētikēn aboulētōs hēmas agonta eis sunkatathesin*)” (*PH I.19*).” I should stress that this kind of passive assent is very different from what M. Frede calls by that name in his 1987. He is discussing the Sceptic’s attitude towards propositions which she has questioned, considered, and then suspended judgment about; I am discussing the Sceptic’s attitude towards appearances which she has *not*

It is worth emphasizing that this third route is not a matter of merely entertaining the appearance: in yielding to the appearance you are not holding it at arm's length as you do when you suspend judgment, for that is something you can do only once the question of its truth has arisen. And thus while it is strictly speaking true to say that the appearance to which you yield is non-epistemic (or non-doxastic), it is also somewhat misleading, for those terms imply something like suspension of judgment. Yielding is instead a matter of not letting the question of the appearance's truth arise – either because you are an animal or child who cannot question appearances, or (on the Sceptic view) because getting on in life without beliefs requires behaving in some ways as if you were such a creature.

This distinction between belief and a similar but sub-doxastic state yields a very narrow and demanding account of belief, and a controversial one. It has modern detractors in those who classify “implicit attitudes” and related states as beliefs, on the grounds that they play the right functional or dispositional roles, and modern proponents in those who classify them instead as sub-doxastic states (e.g. “aliefs”) on the grounds that they do not “aim at truth.”<sup>3</sup>

My project today, however, is to look not at the descendants of this Hellenistic view of belief, but at its antecedents. Sextus detected it in Aristotle, and rightly so,<sup>4</sup> but I want to show that it also has important and unrecognized roots in Plato. The point of showing this is not simply to give credit where it is due, but also to understand Plato better. For I will argue that recognizing a version (or versions) of this appearance/assent distinction in Plato's various claims about belief will show them to have more in their favor, and to cohere better with one another, than generally thought.<sup>5</sup>

There are two reasons that the view is not obvious in Plato, and it will help to begin by making these clear.

The first is terminological: Plato's use of the key Hellenistic terms, *doxa* and *phantasia*, is both internally inconsistent and at odds with Hellenistic usage. In the later dialogues, I will argue, Plato like the Stoics contrasts *doxa* with passive appearance-reception, while in the *Republic* he treats passive appearance-reception (there called *eikasía*) as a species of *doxa*. I will argue that this shift reflects a narrowing of the sense of *doxa*, and will speculate briefly about why Plato narrowed the term; for now we can simply note the ambiguity. As to *phantasia*, Plato's most famous use of the term is in the *Sophist*, where he defines *phantasia* as a “mixture of perception (*aesthēsis*) and *doxa*” (264b), where *doxa* is used in the narrow

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yet questioned or considered in any way, everyday action-guiding appearances like “The snake is dangerous” or “The bread is edible.” The ability to act on this kind of appearance is what is supposed to save the Sceptic from the charge of *apraxia*, inaction, and allow her to follow the “conduct of life.”

<sup>3</sup> For the modern debate see for example Schwitzgebel 2010 in contrast with Gendler 2008a and 2008b. Schwitzgebel's arguments that we should accept these states as beliefs in order to accept responsibility for having them are decidedly Stoic.

<sup>4</sup> See Sextus *M.* 225-6, reporting the Peripatetic view: “whenever the soul yields to the *phantasia* arisen from perception and agrees and assents to what appears, it is called *doxa*.” Probably Sextus is, like Themistius and Alexander, basing his interpretation on Aristotle's claim that thinking is part *phantasia* and part ‘supposition’ (*hupolēpsis*, *de An.* 427b27), or on the claim that animals have *phantasia* but not *doxa* because the latter requires conviction (*pistis*, *de An.* 428a20). For arguments in support of this general approach see Moss 2012, chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>5</sup> In using the Sceptics to illuminate Plato's view of *doxa* I am broadly following Vogt in her recent book (2012b), although the issues I pursue here are different (her focus is on the contrast between *doxa* and superior cognitive states, and thus on *doxa* as an inherently deficient state, one never in the strictest sense true).

sense. This is obviously a very different use from the Hellenistic one, and in tracing the Hellenistic view of *phantasia* to Plato this is not what I have in mind. Instead, I find the roots of Hellenistic *phantasia* – or rather, passive *phantasia*-reception – in the discussion of *eikasia* in the *Republic*, and of *aisthêsis* in the *Theaetetus*.

The second reason goes deeper. When Plato sets about distinguishing cognitive states, he does so primarily by reference not to their psychological history, but instead to their *objects*. In the *Republic* and *Timaeus*, *doxa* as a whole is distinguished from knowledge by being “set over” the visible world rather than the intelligible. In the *Republic* the two species of what is there called *doxa* – *pistis* and *eikasia* – are distinguished by their respective objects, ordinary visible things and their images; in the *Theaetetus*, *doxa* is distinguished from the inferior cognitive state of perception (*aisthêsis*) by having access to a different class of objects, “commons,” prominent among them being (*ousia*).

I will argue however that these ontological distinctions entail a psychological one. Plato, like his Hellenistic successors, draws a distinction between passively yielding to an appearance and actively affirming a claim about how things *are*. Only in the latter case does one count as having one’s mind directed at what *is* as opposed to what merely appears; thus the higher mental states – *pistis* in the *Republic*, *doxa* in the *Theaetetus* – have access to higher objects *because* they result from active questioning and affirmation. The *Republic*’s distinction between visible objects themselves and their appearances, and the *Theaetetus*’ distinction between proper perceptibles and the objects of *doxa*, anticipate the Sceptics’ distinction between what appears and what underlies the appearances – where we have cognitions about the latter only when we engage in active assent.

One important caveat before I turn to Plato’s texts. Although I have been using ‘belief’ to translate *doxa*, the question will arise as to whether at the end of the day we want to call Plato’s theory of *doxa* – or the Hellenistic one – a theory of belief. Arguably in showing Plato’s view to be systematic and internally coherent we also show it to be surprisingly far from the modern notion of belief, even the more narrow and demanding versions of that notion. *Doxai* are rarer than we might think beliefs, more intellectually demanding, and at the same time more closely tied to appearance. I will return to this issue briefly below.

## II. Belief as assent in later Plato

The clearest evidence for a proto-Hellenistic view of belief in Plato comes from the *Philebus*, generally regarded as a late dialogue. The context is a discussion of a certain class of *doxai*, those that are accompanied by pleasure and pain, but there is no indication that the account he gives is restricted to these; it looks to be a general account of belief-formation.

Doesn’t *doxa*...come each time from memory and perception?...And isn’t it necessary for us to suppose that these things happen in this way...Would you say that it often happens to someone seeing things not at all clearly from afar that he wants to discern/judge (*krinein*) those things he is seeing? And after this might he not question himself thus?... “What is it that appears (*phantazomenon*) to be standing near that rock under that tree?” – Does it seem to you that someone would say that to himself, having seen things like that appearing (*phantasthenta*) to him some time?...And might he not after that, as if answering himself, say this, that it is a person, and speak correctly?...And might he not instead be misled, and say that what he sees is a statue, the work of some shepherds?... And if someone else is present with him, the things he said to himself he would utter again to that person out loud, and in this way that which we called *doxa* would become *logos*... Memory and perceptions, and the other affections (*pathêmata*) that are about the same things, converging toward the same thing, appear to me almost

as if to *write logoi* in our souls. And when they write true things, true *doxa* and true *logoi* arise in us.... (*Philebus* 38b12-39a7)

This is a three-stage account of *doxa*-formation, precisely parallel to the Hellenistic appearance/assent account:

- (i) The process begins with the experience of an appearance.
- (ii) The next step is to question the appearance, i.e. to try to determine how things really are. (The ‘really’ here is meant only to underline the force of ‘are’ – to make clear that the relevant notion of being is to be understood as what is contrasted with appearing.)<sup>6</sup>
- (iii) One moves from merely having an appearance that *P* to having a *doxa* that *P* precisely by asserting that *P* is the case (“It is a person” or “It is a statue.”)

Is this representative of Plato’s view of belief-formation, or does the *Philebus* passage simply pick out a particularly vivid and dramatic instance of the process? We gain more information by comparing its account of *doxa* to two very similar ones from other late dialogues:

The soul when it thinks is doing nothing other than dialoguing (*dianooumenê ouk allo ti ê dialegesthai*), asking itself questions and answering them itself, and affirming things and denying [answering yes and no – *phaskousa kai ou phaskousa*]. And whenever it has determined something (*horisasa*), either gradually or by leaping quickly, and affirms the same thing and does not disagree (*to auto êdê phêi kai mê distazêi*), we put that down as its *doxa*. So I call believing ‘saying’ (*to doxazein legein*), and I call *doxa* a *logos* spoken not to another nor with voice, but silently to oneself. (*Theaetetus* 189e6-190a6)

Surely thought (*dianoia*) and *logos* are the same thing (*tauton*), except that the former is a dialogue in the soul with oneself (*entos tês psuchês pros hautên dialogos*), occurring without sound...? In *logoi* we know there are present...affirmation and denial (*phasis kai apophasis*)...Whenever then this arises in the soul...in silence, would you call it anything other than *doxa*? (*Sophist* 263e3-4a2)

These passages clearly emphasize stage (ii): *doxa* comes as the conclusion of an inner question-and-answer session, a dialogue (from *dialegesthai*) – precisely the process that Socrates engages in with his interlocutors. This may seem artificial to us: surely we sometimes form beliefs automatically, or without reflection. Why then does Plato emphasize the process of question and answer in these definitions of *doxa*?

I suggest that his main concern is with stage (iii). In all three passages a *doxa* is an assertion or affirmation (*phasis*) – a saying to oneself, or writing down in one’s soul. We will see the importance of this below when we look at the contrast with states that lack any such explicit commitment. We can speculate therefore that Plato presents *doxa* as what answers a question in order to get at this notion of assent or affirmation, a notion which he is here articulating for the first time in the history of philosophy.

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<sup>6</sup> Contrast M. Frede’s interpretation of the Sceptics as distinguishing how things *are*, where this is already a notion of objective being, from how things “really are,” where this is deep philosophical or scientific fundamental truth (1987). Plato in many dialogues has a notion of real being in this latter sense on which it is beyond the reach of *doxa*; that is not what I here have in mind.

Arguably, then, he may not really hold that we go through the process of question-and-answer every time we form a *doxa*, not even subconsciously: the talk of dialogue may be a mere dramatization, or use of a particularly clear case to illuminate the rest; perhaps Plato does not even propose here to be providing a general account. On the other hand, it seems perfectly possible that Plato conceives of assent as occurring only in response to questioning, in which case we should take the talk of internal dialogue at face value. In the process of *doxa*-formation some amount of reflection – although surely not as much as dramatized in the *Philebus* example – is always required. (On this reading it is the Sceptics more than the Stoics who follow Plato’s lead.)

In either case, and especially the latter, *doxai* are rather rarer, and assent more active, than one might think. If you passively yield to an appearance, without having questioned it or at least without the active commitment that typically results as the response to questioning, you do not count as having a *doxa*. If this seems an unattractive view of *doxa* that may simply show that ‘belief’ is the wrong translation: ‘opinion’ fits this active-reflection model much better, for while we arguably simply find ourselves with beliefs, it takes a bit of work to form an opinion.<sup>7</sup>

What about stage (i), the experiencing of an appearance? The *Sophist* and *Theaetetus* passages make no mention of this stage. The *Philebus* passage by contrast is strongly committed to it. It dramatizes the role of appearance by using in its example an appearance that stands out as a mere appearance – a phantom (from *phantazesthai*, the verb used here instead of the more neutral *phainesthai*) – but since the first line tells us that *doxa* always arises from memory and perception, while the dialogue has earlier defined memory as “the preservation of perception” (34a10), the claim is general: the process of *doxa*-formation always begins with a perception, or a post- or quasi- perceptual appearance.

There is a simple explanation of this difference: the *Philebus* is offering an account of what the other dialogues treat as only one class of *doxa*, namely perception-based belief, what the *Sophist* goes on to call *phantasia* (264b); the passages from the other dialogues are offering accounts of *doxa* as a whole. But we saw that the *Philebus* seems to present its account as a general account of *doxa*, and we have also seen that on the Hellenistic view the process always starts with an appearance – although not always a perceptual one.<sup>8</sup> Why would anyone hold this view? Presumably the thought is: there must be some raw material that provides the impetus for the process of questioning, and thereby for the eventual assent; there must be some contentful state we can be in without yet undertaking any active process, something that simply strikes us, appears.

I want now to show that close examination of the more detailed account of *doxa* we find in the *Republic* suggests that Plato there holds, like his Hellenistic successors, that there always is a stage (i): *doxa*-formation always begins either from literal perceptual appearance or from some analogue of it. I will return to the *Theaetetus* below, arguing that it presents an appearance/assent account at least of perception-based beliefs.

### III. Appearance and assent in the *Republic*

The *Republic* presents a theory of *doxa* that on its face bears little resemblance to what we have seen in the later dialogues. *Doxa* is introduced as the mental state “set over” (*epi* – having as objects) the perceptible world by

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<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, perhaps beliefs (as more or less commonly understood) are rare in this way too: see Tamar Gendler’s argument that many of our actions stem not from beliefs, but from sub-doxastic “aliefs” (“Alief in Action (and Reaction)” *Mind and Language* 23 (2008): 552-585 at 570).

<sup>8</sup> On Sextus’ version not all *phainomena* are perceptual: some, like for example the appearance that one ought not to assent to appearances, are what we would call intellectual.

contrast with the intelligible.<sup>9</sup> Within the category of *doxa* there are two species, also distinguished by their objects: *eikasia* (imaging, most literally) set over images and phantoms (*eikones*, *phantasmata*) such as shadows and reflections, and *pistis* (the word connotes conviction and trust), set over the originals of those, i.e. over ordinary physical objects (509e-510a). Evidently then what distinguishes *doxa* from other states, and what distinguishes the two species of *doxa* from one another, is first and foremost the objects of these states.

This may look to be an odd and unpromising account of *doxa*, and furthermore one that Plato abandoned in later work. Why think that there is a difference in kind, rather than simply in degree of clarity (*saphênia*, 511e), between the mental states one is in when looking at a shadow and when looking at the tree that casts it, let alone between thoughts about trees and thoughts about triangles? Focusing on the first question – the motivation for distinguishing *eikasia* from *pistis* – we might conjecture that Plato only wants a vivid analogy for the more important distinction he goes on to draw between thought (*dianoia*) and understanding (*noêsis*), and therefore that we should not try to make too much of the notion that the two lower states are genuinely distinct.

I want to show that when we understand what Plato means by confining these two species of *doxa* to their respective objects, and when we understand how one “ascends” from the first to the second, we will see that Plato is instead putting forth a substantive view of *doxa*, one that resembles the account we found in the later dialogues, and that also explains why he here restricts *doxa* to perceptibles. What we will find is that *eikasia* and *pistis* correspond to Hellenistic appearance-reception and assent.

Plato nowhere says anything explicit about *eikasia* and *pistis* beyond mentioning their objects and saying that they differ in degree of clarity. In the Cave allegory, however, he seems to align *eikasia* with the state of the chained prisoners looking at shadows and *pistis* with that of those who have turned toward the statues (534a), and from this we can glean some important information.<sup>10</sup> To move from *eikasia* to *pistis* requires effort, and this at least in part because in *eikasia* one does not merely experience images, but is attached to them, for they are all that one has ever known. (I return to this point below.)

This is still not much to go on, but we learn much more from a rarely recognized further source of information about these two states: Book X’s example of conflicting *doxai*.

In Book X Plato wants to show that imitative poetry is dangerous because it indulges the non-rational part of the soul by presenting deceptive images. He needs therefore to establish that images affect this part. He does so by arguing that whenever a person is subject to a perceptual appearance that *P*, the non-rational part of her soul

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<sup>9</sup> Such at least is the straightforward interpretation of the middle books’ equation between the *doxaston* and *hôraton* (see especially 509d-510a), and while the interpretation is much questioned, what I say here should go some way toward confirming it.

<sup>10</sup> That the Line and Cave images are meant as wholly parallel is strongly suggested at 517b and 534b; there are however many who deny this view. In what follows I simply assume parallelism, although the comparisons I draw below between the prisoners’ state and that of the lower part of the soul in the illusion example in Book X do provide further support for that view. It is worth noting, however, that even those who deny parallelism should accept that the Cave allegory presents a distinction between the mental states of those who are confined to looking at shadows and those who attend to what casts them; if these are not identical to *eikasia* and *pistis*, they are at the very least analogous, and of equal interest. (It is true that Plato’s description of the mental state of the recently released prisoner who looks at the statues – he is confused, dazzled, and believes that the shadows are more real (515c-d) – does not sound like *pistis* as I will interpret it in what follows; indeed, it seems like a state of doubt or disbelief rather than any kind of conviction or belief. I think the best explanation is that Plato here describes the transitional adjustment to *pistis*, and never bothers describing the settled stage; he describes both stages in characterizing the ascent to the next level, *dianoia*, at 516a. (Compare Malcolm 1962, 43-44).)

*doxazei* – forms a *doxa* – that *P.*<sup>11</sup> When, for example, it “appears through sight” (*phainetai dia opseôs*) to someone that a distant figure is small, but she calculates and reaches the conclusion that it is large, she has two opposing *doxai*: one that it is small, and one that it is large. Since the same thing cannot undergo opposites at the same time and in the same respect regarding the same thing, these *doxai* must belong to two different parts of her soul. The *doxa* that things are as she has calculated them to be must belong to the calculating (or rational, *logistikon*) part, and therefore it must be a lower part whose *doxa* agrees with the appearances.<sup>12</sup>

The appeal to conflicting *doxai* here may strike us as odd. Why not say instead – with Aristotle, in *De Anima* III.3 – that we have a *doxa* on one side, conflicting with a mere appearance on the other? Plato is clearly assuming that the appearance entails a false *doxa*, perhaps even that it simply *is* a false *doxa* – but why?<sup>13</sup> I want to show that he is relying on the theory of *doxa* he has already put forth: the lower part’s attitude counts as a *doxa* because it is an *eikasia*.<sup>14</sup> The rational part’s attitude, meanwhile, is an instance of *pistis*.

We saw above that *eikasia* was introduced as a response to mere appearances (shadows or reflections) rather than ordinary physical objects; notably, the lower part’s attitude is a response to the appearance of the object rather than to the object itself. This is the natural interpretation of the illusion passage, strengthened by a distinction Plato has drawn in the directly preceding discussion:

[Do painters imitate visible objects] as they are or as they appear (*hoia estin ê hoia phainetai*)? For you must make this further distinction (*touto gar eti diorison*)...If you view a bed from the side or the front or in whatever way...the bed does not differ at all from itself, but it appears to be different. (598a)

Plato goes on to refer to the appearance of the bed as a phantom (*phantasma*) or mere image (*eidôlon*) rather than the truth or reality (*alêtheia*) (598b). Thus the ordinary visual appearance of the bed – or of the distant object, or submerged stick – is in the same ontological category as the lowest objects on the divided line: note that the appearance of the bed, like the shadows in the Cave, is a copy of an original which is itself a mere copy of a Form. The appearance of a physical object is thus ontologically distinct from the physical object itself; when something appears to you smaller when distant, or bent when submerged, your mental state is set over (*epi*) the appearance, not the object that underlies it. (On Plato’s view, as I understand it, the appearance is itself an object

<sup>11</sup> For evidence that *doxa* is the product of *doxazein* see especially *Charmides* 168a.

<sup>12</sup> “Does the same magnitude appear (*phainetai*) to us through sight not to be equal from close by and from far away?...And aren’t measurement and counting and weighing the best aids in this regard, so that what rules in use is not what appears bigger or smaller or more or heavier, but that which has calculated (*to logisamenon*) and measured and weighed?...But this surely would be the work of the calculating element in the soul (*to logistikon*)...But often when this has measured and declared that certain things are larger or smaller than others or equal, the opposites appear (*phainetai*) to it [see note below] at the same time about these same things?...But didn’t we say that it is impossible for the same thing to doxazein opposites about the same things?...So that in the soul which *doxazon* against the measurements could not be the same as that which does so in accordance with the measurements...But that which trusts in (*pisteuon*) measurement and calculation must be the best part of the soul” (*Rep.* 602c-603a). I am here simply going to assume without argument that we can accept at least one of the various ways that have been found to interpret the phrase *toutôi...t’anantia phainetai* as not conflicting with what I have argued elsewhere to be the clear implication of the rest of the discussion: the part that believes the illusions is one of the non-rational parts of the soul (see Moss 2008; for possible interpretations of the vexed line see among others Adam 1902, Barney 1992, and Storey forthcoming).

<sup>13</sup> For good discussion see Storey, forthcoming.

<sup>14</sup> It is often recognized that consumers of imitative poetry are in a state of *eikasia*; the relevance of the *eikasia/pistis* distinction to the visual illusion passage, however, has neither been much noted nor much discussed.

outside the mind, like a shadow; in this way his view of appearance differs from the Hellenistic one.) Thus in illusion cases the non-rational part of the soul, like the prisoners in the cave, is in cognitive contact with a mere image rather than its original, and like them is taken in by the image – yields to it. It is in *eikasia*.

As to the rational part, its thought is directed not toward the appearance, but toward the object “as it is,” i.e. to the object itself: it is thus in a state of *pistis*, as arguably implied by Plato’s characterization of it here as “the part that trusts in [literally, has *pistis* in – *pisteuon*] measurement and calculation” (603a).<sup>15</sup> But now we understand the Cave’s implication that getting to this point is a difficult achievement. Only once you have doubted that the tree (e.g.) is the size it appears to be, and have gone through some process of reasoning or calculation, *logismos*, with the aim of determining its true size, do you count as having an attitude not toward the appearance, but toward the tree itself. That is simply not something you could have as an object of thought without having gone through that process.<sup>16</sup> (This is not to say that *eikasia* is entirely passive: in the cave, prisoners conjecture about which shadow will appear next. What they never do however is to question whether or not the shadows are all there is, and that is why they never achieve *pistis*. Note the analogy, one that 602d’s mention of *logismos* encourages us to draw, with the middle books’ claim that we cannot direct our minds toward what in the strictest sense *is* – the Forms – without going through a different kind of doubt, and a differently directed process of *logismos* (see especially 524a-b).)

The point is not that we are in *pistis* only when our beliefs are *true*: surely, as the *Philebus* passage explicitly acknowledges, the process of reasoning might result in a false belief. To say that *pistis* is about the object itself rather than appearance is not to say that *pistis* always grasps how things really are, but rather that in *pistis* one is *trying* to make a claim about how things really are – what people nowadays sometimes mean by the claim that beliefs “aim at truth.” In *eikasia* we make no distinction between how things appear and how they are; only once we have drawn that distinction do we count as make claims about the latter.

Does this mean that reaching *pistis* always requires actual *logismos*, calculation? Presumably it will not always involve the kind of physical measurement at issue in the illusion example; arguably however such measurement is only one species of the wider genus of *logismos*, where *logismos* always has the aim of determining how things really are by contrast with how things appear – precisely the sort of questioning and answering activity that constitutes stage (ii) in the *Philebus*’s account of *doxa*-formation.<sup>17</sup> Then is some kind of active reflection always required for *pistis*? Arguably yes: the root in *peithesthai*, to be convinced or persuaded, suggests that *pistis* is what results from some actual process (compare Aristotle, *de Anima* 428a20-24). Active affirmation can only result from active questioning and considering. In this case ‘opinion’ will again be an attractive translation, or even better ‘conviction,’ which picks up on the root verb. Note in favor of this view that the only explicit attribution of *pistis* in the *Republic* is to the craftsman, who has correct *pistis* about the value of his products (601e); the imitator and his audience do not even have false *pistis* about this, arguably because they have not even tried to figure out what makes these products good. On the other hand, I am happy to leave open the possibility, as I did with regard to the *Philebus* and other late dialogues, that Plato may appeal to the active process simply to help us understand the mental act he presents as its result: we can most easily grasp the notion of active

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<sup>15</sup> Certainly it is not in any higher state – *dianoia* or *noësis* – for its thought is directed wholly to the visible object rather than to pure intelligibles: more on this below.

<sup>16</sup> In the Cave allegory Plato implies that most people have never gone through even the lower process of moving from *eikasia* to *pistis*, with his claim that it is the chained prisoners who are “like us” (515a). This may seem too bizarre a claim to attribute to him, but (a) the context arguably implies that it is a claim just about our attitude toward *ethical* appearances (see below), and (b) perhaps Plato thinks it is true even of our attitude toward visual appearances: only when problems arise do we bother to question how things appear; in other words, our rational part very often lies idle.

<sup>17</sup> I argue for this account of *logismos*, based on comparisons between the role of the *logisikton*, calculative part of the soul, in Book X’s soul-division argument and in Book IV’s, in Moss 2008.

affirmation of how things are if we see it as the culmination of a process that begins by questioning the appearances and proceeds via a process of calculation.

Book X's illusion example has thus shown us that the *Republic's* two species of *doxa* coincide very closely with the Sceptics' passive and active assent. *Eikasia* and *pistis* are indeed distinguished by their objects, but this is not so flimsy a basis for a distinction as it first appeared: there is a real epistemic and psychological difference too. *Pistis* is active affirmation (or denial) about how things *are*: the reason that it counts as an attitude toward a thing itself, rather than its appearance, is that having any attitude at all toward such things presupposes going beyond the appearance via mental effort. *Eikasia* on the other hand is passive going along with appearances, and thus has only appearances as its objects. It is also – like Sceptic passive assent to *phantasia* – a state that plays a very belief-like role in behavior: the lower part of the soul, which lacks the ability to perform *logismos* and thus can never move beyond *eikasia*, feels and desires in accordance with the appearances; if the person as a whole is ruled by this part then she will even act on the appearances.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, the resemblance to the Sceptic view is striking. Consider a passage in which Sextus acknowledges a broad use of *dogma* (from the same root as *doxa*):

We say that the sceptic does not dogmatize, not in the sense of *dogma* in which some say, speaking quite generally, a *dogma* consists in acquiescing to a thing (*eudokein tini pragmati*); for the sceptic does assent to such feelings which necessarily result when things appear to him in certain ways; he would not, for example, when he is heated or chilled, say, 'I believe I am not heated (or chilled)'; We rather say, he does not dogmatize, in the sense of *dogma* in which some say a *dogma* consist in assenting to one of the non-evident objects of scientific inquiry." (Sextus, *PHI* 13)<sup>19</sup>

There are two senses of *dogma*: passive acquiescing to appearances, and active affirmation of the reality of what investigation purports to show lies behind them. Arguably Sextus takes there to be a broad use of *dogma* on which both count, and a narrower use on which only the latter does (this would explain why he elsewhere says that the Sceptic has no *dogmata* or *doxai*). We can see Plato in the *Republic* as embracing the equivalent broader sense of *doxa*, and in the later dialogues, where he makes active assent a prerequisite, the narrower. And we can understand this ambivalence: as modern debates about belief testify (see note 3 above), there is arguably no clear fact of the matter as to which states are included in the everyday concept.

Before leaving the *Republic*, I want to show that this interpretation also sheds some light on Plato's restriction of *doxa* to the perceptible world – if we grant him a suitably broad notion of perception. *Eikasia* is about appearances; so far we have focused on visual appearances, but as many have recognized both the Cave allegory, with its talk of "shadows of justice" (517d), and Book X, with its analogy between the painter's visual images and the poet's "images of virtue" (600e), imply that Plato puts value-appearances in this same lowest ontological category. One promising explanation of this move makes the ontological claim dependent on an epistemological one: Plato identifies beliefs as being about appearances (and thus as *eikasiai*) if one can form such beliefs without any active mental effort – that is, if it can merely strike one that things are so. In the *Republic*, at least, he thinks that an act can merely strike us as just or unjust, fine or shameful, and so on. When he confines *doxa* to the visible world, we can thus read his claim most charitably by taking 'visible' as shorthand for 'able to appear,' and take the claim to be that a *doxa* is either a passive or an active assent to an appearance. In *eikasia* we passively yield to an appearance of the form '*x* is *F*;' we reach *pistis* as the conclusion of calculation that aims to determine

<sup>18</sup> This characterization of the lower part is clearest later in Book X, when we discover that non-rational appetites and other passions are responses to images of value. See among others Moss 2007 and 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Translation loosely based on Annas and Barnes 2000.

whether  $x$  is in fact  $F$ . If we abandon this endeavor and engage in calculation with a view instead to determining what  $F$ ness itself is (see 524-5) – that is, if we attempt to move beyond the world of appearance and get some hold on intelligibles – we move beyond *doxa* entirely. At each stage, we gain access to (can set our minds over, *epi*) a higher class of objects only through an active process of doubt, reflection, and calculation that yields a new kind of mental state. If we can have beliefs about intelligibles, then Plato does not mean by *doxa* what we mean by belief.

#### IV. Appearance and Assent in the *Theaetetus*

We have seen that the *Theaetetus* offers an assent account of *doxa* (189e-90a, quoted in section II). When we note that this comes shortly after an argument distinguishing *doxa* from a lesser cognitive state, perception (*aisthêsis*), largely on the grounds that the lesser state has no access to *what is*, it is very tempting to interpret the *Theaetetus* as advancing another version of the appearance/assent model of *doxa*, with perception playing the role of the *Republic*'s *eikasia*, and *doxa* playing the role of the *Republic*'s *pistis*. Although here as in the *Republic* two mental states are at first distinguished by their objects – “proper perceptibles” vs. “commons” (see below) – perhaps here too this corresponds to a psychological difference between passive and active assent.

My aim in this section is to show that this is a promising reading of the *Theaetetus*. I will not offer a thorough discussion of the relevant texts nor a full defense of my proposed interpretation against its rivals: the passage which draws the perception/*doxa* distinction, *Tht.* 184-7, is among the most discussed and most debated in Plato, and a detailed treatment would require a paper of its own. There is however an existing interpretation of the passage which fits well with the suggestion that perception and *doxa* are here distinguished as passive vs. active assent, so I will here take on the limited goal of bolstering that interpretation, largely by showing how it fits with what we have seen of Plato's view of *doxa* later in the dialogue and in the *Republic*.

First, a brief summary. The first part of the *Theaetetus* is devoted to refuting Theaetetus' hypothesis that knowledge (*epistêmê*) is perception. The argument that Socrates winds up treating as decisive can be summarized follows:

- Only objects that are peculiar or proper (*idia*) to one sense are perceived; all other objects – “commons” (*koïna*) – are investigated not through the senses, but rather by the soul “itself by itself” (184c-185c). This solo activity of the soul is called *doxazein*, the forming of *doxa* (187a).
- The class of commons includes, along with sameness, difference, similarity, dissimilarity, number, fineness, goodness, and benefit, and *being* (*ousia*) (185c-186c).
- Since perception has no access to being, it has no access to truth (*alêtheia*); therefore perception cannot be *epistêmê*, knowledge (186d-e).

Perception lacks access to being; the activity of the soul investigates being is *to doxazein*, forming *doxai*. But what does ‘being’ mean here? This is the subject of a good deal of controversy. Cornford (1957) took it as a reference to Forms; perception is not knowledge because it has no grasp on the Forms, which are the only things that really are (1957). Burnyeat (1976) introduced a different and very influential reading: ‘being’ refers to the copula, and Socrates' claim is that perception cannot even make simple judgments – predications; this comes only with *doxa*. These have been the dominant interpretations to date, but there are others too; I want to draw attention to one which would render the passage's distinction between perception and *doxa* another version of the distinction between passive yielding and active assent. On this interpretation Socrates' claim is that only in *doxa*

does one go beyond appearances to make claims about how things really or objectively *are*.<sup>20</sup> This “objectivity” interpretation remains a minority one; I want to show that we have very strong reasons to accept it.

The main piece of textual evidence in favor of this reading, largely ignored by its advocates as well as by its opponents, is this.<sup>21</sup> By the time we reach this point in the dialogue, we should already have a strong presumption about what ‘being’ refers to in precisely the relevant context – that is, about what kind of being a mental state must grasp in order to grasp truth and thereby qualify as knowledge – and the presumption favors the objectivity reading. For all along Socrates has been saying that knowledge must be true and therefore must be of “what is,” where “what is” has a very clear sense: *how things really are*, where this is conceptually contrasted with *how we perceive things*. Certainly commentators have recognized that this sense of ‘being’ plays a crucial role in the first part of the dialogue, but they have by and large ignored its connection to the concepts of knowledge and truth, and thus missed its relevance in the crucial passage. (See prominently Burnyeat 1976.)

The connections emerge immediately from Socrates’ first response to the proposal that knowledge is perception. If Theaetetus is right, says Socrates, then “perception is always of *what is*, and without falsehood [*apseudes* – that is, always *true*] – as befits knowledge” (152c). The preceding example has made clear that for perception to be “of what is” for it to get things right about *how the world is* – for instance, to declare the wind cold only when the wind *is* cold (for the perceiver) (152b). The kind of being one must grasp to attain knowledge and truth, then, is how things objectively are.

This same sense of ‘what is’ and ‘being’ is clearly at work throughout the ensuing discussion, which purports to show that Theaetetus’ view of perception entails Protagoreanism about truth and Heracliteanism about “being,” where that means, about what the world is like:

[On the proposed view, ] my perception is true for me because it is always a perception of that being (*ousia*) which is mine (*alêthês emoi hê eme aisthêsis – tês gar emês ousias aei estin*), and I am judge, as Protagoras said, of things that are, that they are, for me... How then, if I am without falsehood (*apseudês*) and never stumble in thought about the things that are (*ta onta*) and that come to be, can I not be a knower of the things I perceive? (160c-d)<sup>22</sup>

Perception is only knowledge if it is always true, and it is always true only if it is always “of *being*” (*ousia*) – where as the examples show this means once again *how things are*, e.g. the wind being cold, the honey being sweet, and so on.<sup>23</sup> All this is summed up in a passage that takes a major step toward rejecting this package of views, while still provisionally granting them in a restricted realm:

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<sup>20</sup> The position is associated with Cooper (1970), although his defense of it is tentative. Versions are defended by Kanayama (1987) and Gerson (2003, 204-212). Lott (2011) offers a very good extended defense of the position, with compelling criticism of its rivals and a persuasive argument that it reveals Plato to think that *doxa* is rational because it aims at truth. The oldest version of the view I have found is in a little-cited article in this series, one which draws the same comparisons I will draw between the *Theaetetus*’s *doxa/aisthêsis* distinction and the *Republic*’s *pistis/eikasia* distinction: Paton 1922 (see quotations below). Although I do not agree with all the details of Paton’s account, I am pleased to be following its broad lines.

<sup>21</sup> Gerson is an exception: see his 2003, 210.

<sup>22</sup> Translations loosely based on Levett.

<sup>23</sup> See also the Protagorean view of value-properties: the things that are seem (*dokein*) to people about the just, fine and pious always “are in truth (*einai tēi alêtheia*),” so that here everyone has knowledge (172a); that is to say, these things have no being (*ousia*) of their own, so that what seems to people to be so is true (172b); as the contrast with beneficial shows, all this is to say that if we think x is just, then x *is* just. Once again, ‘being’ refers to how things really are.

Man is the measure of all things...of white things and heavies and lights and all things of that sort (*tôn toioutôn*)...when he thinks that they are as he experiences them (*hoia paschei toiauta oiomenos*), he thinks what is true and what is for him (*alêthê te oietai hautôi kai onta*)...And what about the things are going to be in the future? Has a man the criterion of these within himself? When he thinks certain things will be, do they come to be for him?...Take hot things (*therma*), for example. Whenever a layman man thinks he is going to take a fever, will this heat also be (*esesthai*)...? (178b-c)

On this view laymen grasp “what is true and what is” about whites, heavies, lights and “all things of that sort” – presumably, proper perceptibles – in the present, but not in the future. To grasp “what is” about such things in the way that is relevant to truth and thereby knowledge is thus to grasp what is the case – to judge rightly that some object is white or heavy or hot.

By the time we reach the argument at 184-7, then, we should have the strong presumption that “*x* has no access to being, and therefore no access to truth” means: *x* cannot access how things really *are* by contrast with how they appear or are perceived. Now consider Socrates’ statement of the crucial claim that perception lacks this access:

We perceive the hardness of the hard and the softness of the soft through touch...but the being (*ousia*) of these and that they are (*hoti eston*)...the soul, going back and comparing these with one another, tries to discern (*krinein*). (186b)

What is “the being of these and that they are”? We just saw that at 178b, thinking “what is” about proper perceptibles meant thinking that (e.g.) a stick is hard. If we interpret ‘being’ the same way here, then what 186b claims is that insofar as one is having such a thought, one is not exercising perception. We can perceive a stick as hard, or as soft – just as in *Republic X* we can have *eikasia* of a figure as big, or as small. These are ways things can simply appear to us – strike us. But we cannot perceive something as *really being* hard, any more than we can have *eikasia* of something as *really being* big. To have the thought that the stick is really hard requires having thoughts about how things are by contrast with how they appear (that, again, is what I mean by ‘really’), and once you are having thoughts like that you have moved beyond the stage of passive-appearance-reception to the stage of questioning and calculation – *Republic X*’s *logismos*, or *Theaetetus* 189e’s *dialogos* – and thence to active assertion.

Can this be what Plato has in mind in denying perception access to being, at 186b? It is strongly suggested by the passages that directly precede and follow, in which he uses precisely the language of calculation to explain how one goes beyond perception:

the soul investigates the being [of the commons] in relation to one another, calculating in itself (*analogizomenê*) past and present things in relation to the future (186a-b)

whatever *pathêmata* reach the soul through the body are present to humans and beasts as soon as we are born, while the calculations (*analogismata*) about these things, regarding both *ousia* and benefit, scarcely arrive to those to whom they do arrive, even after a long time, and through a lot of effort and education (186d)

Going beyond perception means making calculations, just as in the *Republic*’s illusion passage. Furthermore, the mention of the future and of benefit strongly imply that, just as in the *Republic*, what one attempts to determine when one goes beyond perception via calculation is the objective fact of the matter. (This was Cooper’s main motive for the objectivity interpretation: in the 170s Socrates argued that with respect to these two topics everyone rejects Protagorean subjectivism in favor of the view that there are objective facts to be known, for we

all defer to experts to tell us whether a particular regiment will benefit our bodies, or a particular seasoning improve the taste of a dish.) The kind of being that perception cannot access is precisely the kind that calculation can: how things are by contrast with how they appear.

Moreover, this reading of the perception/*doxa* distinction makes very good sense of Plato's account of *doxa* just a few pages later in the *Theaetetus*, where he presents *doxa* as an affirmation or denial resulting from a question-and-answer dialogue in the soul (189e-90a, quoted in section II). At stage (i) I perceive the wind as cold; at stage (ii) I start asking if the appearance is true, i.e. if the wind *really is* cold (or, to take another "common," if it is the *same* wind that feels hot to you); at stage (iii) I stably affirm or deny that it really is cold, and only now do I have a *doxa*. Perception on its own makes no assertion about how things really are, but if we begin with a perception, question it, and then reason out an answer, we wind up with such an assertion. (To return to an issue raised in part II: I am not claiming that all *doxa* in the *Theaetetus* begins from perception in this way; indeed Plato seems to deny this at 196c. The claim instead is that on the view here developed *doxai* are always assents, which are best construed as answers to questions, and a large class of *doxai* are answers to questions about whether things are as they are perceived. Arguably Plato is thinking of other *doxai* as assents to non-perceptual appearances, but I see no clear evidence for or against that reading of the dialogue.)

Finally, although the point deserves a much longer discussion than I can offer here, the objectivity reading thus understood can accommodate the main arguments in favor of the copula reading. Arguably Plato does not distinguish the act of predication from the act of active affirmation or denial (in this he would be followed by Aristotle). Thus while at stage (i) I perceive the wind as cold, this is not an explicit predication. My senses do not strictly speaking say "The wind is hot," for to make that statement is already to be making a claim about how things objectively are. Burnyeat et al. are thus right that Plato denies to perception the ability to form predications, but their emphasis is wrong: what is distinctive about predication is not the ability to have complex cognitions, associating (e.g.) wind and heat, for perception can do that; instead, predication in the strict sense is special because it involves active affirmation.

In sum, then, Plato gives us very strong reason to expect that in the passage that distinguishes *doxa* from perception, 'being' will refer to how things objectively are, and he confirms that expectation both within the passage itself and in the account of *doxa* that follows. And thus we should accept that reading, unless there are serious obstacles. Proponents of the copula reading will insist that there are such obstacles, and although I do not have room to do justice to all the objections here I will consider two important ones.

First, if Plato means in this part of the *Theaetetus* to be distinguishing between perception as passive appearance-reception and *doxa* active assent, why does he explicitly differentiate them on the grounds that perception is confined to proper perceptibles alone? In *Republic X* a distant object can appear small, a stick bent, or Achilles virtuous, but all of these are what the *Theaetetus* classifies as commons, beyond the reach of perception. The *Theaetetus'* perception is drastically more limited than the *Republic's eikasia*, or the Sceptic's *phantasia*, and this should lead us to doubt that the intended contrast with *doxa* is the same.

Proponents of the objectivity reading have strategies for downplaying the relevance of the distinction between proper and common perceptibles, and it does seem to me plausible that Plato did not notice that he has ruled out perception of shapes and sizes like small and bent, but I want to consider a bullet-biting response: Plato is here deliberately narrowing the range of appearance-reception. Judging something like, unlike, virtuous, or good, he now believes, involves making comparisons and calculations in a way that finding something hot does not; thus only proper perceptibles like hot can be passively perceived. At 172e Socrates makes a tentative concession to Protagoras: there may be no more to reality than how things appear, and thus no more to knowledge than perception, when it comes to "hot, dry, sweet, and all this type of thing" – that is, proper perceptibles. Even though he rejects this view at 184-7, he may be retaining the underlying thought: it takes no active mental effort to find something hot; that is something that can simply appear.

The second main objection to the objectivity reading rests on a misunderstanding, but an important one for our purposes. Bostock articulates it clearly: if ‘being’ refers to the facts of the matter, Socrates should grant something he explicitly denies, that with respect to the proper perceptibles perception *can* grasp being, attain truth, and be knowledge (Bostock 1991, 133). This is the converse of the misunderstanding that would take all *pistis* to be true because *pistis* is about how things really are. To say that perception does not even investigate being (*episkopein*, 185e) is to say that it does not make any claims about how things really are, and therefore, on the proposed notion of truth, makes no truth claims. In modern terminology, although perception may often get things right, it does not “aim at truth.” Compare Burnyeat’s discussion of the debates between the Stoics and the Sceptics. When the Sceptic doubts that appearances are true, just as here when Socrates denies that perception attains truth,

... ‘true’ in these discussions means ‘true of a real objective world’; the true...is what conforms with the real, an association traditional to the word *alêthês* since the earliest period of greek philosophy...If the modern reader [objects that]...if I say how things appear to me my statement ought to count as true if and only if things really do appear as I say they do, the answer is that is objection, though natural, is anachronistic.<sup>24</sup>

The senses in the *Theaetetus*, like a good Sceptic, experience the wind as cold. But this experience is not in the strict sense true even if the wind really is cold, for in passively accepting appearances in this way one has not made any claim about how things really are. One makes no truth-claims in merely yielding to an appearance, but only in actively affirming it – in forming *doxai*.

Paton makes this claim about both the *Theaetetus*’s perception and the *Republic*’s *eikasia*:

*Eikasia*...makes no distinction between the different levels of reality...real and unreal do not mean anything to it...it does not affirm or deny: that is, it does not claim to be true....It is identical with that *aisthêsis* or Intuition of the first part of the *Theaetetus*.<sup>25</sup>

In fact, the *Republic* appears to deny this characterization of *eikasia*: the prisoners in the cave “consider the truth/reality (*to alêthes*) to be nothing other than the shadows” (515c). There is however something odd about this claim: if the prisoners have no awareness of anything other than the shadows, will they really have the concept of reality? Arguably their mistake is not to identify the shadows as real, but instead, more radically, to fail entirely to develop a notion of the real, by contrast with the apparent. (A parallel issue arises with another “common”: in *Republic X* the lower part of the soul, the one that cannot get beyond *eikasia*, is taken in by illusions like that of an object appearing smaller when further away, and so “supposes that the *same things* are at one time large and another time small” (*Rep.* 605c). On the *Theaetetus* view, this grants too much, since ‘same’ is a common and thus beyond the range of appearance: the lower part has an impression of *x* as size A, and later another impression of *y* as size B, where B is smaller; from an external standpoint we know that *x* and *y* are the same object, but that vocabulary is not accessible to the appearance-bound lower part of the soul.)<sup>26</sup>

Of course this may be what Plato has in mind in the *Republic* too, with 515c offering only a third-person description of *eikasia*. If however he undergoes a real change of mind about this lowest mental state in the later dialogues, coming to hold that it cannot make assertions about truth or reality at all, then we have an explanation for why he narrows the sense of *doxa* as he does. Once he has realized that passively going with appearances implies having no thoughts at all about truth, he no longer wants to call a state like that a *doxa*. A *doxa* is a view

<sup>24</sup> Burnyeat 1980, reprinted in 1997, 30.

<sup>25</sup> Paton 1922, 176. For this view of perception in the *Theaetetus* see also Cooper 1970 and Crombie 1963, 13-14 and 26.

<sup>26</sup> In fact ‘small’ must name a common too, although Plato arguably does not recognize this.

about what is true; to have a view about what is true, one must be able to question how things appear, use calculations to reach an answer, and affirm it; a creature – or part of soul – that can do none of these things cannot properly be said to have any *doxai* at all.<sup>27</sup>

I have argued then that the *Theaetetus*' distinction between perception and *doxa* is a second attempt on Plato's part to articulate the distinction that he initiates in the *Republic*, and that the Stoics and Sceptics will refine: the distinction between passively accepting appearances and actively making affirmations about how things are. Only in *doxa* do we investigate or set our minds over or aim at being and truth, because doing that requires explicit reflection and calculation, and without such reflection there is no *doxa*.

This is, as I said at the start, a very narrow and demanding conception of *doxa* – even moreso, we now see, than modern conceptions that tie belief to reason, evidence, and truth, for these conceptions do not require that beliefs result from active reflection or affirmation. Perhaps then we should conclude that Plato's theory of *doxa* is not in the end a theory of what we call belief. Indeed this may be a welcome result: Plato says a number of things about *doxa* that seem unjustifiable as views about belief, and it is good not to have to attribute to him those views. On the other hand, we may wonder if he is really carving the nature of mental states at its joints. I leave that question to another occasion.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ganson defends this interpretation of the lower part's *doxa* in Book X, in a paper that distinguishes the cognitions of the rational and non-rational parts of soul along the lines here proposed for the distinction between passive appearance-reception and active belief (2009). He also argues that in my 2008 I mischaracterize the lower part of the soul as believing that things are as they appear, while one should stay instead that it has no beliefs about how things are. I am sympathetic to the claim that that is how Plato on reflection would have put it, but given that he does make claims like the one at 515c I think we can read them loosely: the main point of arguing, as I did, that the lower part is confined to appearances is to say that it makes no distinction between these and reality or truth, so cannot be said strictly speaking to have views about the latter.

<sup>28</sup> I am grateful for discussion from the Aristotelian Society, and comments on earlier versions from Rachel Barney, Klaus Corcilius, Gail Fine, Brad Inwood, Brian Johnson, Toomas Lott, Ian McCready-Flora, Phil Mitsis, Jozef Muller, Suzanne Obdrzalek, Nick Pappas, Whitney Schwab, Damien Storey, Naly Thaler, Rosemary Twomey, Iakovos Vasiliou, and Katja Vogt.

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