

# The Eleatic Stranger in *Sophist* dialogue: A Continuation of the Socratic Legacy

**Lucas M. Álvarez**

Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina

lucasmalvarez@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7571-6941>

## ABSTRACT

Within the framework of the discussion about the existence of a spokesman in the Platonic dialogues, we look, in the first part, into the possible transfer of this spokesman's function from Socrates to the Eleatic Stranger, identifying the contact and divergence points between both characters. In the second part, we try to show that this transfer has a dramatic staging at the beginning of the *Sophist* dialogue, where Socrates makes a demand that enables the Stranger to demonstrate his genuine philosophical condition.

Keywords: spokesman, *Sophist*, the Eleatic Stranger, dialectic

[https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105\\_23\\_1](https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_23_1)

Following a traditional reading of the Platonic works that assumes that the author speaks through a spokesman (even though this approach has received criticism in the past few decades),<sup>1</sup> it can be said that Socrates embodies, in the early and middle dialogues, the philosophical perspective that Plato seeks to defend against that of various interlocutors. Does the same happen with the Eleatic Stranger, who replaces him as the main interlocutor in *Sophist*? Does he, like Socrates before him, represent a genuine philosophical perspective? Is he perhaps the spokesman for a late Plato? We shall try to answer these questions paying special attention both to the composition of the Eleatic Stranger character (I) and the architecture of the *Sophist* dialogue (II). In the first part, we shall offer a brief review of the coincidences and differences between Socrates and the Stranger and, in the second, we will focus on a key question Socrates makes to his interlocutor, which lays the foundation for the Stranger to demonstrate his true condition.

## I.

In relation to that composition, the first thing to point out is the notable points of contact between Socrates and the Stranger which, we think, could evidence the legacy that the former transmits to his successor. This should attract our attention, insofar as Plato, free to build a character from scratch and completely distanced from his master, composes a new one following the guidelines of the Socratic model. Let us briefly review some of those shared traits. Already in his first speeches, the Stranger inherits from Socrates the question-and-answer format for organising the discussion –leaving aside the long speeches– (*Sph.* 217d-e);<sup>2</sup> resumes the

typical Socratic formula of the early dialogues, i.e., the τί ἔστι, when beginning his research (*Sph.* 217b3, 218c1 and c6-7); and he pursues a definition of a universal type which, by pointing out essential features, separates the kind of objects to be defined from the rest (*Sph.* 232a and 240a). Also he displays a feature of his character which Socrates highlights as something fundamental of the philosopher: the handling of time, the lack of concern about the extent of reasoning (since, in the end, the most important thing is the search for truth), which the Stranger exhibits in the face of the repeated frustrations of his interlocutor (*Tht.* 172d, *Sph.* 261b-c, *Plt.* 268d and 286d-e).

By averaging the discussion of the dialogue, the Stranger takes a number of decisions that stress his affinity with Socrates. On the one hand, he postulates and analyses a group of eidetic entities, the so-called μέγιστα γένη (*Sph.* 254d4), which can be read as a renewed version of the Forms from the middle dialogues presented by Socrates.<sup>3</sup> In fact, numerous words that remind us of the introduction of the the Forms in *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Symposium* or *Republic* can be identified: the Stranger states that those γένη “definitely are” (βεβαίως ἔστι, *Sph.* 258b10), that they are “in themselves” (τὸ ὄν αὐτὸ, *Sph.* 257a1), they are “aeternal” (ἀεί, *Sph.* 254e4, 255c13 γ d1), they have their own nature (*Sph.* 258a7), he adds the adverb ὄντως to signify that they “are really” (*Sph.* 256c8-9, 258e3, 268d3-4) and he even talks, when he refers to the Being’s εἶδος, about a ‘brightness’ and about a ‘divine’ character (τὸ θεῖον, *Sph.* 254b1) which seem to evoke the characterisation of Good in *Republic*. On the other hand, the Stranger makes use of methodological tools that characterised the Socratic proposals both of the early and the middle dialogues. Without going into detail, it is sufficient to note that, in challenging certain opponents

who deny the basic principles he seeks to put forward, the Stranger appeals to the Socratic refutation in three occasions. Even when the appeal does not always respect the original format, it cannot be denied that, in the arguments against the dualist, against the monist and against those who deny the possibility of predication, the Stranger draws inspiration from that resource to show that those adversaries refute themselves when holding theses that contradict their very enunciation (*Sph.* 241c4-249d5 and 252d12-e7).<sup>4</sup> Moreover, connected to this use of refutation, an author like Baltzly has noticed that, in the passage where the Stranger deals with those who deny the possibility of predication, Plato reintroduces the hypothetical method that Socrates had presented in *Republic* (*R.* VI 510b4-9, 511b3-c2 and VII 533c7-d1).<sup>5</sup> After presenting the three hypotheses about combination (that things are unmixed and incapable of mutual participation, that all things are capable of mutual participation, and that some things are, but others are not, capable of such communication) (*Sph.* 251d-e.), the Stranger deals with refuting the first two and establishing the last one not hypothetically, an operation that seems to put into practice the famous proposal of *Republic* about dialectics as a method that cancels hypotheses.<sup>6</sup>

Having pointed out the coincidences between Socrates and the Stranger, our intention now is to indicate the differences between the two characters which, we understand, shall be read within the framework of that essential continuity.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the great difference concerns their respective characterisations, since Plato's detailed description of Socrates throughout the dialogues contrasts with the almost non-existent portrait he gives of the Stranger. There is no mention of his name, no description of his appearance, no clarification

of his family line, and no mention of any link to Athens' social fabric. The only links mentioned are the philosophical and the patriotic ones: Theodorus states that the Stranger is from Elea, 'different' (ἕτερον, *Sph.* 216a3) from Parmenides' and Zeno's companions, although a real philosopher (*Sph.* 216a).<sup>8</sup> It could be said then that if Socrates represents the individual at the expense of the generic, the Stranger represents the generic at the expense of the individual,<sup>9</sup> but what does this pre-eminence of the generic bring? Some interpreters see it as emblematic of a general decline in Plato's interest in dialogue as a form, which would also be seen in increasingly less vivid discussions.<sup>10</sup> We think that Plato's interest in that form is intact and that that pre-eminence can be read as a response of Plato's to two needs. On the one hand, the need to experience the limitations of his former spokesman, since the defense of philosophical theses is now free from a particular enunciator like Socrates.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the need to build a new character in such a way that his status is kept in suspense and is only determined by his actions in the development of the dialogue.

Let us begin with the first need, what new dimensions does the main interlocutor incorporate, freed from a personality as particular as that of Socrates? Unlike the dynamics of the dialogues conducted by Socrates where he confessed his desire to learn from others through conversation, since he ultimately knew that he knew nothing, in *Sophist*, the Stranger is responsible for guiding a docile and inexperienced Theaetetus towards results that he knows in advance and asserts with forceful authority (*Sph.* 239b-240a).<sup>12</sup> The Stranger deploys an argumentative machinery that allows him to offer, almost without hesitation, a range of resolutions from an appropriate definition and critique of the sophistic action to a map-

ping of the reciprocal relations between the greatest kinds.<sup>13</sup> A significant proof of these capacities of the Stranger could be his solution to the dispute between the “Somatists” and the “friends of the Forms” regarding the οὐσία. If we follow Cordero’s proposal, we can state that the Stranger provides a definition of the Being that is unusual for the main interlocutor in a Platonic dialogue because it is decisive, categorical and unequivocal; namely: «I propose as a definition to define the beings that are nothing but δύναμις» (*Sph.* 247e3-4).<sup>14</sup> Faced with a question of such wide scope as this definition, the Stranger does not hesitate and seems to offer a real proclamation difficult to find in any other passage of the Platonic work.

However, what we would like to highlight is that the Stranger’s confidence and authority also enable him to solve precisely those problems that had been urgent for old Socrates in chronological dialogues and dramatically linked to *Sophist*. We shall not go into detail here, but at least two solutions can be identified.<sup>15</sup> On the one hand, the question of false discourse which, formulated and not resolved in *Theaetetus*, is finally solved in *Sophist*. In fact, as there is neither a Form of Difference nor a postulation of not being as alterity in that dialogue, it is impossible to define false speech, as the Stranger does in *Sophist*, as saying things *different* from those that are (*Sph.* 263b-d).<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, while in *Parmenides* Socrates had warned that he “should be filled with admiration (θαυμαστώς)” (*Prm.* 129e3-4),<sup>17</sup> if someone were to distinguish and separate the Forms and show that “these things among themselves can be combined and distinguished” (*Prm.* 129e2-3), the Stranger succeeds in fulfilling that desire in *Sophist*.<sup>18</sup> The positive knowledge about the eidetic field allows him to answer that question in the long

passage dedicated to showing the relationships of mutual participation that the greatest kinds maintain (Being, Sameness, Other, Rest and Motion) (*Sph.* 254b-255c). Through a significant terminological coincidence,<sup>19</sup> Plato explicitly connects his two spokesmen in a path that goes from young Socrates, who wishes to instruct himself, to the Eleatic Stranger, who satisfies that desire by establishing incorrigible truths about the aforementioned combination.<sup>20</sup> A journey which also begins with an emotion which, for Plato, is the trigger to philosophise: θαυμαστός.<sup>21</sup> In fact, some interpreters assume that this astonishment into which Socrates would be finally falling in *Sophist* could explain his role as a silent witness throughout the dialogue.<sup>22</sup>

We had warned that the pre-eminence of the generic in the case of the Stranger could be due to an experimentation on Socratic limitations and it is time to wonder whether it proved fruitful. Given that Socrates returns as the main interlocutor in *Philebus*, a dialogue considered chronologically post-*Sophist*, and that the Stranger only reappears in *Statesman*, it might be thought that this Platonic operation is not entirely successful. For an interpreter like Rowe, Plato is still always Socrates and, by using the Stranger, he is only imagining what it would be like for the philosopher to possess at least some of that authority which his Socrates and he himself continue denying; in that sense, the Stranger would embody the very essence of the philosopher with the crucial exception of his magisterial stance.<sup>23</sup> In our opinion, it is not possible to evaluate that experiment without considering the meaning that the Socratic return in *Philebus* may have (a task that we cannot undertake here),<sup>24</sup> but neither is it possible without considering the connections and continuities between Socrates and the Stranger.

As we anticipated, the specific differences between these characters had to be read within the framework of a continuity that has been reinforced, since we have seen that the novelty brought by the Stranger allows him to respond precisely to what Plato's old master urged and which he was unable to resolve (the Stranger seems to represent the different from and the familiar with Socratic philosophy).<sup>25</sup> It is on this basis that the success of the Platonic experimentation must be measured. Likewise, this link between Socrates and the Stranger could represent an example of the plausibility of the spokesman's theory, since even though Plato incorporated a new main interlocutor, he decided to build him on concerns and methodologies similar to Socrates' and with capacities that do not enable him to say things contrary to Socrates', but rather to solve his unfinished problems. It would be very curious for Plato to insist time and again on starting off and reaching (or intending to reach) similar points were it not for the fact that, in some way, he sees these points in a positive light.

In defending the spokesman's theory, Rowe argues that it is difficult to give credit to those who question it, since it is always (or almost always) Socrates' opponents (and not him) who are defeated, humiliated or forced to think again, which would suggest that it is Socrates' position that Plato intends to support.<sup>26</sup> Following this reasoning, the truth is that, in the case of *Sophist*, the Stranger holds a group of theses, offers a series of solutions and is not either defeated, humiliated or forced to think again, either by his interlocutor Theaetetus or by a Socrates who decides to call for silence. It is therefore difficult to think that, without staging any kind of defeat (and composing a character that offers solutions to old problems), Plato seeks to distance us from the position and the theses defended by the

Stranger. Evidently there is something in the position of that character that Plato esteems and considers pertinent to incorporate into the philosophical paradigm which, up to the moment and just before his death (if we take into account the dramatic context of the dialogue), Socrates had embodied.<sup>27</sup>

We considered earlier that another of the reasons for the pre-eminence of the generic in the construction of the Stranger as a character could well be the need to keep his status in abeyance so that he could, through his actions, particularise his identity. This is why, in the next section, we will seek to demonstrate that in *Sophist* the Stranger successfully orchestrates a genuine philosophical perspective, even though certain interpreters try to discredit his work by equating him with a Sophist or assuming that he does not even manage to satisfy Socrates' initial demand: that of distinguishing the philosopher from the Sophist and from the statesman.<sup>28</sup> And to achieve that goal we must start by reading the prologue to the dialogue.

## II

In the first lines of *Sophist*, Theodorus notifies those present that he is accompanied by a stranger from Elea, clarifying that, although different from Parmenides' and Zeno's companions, "he's very much a philosopher" (*Sph.* 216a3-4).<sup>29</sup> Socrates doubts about that condition and asks if he will bring a god, but Theodorus answers that, in his 'opinion' (δοκεῖν, *Sph.* 216b9), he is only a divine being like all philosophers. Socrates in turn replies that the class of philosophers is not easier to 'discern' (διακρίνειν, *Sph.* 216c3) than the divine class, since "the genuine (ὄντως) philosophers 'who haunt our cities' –by contrast to the fake ones

(δοκοῦσιν)–” (*Sph.* 216c5-6) appear with various ‘aspects’ (φανταζόμενοι, *Sph.* 216c4) because of the others’ ignorance and, looking down on life here below, “sometimes they take on the appearance (φαντάζονται) of statesmen, and sometimes of sophists. Sometimes, too, they might give the impression that they’re completely insane” (*Sph.* 216c8-d2).

As we understand it, from reading these lines we can conclude that the inaugural problem of the dialogue is that of identifying the work of the Stranger. The data we have – Theodorus’ general assessments and his appearance before the eyes of his interlocutors – are not conclusive.<sup>30</sup> And Socrates makes it clear that the problem of appearances is also a thorny one because it can happen that a philosopher (the class to which the Stranger belongs according to Theodorus) is a philosopher only in appearance or that, being a genuine one, he appears in another way, not by his own decision, but due to the ignorance of the majority who are unable to recognise one of his kind. This issue is key in the development of the dialogue because the Sophist will be characterised, quite the contrary, as an agent who intentionally projects deceptive appearances.<sup>31</sup> What interests us now, however, is Socrates’ final reaction to the problem of identifying the status of the Stranger.

While Theodorus expresses his position in terms of δόξαι, Socrates rehearses some ironic conjectures,<sup>32</sup> avoids expressing opinions, and finally, in a momentous gesture of the dialogue, decides to question the Stranger and remain silent. Socrates asks him how those in his ‘region’ (τόπος, *Sph.* 217a1) conceive and call the sophist, the statesman and the philosopher, and indicates that he wishes to know whether they conceive them all as one, as two or “...they divide them up into three kinds (γενή) corresponding to the three names

(ὄνομα) and attach one name to each of them” (*Sph.* 217a7-8).<sup>33</sup> Theodorus suggests that the Stranger will have no ‘inconvenience’ (φθόνος, *Sph.* 217a9) to respond, and he immediately notices that those in his region conceive them as three different kinds, although “distinguishing (διορίζειν) clearly what each of them is, though, isn’t a small or easy job” (*Sph.* 217b2-3). It is in this exchange among Socrates, Theodorus and the Stranger that Plato reveals one of the central purposes of the dialogue and he does so through the first one. If it was Socrates who warned before about the impossibility to solve the thorny problem in terms of appearances, it is also he who now prepares the ground for its resolution through the two demands he poses to the Stranger: that he speak from his τόπος and that, in doing so, he operate distinguishing kinds.

What does the first demand involve? Some interpreters have pointed out that the term τόπος, central to Socrates’ question, is loaded with ambiguity because it can refer to that character’s land of origin or to the place of his kind, i.e., the place of the philosophers (if we respect the condition ascribed to him by Theodorus in the beginning).<sup>34</sup> However, this ambiguity can be dispelled if we take into account the immediate context in which the term is inserted. First of all, it is necessary to emphasise that what is at stake from the beginning of the discussion is not the land to which the Stranger belongs (nobody objects that he is from Elea and that if it were that which was in dispute, other terms would be relevant),<sup>35</sup> but rather his philosophical status. This being so, it is logical that Socrates seeks to test that status by asking him to speak from the ‘place’ of the philosophers, i.e. as a philosopher.<sup>36</sup> Secondly, it should be noted that, just before introducing the term τόπος, Socrates refers to a couple of spatial coordinates to talk about

the philosopher's task, who, from above, looks 'down' (καθοράω, *Sph.* 216c6). Therefore, the inescapable spatial dimension of the term – which has led translators and interpreters to think that it refers to the native land of the Stranger<sup>37</sup> is safeguarded in our reading, insofar as Socrates poses the philosophical task precisely in spatial terms.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, Plato reinforces the idea that the Stranger should speak from the place of the philosophers, incorporating –now through the mouth of another interlocutor– the term φθόνος. This notion presupposes the existence of jealousy born from the envy which, in this case, would provoke the knowledge of others, which is why the jealous person retains information because he is concerned about turning the other into a connoisseur.<sup>39</sup> In this sense, Theodorus uses the notion to indicate that the Stranger will offer his interlocutors all his knowledge without reservation, since he does not feel jealousy of any kind. However, Plato's use of φθόνος is not innocent, since, in *Republic*, Socrates states that he who has his thoughts directed towards the things that are will not have time to “glance down (κάτω βλέπειν) at the affairs of men, or compete with them, and be filled with envy (φθόνος) and ill-will” (*R.* VI 500b9-c2).<sup>40</sup> As can be seen, Socrates suggests, in spatial terms akin to those of *Sophist*, that by looking down –towards the affairs of the city– the philosopher avoids the φθόνος. In fact, we could say, together with Brisson, that this feeling is incompatible with the philosophical dialogue, since he who knows something (even he who knows that he does not know) must put his knowledge at the service of the other in order to discover the truth together.<sup>41</sup> In this way, Theodorus insists on the philosophical condition of the Stranger, showing that, like everyone in his kind, this subject is free from φθόνος.

Taking into account the three issues mentioned above (the reason for the discussion about the Stranger, the spatial coordinates of the philosopher's work and the denial of that feeling that represents an obstacle to philosophical activity), we must opt for the second alternative that we put forward regarding the term τόπος and think that this notion refers to the philosophers' 'place'. Leaving conjecture aside and avoiding opinions, Socrates would be inviting the Stranger to intervene as a representative member of the philosophers' region and it is in this Socratic proposal that one of the central purposes of the dialogue is made explicit, namely, the demonstration by the Stranger of his condition.<sup>42</sup>

It is now time to ask ourselves about Socrates' second demand: what does his request imply that the Stranger should operate by distinguishing kinds in order to differentiate the sophist, the statesman and the philosopher? To answer this question, it is necessary that we first look at the general architecture of the dialogue. It is an extended topic in the interpretation of *Sophist*, from the readings of Schleiermacher, Gomperz and Diès, to speak of two great parts that compose the dialogue, metaphorically understood as a shell that covers and a coated nucleus.<sup>43</sup> Diès points out that the nucleus would be the demonstration of the possibility of error, while the shell would be the sophist's series of definitions.<sup>44</sup> Here we understand that it is possible, inspired by that metaphor, to speak of a first layer, an outer –let us call it that– layer of the dialogue, which would be the one in which the philosophical condition of the Stranger is discussed (the inaugural problem of the work) and of a series of successive inner layers which, starting with the sophist's definition, harbour the true core of the dialogue, the one that responds to the inaugural problem.<sup>45</sup> However, what keeps

these various layers together is precisely the operation of distinguishing kinds requested by Socrates.<sup>46</sup> Let us see how.

Having heard the Socratic demands, the Stranger chooses Theaetetus as his interlocutor and tells him that they must investigate the sophist together to give “a clear account of what he is” (*Sph.* 218c1). It is reasonable to wonder why the Stranger chooses the sophist over the statesman and the philosopher, for would it not make more sense to try to justify his status by precisely defining the philosopher? Taking into account our interpretation of the composition of the dialogue, it is possible to consider that the definition of the sophist is at the service of the inaugural problem for two reasons: not only because the said sophist can represent an *other* with respect to the philosopher, an *other* against whom the philosopher can be delimited by refusal,<sup>47</sup> but also and fundamentally because the operations used to define him and the difficulties that arise when attempting a definition lay the foundations for the Stranger to fulfil his maximal objective: to prove his condition.

The Stranger and Theaetetus are working on the definition of the sophist with the help of a procedure such as διαίρεσις. Through it they start from a ‘genus’ (Plato indistinctly uses the terms εἶδος ο γένος)<sup>48</sup> which contains the relevant and more general character of the object to be defined (a character that this object shares with others) and then they make a series of successive cross sections that separate kinds with different characteristics until they reach the *definiendum*. Starting from the genus τέχνη then, they distinguish among productive, separatist and acquisitive techniques, next, by selecting the acquisitive one, they distinguish between acquisition by exchange and by capture, and so on until they reach the sophist’s first definition where the

process stops momentarily.<sup>49</sup> Since this definition does not satisfy the interlocutors, the division resumes and the process continues until a greater difficulty assails them. As can be seen, throughout the passage from 218d to 231b, the interlocutors are responsible for distinguishing kinds, which was precisely what was at stake in the second Socratic demand (to determine whether or not the names ‘sophist’, ‘statesman’ and ‘philosopher’ corresponded to three different γενή, which means differentiating these γενή). The Stranger begins by warning that distinguishing what each one is is not an easy task, but then ends up exercising that distinction of kinds by defining the sophist (*Sph.* 217a-b). It should be clarified that, throughout the passage, the terms εἶδος and γένος are not given any specific technical meaning by Plato, so they can be understood as ‘class’, ‘genus’ or ‘kind’, without any metaphysical connotation.<sup>50</sup>

However, this is neither the only nor the most important distinction of γενή that the Stranger operates in the dialogue. Once the course of the Sophist’s definition is interrupted because of the inconveniences of characterising him as a falsifier and the discussion is diverted towards greater difficulties such as those of the existence of non-being and the very definition of being (*Sph.* 236d-249d), he resorts to dialectical science. He then asks himself if it is not up to it “to divide by Forms (κατὰ γένη διαίρεσις) and not to consider that the same Form is different, or that a different one is the same” (*Sph.* 253d1-2) and, having listed a series of operations that this science must undertake,<sup>51</sup> he concludes that the dialectician “knows how to distinguish (διακρίνειν), with respect to Forms, how some are capable of communicating with others, and how they are not” (*Sph.* 253d8-e2).<sup>52</sup>

It should be noted that, in presenting the dialectic, the Stranger takes up again the title



of that procedure used to define the Sophist, but, in our opinion, the expression “κατὰ γένη διαίρεσις”, even invoking those divisions practised from 219a to 231b, does not imply in 253d1 the task of “cleaving” Forms (in the sense of splitting a εἶδος in two lower ones as it happened in that passage), but that of separating *by* Forms: not to confuse one with the other and to distinguish those that are able to communicate from those that are not.<sup>53</sup> Following a series of authors for whom division and dialectics are not identified in *Sophist*, but the first one represents a necessary condition, which is not enough for its development, a kind of propaedeutic for the fulfilment of the dialectic,<sup>54</sup> here we think that this science is based on the capacity to distinguish γενή (capacity practised by the Stranger and Theaetetus in another sphere and in front of other objects), but it goes beyond.<sup>55</sup> If in principle the interlocutors distinguish εἶδη or γένη as “acquisitive technique”, “hunting of domestic beings”, “discussion technique” or “combat” seeking to define the sophist, what they now distinguish is something else: Being, Motion, Rest, Sameness and Other, entities that are called μέγιστα γένη, and which can be equated to the Forms as they are introduced in Plato’s dialogues of maturity.<sup>56</sup>

We had anticipated that, like the first, the second Socratic demand pronounced at the beginning of the dialogue ultimately pointed to the demonstration of the philosophical condition of the Stranger and we are now in a position to justify our reading. In principle, it should be noted that, in implementing the dialectic just presented, the Stranger evokes the terms of that demand. In fact, within the framework of the distinction and identification of the μέγιστα γένη, seeking to prove that Being and Other are not a single thing, he consults Theaetetus if the Other is a fifth

genus or if, in fact, the Other and the Being are two names applied to the same genus (*Sph.* 255c8-10). Read carefully, this question, through parallel terminological constructions, evokes that other one made by Socrates when he was trying to know whether or not Sophist, Statesman and Philosopher were three names of three different γένη.<sup>57</sup> Now, what is significant for our reading is that, according to the Stranger, that implementation of dialectics is a clear indication of the presence of a philosophical soul.

Flanking the presentation of dialectical science, two interventions by the Stranger point in that direction. Firstly, just before this presentation, he asks Theaetetus if “without realising it ... looking for the sophist, we run the risk of having found the philosopher first” (*Sph.* 253c6-9).<sup>58</sup> And, secondly, right after that presentation, he underlines that it is in that ‘place’ (τόπος, *Sph.* 253e8) that “both now and later, we will find the philosopher – if we look for him (ἐὰν ζητῶμεν)–” (*Sph.* 253e8-9).<sup>59</sup> This final clause that could be read as a foretaste of that never written, though announced, *Philosopher* dialogue (and, in that sense, translated as “when we look for him”)<sup>60</sup> indicates, for us, that the appearance of the philosopher does not have to happen in an eventual future.<sup>61</sup> Understanding that the τόπος (and here the Stranger takes up the key term of the first Socratic demand) of the philosophers is the one from which the dialectic is practised, the truth is that every time that science is exercised, one of them can be found.<sup>62</sup>

While interpreters such as Cornford assume that the search for that subject is an unfulfilled promise in *Sophist* and others understand that the very existence of a *Philosopher* dialogue is impossible because it is not feasible to represent one of his kind,<sup>63</sup>

here we think that the philosopher ends up emerging in *Sophist* through the execution of dialectic. In fact, thanks to an absolute self-awareness of the tasks that define him, the Stranger answers the initial questioning about his status by executing the dialectic from his place as a philosopher. The inaugural discussion between the interlocutors showed that the vast majority were unable to recognise a philosopher because, if they were in front of one of them, they could confuse him with a sophist, a statesman or a madman. This is because the recognition of a subject of this kind cannot take place in terms of appearances, which is the level at stake in that discussion. However, there exists another level –that of the dialectical exercise– where the Stranger is capable not only of accrediting his condition before a fellow of his like Socrates, but also of pointing out to non-philosophers like Theodore or Theaetetus himself the place where one can find one of his kind, if he is sought. The emergence of such a subject in *Sophist* could well be one of the reasons why the *Philosopher* dialogue did not come to fruition.<sup>64</sup> Since the true philosopher emerges clearly through the use of dialectics, *Sophist* is already the *Philosopher* dialogue.<sup>65</sup>

From our reading of the prologue of the dialogue, we can then see that Plato composes *Sophist* as a dramatic staging of that legacy that Socrates would be transmitting to the Eleatic Stranger as a platonic and philosophical spokesman. A question, in principle innocent, enunciated by Socrates about the distinction between the sophist, the statesman and the philosopher, carries with it two triggers that ignite in the Stranger a complex machinery destined not only to define the sophist, but also, and fundamentally, to justify his philosophical status. This is how we can understand the silence that Socrates keeps, ready to listen

to one of his own kind philosophising. And the Stranger responds to him, at the height of the dialogue, by warning that the philosopher's place is where dialectics is practised, nothing more Socratic than that.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ackrill, J. (1997). In defence of platonic division. In: Ackrill, J. (ed.). *Essays on Plato and Aristotle*. Oxford, OUP, p. 93-109.
- Allen, R. (1997). *Plato's Parmenides* (translated with comment). New Haven, YUP.
- Bailey D. 2006. Plato and Aristotle on the Unhypothetical. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* XXX, p. 101-26.
- Baltzly, D. (1996). To an Unhypothetical First Principle in Plato's *Republic*. *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 13, p. 149–65.
- Baltzly, D. (1999). Aristotle and Platonic Dialectic in *Metaphysics G. 4*. *Apeiron* 32, n. 4, p. 171-202.
- Benardete, S. (1984). *The being of the beautiful. Plato's Theaetetus, Sophist and Statesman*. Chicago, CUP.
- Benitez, E. (1996). Characterisation and Interpretation: The Importance of Drama in Plato's *Sophist*. *Literature and Aesthetics* 6, p. 27-39.
- Blondell, R. (2002). *The Play of Character in Plato's Dialogues*. Cambridge, CUP.
- Bluck, R. (1975). *Plato's Sophist*. Manchester, MUP.
- Bostock, D. (1988). *Plato's Theaetetus* (translation). Oxford, OUP.
- Brisson, L. (2000). *Lectures de Platon*. Paris, Vrin.
- Brisson, L. (2011). *Platon. Parmenides* (presentation et traduction). Paris, Flammarion.
- Campbell, L. (1867). *The Sophistes and Politicus of Plato* (with a revised text and English notes). Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- Candiotta, L. and Politis, V. (2020). Epistemic Wonder and the Beginning of the Enquiry: Plato's *Theaetetus* (155d2-4) and Its Wider Significance. *Brill's Plato Studies Series* 4, p. 17-38.
- Casertano, G. (1996). *Il nome della cosa. Linguaggio e realtà negli ultimi dialoghi di Platone*. Napoli, Loffredo.
- Castagnoli, J. (2010). *Ancient Self-Refutation: The Logic and History of the Self-Refutation Argument from Democritus to Augustine*. Cambridge, CUP.

- Chambry, E. (1969). Platon. *Sophiste* (trad., notices et notes). Paris, GF-Flammarion.
- Cherniss, H. (1962). *The Riddle of the Early Academy*. New York, Russell & Russell.
- Clanton, J. (2007). From Indeterminacy to Rebirth: Making Sense of Socratic Silence in Plato's Sophist. *The Pluralist* 2, n. 3, p. 37-56.
- Cordero, N. (1988). Platón. *El Sofista* (traducción, introducción y notas). Madrid, Gredos.
- Cordero, N. (1991). Des circonstances atténuantes dans le parricide du *Sophiste* de Platon. *Diotime*, 19, p. 29-33.
- Cordero, N. (1993). Platon. *Le Sophiste* (traduction, introduction et notes). Paris, GF-Flammarion.
- Cordero, N. (2013). El extranjero de Elea, 'compañero' de los parmenídeos... desde 1561. *Méthexis* 26, p. 51-58.
- Cordero, N. (2016). *Platón contra Platón. La autocrítica del Parménides y la ontología del Sofista*. Buenos Aires, Editorial Biblos.
- Corlett, J. (2005). *Interpreting Plato's Dialogues*. Las Vegas, Parmenides Publishing.
- Cornford, F. (1935). *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Cotton, A. (2014). *Platonic Dialogue and the Education of the Reader*. Oxford, OUP.
- Crivelli, P. (2012). *Plato's Account of Falsehood: A Study of the Sophist*. Cambridge, CUP.
- De Chiara-Quenzer, D. (1998). The Purpose of the Philosophical Method in Plato's *Statesman*. *Apeiron* 31, n. 2, p. 91-126.
- Delcomminette, S. (2014). Odysseus and the Home of the Stranger from Elea. *Classical Quarterly* 64, p. 533-541.
- Diès, A. (trans.) (1925). Platon. *Le Sophiste*. Vol. 8, part 3 of *Platon Oeuvres Complètes*. Paris, Les Belles Lettres.
- Dixsaut, M. (2000a). *Platon et la question de la pensée*. Études platoniciennes I. Paris, Vrin.
- Dixsaut, M. (2000b). Images du philosophe. *Kleos* 4, p. 191-248.
- Dixsaut, M. (2001). *Métamorphoses de la dialectique dans les dialogues de Platon*. Paris, Vrin.
- Ferrari, G. (ed.) and Griffith, T. (trans.) (2000). *Plato. The Republic*. Cambridge, CUP.
- Fossheim, H. (2012). Division as a method in Plato. In: Fink, J. (ed.). *The Development of Dialectic from Plato to Aristotle*. Cambridge, CUP, p. 91-113
- Frede, M. (1992). Plato's Arguments and the Dialogue Form. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* X, Suppl. Vol., p. 201-19.
- Frede, M. (1996). The literary form of the Sophist. In: Gill, C. and McCabe, M. (eds.). *Form and Argument in Late Plato*, Oxford, OUP, p. 135-151.
- Friedländer, P. (1964). *Platon. Vol. 1*. Berlin, Walter de Gruyter.
- Fronterotta, F. (2001). *METHEXIS, La teoria platonica delle Idee e la partecipazione delle cose empiriche*. Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore.
- Fronterotta, F. (2007). *Platone. Sofista* (Introduzione, traduzione e note). Milano, BUR.
- Fronterotta, F. (2020). Platone e lo straniero: un visitatore nella città e un ospite nel dialogo. In: Aronadio, F., Palumbo, L. and Serra, M. (eds.). *Lo straniero e le voci della città*. Napoli, Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici Press, p. 91-110.
- Gill, M. (2006). *Models in Plato's Sophist and Statesman*. *Journal of the International Plato Society* 6, p. 1-16.
- Gill, M. (2012). *Philosophos. Plato's Missing Dialogue*. Oxford, OUP.
- Gómez-Lobo, A. (1977). Plato's Description of Dialectic in the *Sophist* 253d1-e2. *Phronesis* 22, n. 1, p. 29-47.
- Gomperz, T. (1896). *Griechische Denker*. Leipzig, Veit & Co.
- Gonzalez, F. (2000). The Eleatic Stranger: His Master's Voice?. In: Press, G. (ed.). *Who Speak for Plato? Studies in Platonic Anonymity*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, p. 161-81.
- Gonzalez, F. (2009). *Plato and Heidegger: A Question of Dialogue*. Pennsylvania, Penn State Press.
- Griswold, C. (1989). *Platonic Writings/Platonic Readings*. New York, Routledge.
- Guthrie, W. (1978). *A history of greek philosophy. Volume V. The later Plato and The Academy*. Cambridge, CUP.
- Heidegger, M. (1992). *Platon: Sophistes*, Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann (Rojcewickz, R. and Schuwer, A. (trans.) (2003). *Plato's Sophist*. Indiana, IUP).
- Henry, D. (2012). A Sharp Eye for Kinds: Plato on Collection and Division. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 41, p. 229-255.
- Hyland, D. (2015). Colloquium 4 Strange Encounters: Theaetetus, Theodorus, Socrates, and the Eleatic Stranger. *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 30, n. 1, p. 103-117.

- Howland, J. (1997). *The Paradox of Political Philosophy*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Ionescu, C. (2013). Dialectic in Plato's *Sophist*: Division and the Communion of Kinds. *Arethusa* XLVI, n. 1, p. 41-64.
- Kahn, C. (1996). *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form*. Cambridge, CUP.
- Kahn, C. (2013). *Plato and the Post-Socratic Dialogue: The Return to the Philosophy of Nature*. Cambridge, CUP.
- Konstan, D. (2011). "Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds*." In: Morrison D. (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates*. Cambridge, CUP, p. 75-90.
- Kraut, R. (1992). "Introduction to the study of Plato." In: Kraut, R. (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*. Cambridge, CUP, p. 1-50.
- Lacey, A. (1959). Plato's *Sophist* and the Forms. *The Classical Quarterly. New Series* 9, n. 1, p. 43-52.
- Marcos, G. (1995). *Platón ante el problema del error. La formulación del Teeteto y la solución del Sofista*. Buenos Aires, Fundec.
- Márquez, X. (2012). *A Stranger's Knowledge. Statesmanship, Philosophy & Law in Plato's Statesman*. Las Vegas, Parmenides Publishing.
- McCabe, M. (2000). *Plato and his Predecessors. The Dramatisation of Reason*. Cambridge, CUP.
- McCabe, M. (2006). Form and the Platonic Dialogues. In: Benson, H. (ed.). *A Companion to Plato*. Malden, Blackwell, p. 39-54.
- Miller, M. (2004). *The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman*. Las Vegas, Parmenides Publishing.
- Moravcsik, J. (1962). Being and Meaning in the *Sophist*. *Acta Philosophica Fennica* 14, p. 23-78.
- Movia, G. (1994). *Apparenze, essere e verità. Comentario storico-filosofico al Sofista di Platone*. Milano, Vita e Pensiero.
- Nails, D. (1995). *Agora, Academy, and the Conduct of Philosophy*. Boston, Dordrecht.
- Nails, D. (2000). Mouthpiece Schmouthpiece. In: Press, G. (ed.). *Who Speak for Plato? Studies in Platonic Anonymity*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, p. 15-26.
- Nercam, N. (2012). «Topos» en question dans l'introduction du *Sophiste* (216a1-217a1). *PLATO. The electronic Journal of the International Plato Society* 12, p. 1-18.
- Notomi, N. (1999). *The unity of Plato's Sophist*. Cambridge, CUP.
- Palumbo, L. (1994). *Il non essere e l'apparenza. Sul Sofista di Platone*. Napoli, Loffredo Editore.
- Philip, J. (1966). Platonic Diairesis. *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 97, p. 335-358.
- Press G. (2000). The Logic of Attributing Characters' Views to Plato. In: Press, G. (ed.). *Who Speak for Plato? Studies in Platonic Anonymity*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, p. 27-38.
- Press, G. (2000). *Who Speak for Plato? Studies in Platonic Anonymity*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield.
- Robin, L. and Moreau, M. (1942). *Platon, Oeuvres complètes*, t. II, Paris, Gallimard.
- Rosen, S. (1983). *Plato's Sophist. The Dream of Original and Image*. Londres, New Haven.
- Ross, W. (1951). *Plato's Theory of Ideas*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- Rowe, C. (2007). *Plato and the Art of Philosophical Writing*. Cambridge, CUP.
- Rudebusch, G. (1990). Does Plato Think False Speech Is Speech?. *Noûs* 24, p. 599-609.
- Sanders, E. (2014). *Envy and Jealousy in Classical Athens. A Socio-Psychological Approach*. Oxford, OUP.
- Schleiermacher, F. (1836). *Introductions to the Dialogues of Plato*. Cambridge, J. & J.J. Deighton.
- Scodel, H. (1987). *Diaeresis and Myth in Plato's Statesman*. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.
- Taylor, C. (2006). Socrates the Sophist. In: Judson, L. and Karasmanis, V. (eds.). *Remembering Socrates*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, p. 157-68.
- Teisserenc F. (2007). Consonnes et voyelles: les fonctions de l'Être et de l'Autre dans le *Sophiste* de Platon (251a-259e). *Dialogue* XLVI, p. 231-64.
- Tejera, V. (1999). *Plato's Dialogues One by One: A Dialogical Interpretation*. Lanham, University Press of America.
- Trevaskis, J. (1955). The sophistry of noble lineage. *Phronesis* 1, p. 36-49.
- Vasilu, A. (2008). *Dire et Voir. La parole visible du Sophiste*. Paris, Vrin.
- Vlastos, V. (1991). *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher*. Cambridge, CUP.
- Wilmet, R. (1990). Platonic Forms and the Possibility of Language. *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne* VIII, n. 1, p. 97-118.
- White, N. (1993). *Plato. Sophist* (translated, with Introduction and Notes). Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company.

- Zaks, N. (2017). Science de l'entrelacement des formes, science suprême, science des hommes libres: la dialectique dans le *Sophiste* 253b-254b. *Elenchos* 38, p. 61-81.
- Zaks, N. (2018). Socratic Elenchus in the *Sophist*. *Apeiron* 51, p. 1-20.
- Zuckert, C. (2000). Who's A Philosopher? Who's A Sophist? The Stranger V. Socrates. *The Review of Metaphysics* 54, n. 1, p. 65-97.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Among the defenders of the spokesman theory, we can mention Friedländer 1964, Vlastos 1991, Kraut 1992, Blondell 2002 and Rowe 2007. About the numerous currents inside this heterogeneous group, see Corlett 2005, 4-10. Regarding the dissident voices that question that theory from various fronts, see Frede 1992, 204-5; Tejera 1999, x-xi; Nails 2000, 23-4 and Press 2000, 30-2.
- 2 Gonzalez 2000, 163, understands that the choice of questions and answers is only an act of courtesy from the Stranger towards Socrates.
- 3 Cherniss 1962, 45-6; Dixsaut 2001, 125; Fronterotta 2001, xiv, and Kahn 2013, 112 think so. Regarding the characterization of the Forms in the middle dialogues, see, for example, *Phd.* 78d1-7, *Smp.* 211b1 and 211e1-3 and *Phdr.* 247c6-e2.
- 4 On this subject, see Wilmet 1990, 97-9; McCabe 2000, 60-92 and Zaks 2018.
- 5 See Baltzly 1996, 153-156; 1999, 171-174.
- 6 Bailey 2006, 102-12, and Castagnoli 2010, 231, opposed Baltzly's position.
- 7 Another possible difference that we are not discussing in this paper is that which arises from the fact that the Stranger's method is said to be value-neutral at *Sph.* 227b. About this topic, see Gonzalez 2009, 52-3.
- 8 On this subject, see Cordero 1991 and 2013.
- 9 See Blondell 2002, 318-30.
- 10 See Campbell 1867, xix-xxii, Bostock 1988, 12, and Gonzalez 2000, 163-4.
- 11 Blondell 2002 understands that, at the time of the writing of the late dialogues, Plato came to consider Socrates too individual and idiosyncratic a model to be successfully imitated, which is why he develops more generic figures that represent the essential elements of the philosophical character. Also, see Cotton 2004, 132-42.
- 12 On the knowledge of the Stranger, see *Sph.* 217b, 219a and 262e-263a.
- 13 Consider the security expressed by the Stranger at the end of the definition of the sophist in *Sph.* 268d3-4.
- 14 Translation based upon Cordero 1993 and 2016, 137. See Crivelli 2012, 88-90, who offers other interpretation alternatives.
- 15 One could add the solution to the problem of the relationship between the names and the things to which those names refer which arises in *Cratylus* and which the Stranger seems to solve in *Sophist* by incorporating the genus of the Other. See Zuckert 2000, 66-7.
- 16 See Palumbo 1994, Marcos 1995 and Crivelli 2012. See Rudebusch 1990 who questions the commonplace that Plato resolves the puzzles about the false speech in the *Sophist*.
- 17 Allen's 1997 translation.
- 18 About that connection, see Allen 1997, 100; Brisson 2011, 259 n. 71; Gill 2012, 29, and Kahn 2013, 4.
- 19 See Allen 1997, 100.
- 20 In *Sph.* 259a, the Stranger seems to leave open the possibility that a refuter could question everything that was said until then, thus relativizing his "truths", even though he immediately dismisses those possible refuters, by admitting that they only like to "drag the arguments back and forth" (*Sph.* 259c1).
- 21 About that emotion, see Candiottto and Politis 2020.
- 22 See Márquez 2012, 18, n. 26, who claims that that silence could be interpreted as a positive or a negative judgement on the performance of the Stranger. On other possible reasons that would explain the Socratic silence, see Clanton 2007, 46-8.
- 23 See Rowe 2007, 19, n. 56. In contrast, Taylor C. 2006, 158, states that the impersonal figure of the Stranger is a direct representation of philosophical authority and, therefore, of the author's personal situation.
- 24 Bear in mind that Guthrie 1978, 212, suggests that the Socrates who appears in *Philebus* resembles more the Stranger of *Sophist* and *Statesman* than the Socrates of the early dialogues and Hyland 2015, 117, n. 16, states that the Socrates in *Philebus* combines methods of his own and of the Stranger's.
- 25 See Fronterotta 2020, 107-9.
- 26 See Rowe 2007, 15.
- 27 Let us remember that *Sophist* is a continuation of *Theaetetus* and that, in this dialogue, Socrates had warned that he had to appear before the King's Portico to face Meleto's accusation (*Th.* 210d). In line with that, Hyland 2015, 106, points out that Socrates' concern to differentiate among the philosopher, the sophist and the statesman is not an abstract concern but a very concrete one, as he understands that his accusation is due to the fact that the rest confuse him with a sophist.
- 28 See Scodel 1987; Benitez 1996, 36; Howland 1997, 173-6; Zuckert 2000 and Hyland 2015. Gonzalez 2000, 163-8, states that the Stranger is not able to distinguish between eristic and ἔλεγχος in the fifth definition of the Sophist, nor is he able to distinguish between Socrates' own methods and those of the sophist in the sixth, nor does he manage to

- separate the philosopher from the sophist in the seventh. In turn, Taylor, C. 2006, 159-62, understands that it is precisely the Stranger who can differentiate the Sophist from Socrates, whose Platonic portraits overlap in certain specific points. It is not possible for us to develop our position here, but we understand that, in the fifth definition, the Stranger is only reflecting a popular opinion condensed, reinforced and kept in the memory of the Athenians thanks to the theatrical representations that confuse Socrates with the sophist. See Trevaskis 1955, 48; Gill 2006, 11 and Konstan 2011, 76-88.
- 29 White's 1993 translation. Unless otherwise noted, I quote White's translation of the *Sophist*.
- 30 See Vasiliu 2008, 112-4.
- 31 At the end of the dialogue, and after several attempts, the interlocutors come to the conclusion that the sophist is an "imitator of the wise man" (*Sph.* 268c1) who, thanks to the projection of deceptive appearances, manages to introduce himself to inexperienced young people as a wise man, even though he only manages to resemble the external 'aspect' (σχῆμα, *Sph.* 267a6-8) of the said wise man. In our opinion, this definition shows that the Stranger succeeds in clearly differentiating the sophist from the philosopher (whose eventual appearances are not intentionally projected by him), even though interpreters like Gonzalez 2000, 166, insist that the latter definition does not allow for such a difference.
- 32 The Socratic equation between philosophers and gods works in an ironic way, since it hides insurmountable differences between both classes and anticipates a contrast between sophists and philosophers. The Homeric gods to which Socrates refers are characterised by the voluntary projection of appearances that conceal the status of the agent and, at this point, are equated not with the philosopher, but with his adversary: the sophist. In *Sph.* 216a-d, Socrates could be referring to *Od.* IX 270-271 or XVII 484-487.
- 33 On Socrates' purpose of asking that question, see Palumbo 1994, 29, n.14, and Casertano 1996, 92-3.
- 34 See Benardete 1984, 72-3, and Scodel 1987, 22, n. 4. On other possible interpretations of the meaning of τόπος, see Nercam 2012.
- 35 See Nercam 2012, 5.
- 36 And that place cannot be restricted to Elea, for, if we are guided by Socrates' words, what happens is that philosophers actually go from one city to another (*Sph.* 216c).
- 37 See Campbell 1867, Diès 1925, Cornford 1935, Robin and Moreau 1942, Chambry 1969, Rosen 1983 and Notomi 1999, 22.
- 38 Bear in mind that Plato reinforces the locative sense of the term τόπος (οἱ περὶ τὸν ἐκεῖ τόπον, *Sph.* 217a1) by using the preposition περὶ with its term in accusative case and the spatial adverb ἐκεῖ. See LSJ s.v. 'ἐκεῖ' and 'περὶ'. Delcomminette 2014, 537, states that τόπος refers to Being as "home" of the philosopher.
- 39 See LSJ s.v. 'φθόνοσ' and Brisson 2000, 223. Sanders 2014, 38, n. 26, notes that out of the one hundred and twenty-nine occurrences of the term φθόνοσ in the Platonic dialogues, twenty-five of them refer to wisdom.
- 40 Griffith's 2000 translation.
- 41 See Brisson 2000, 227. Let us remember that by operating a total resignification of the religious tradition through which the gods are no longer prisoners of the φθόνοσ, Plato can consider the philosopher free from jealousy because of his closeness to these perfect gods. See Brisson 2000, 228-33.
- 42 We agree with Delcomminette 2014, 534-5, who, while comparing the situation of Odysseus in the Homeric poem and that of the Stranger in *Sophist*, states that both of them must reveal their identity through their actions.
- 43 See Schleiermacher 1836, 246; Gomperz 1896, 503; and Diès 1925, 267. Note Heidegger's 1992, 160-1, criticisms.
- 44 See Diès 1925, 267.
- 45 The existence of several layers in *Sophist* is not very different from the narrative technique Plato usually uses when presenting dialogues within other dialogues. See McCabe 2006, 40-2.
- 46 Zaks 2017, 70, holds a similar position.
- 47 Let us remember that the sophist is characterised as an agent who intentionally projects deceptive appearances, whereas, on the contrary, the appearances that the philosopher may have in the city are due to the ignorance of the majority. In this sense, the identification of a philosopher can never be made on the level of appearances, but, as we shall see, through a dialectical exercise.
- 48 Bear in mind that both γένος and εἶδος do not have fixed taxonomic references in Plato as the terms 'genus' and 'kind' do in modern taxonomies. See Henry 2012, 247.
- 49 See Philip 1966, 348-9.
- 50 See Henry 2012, 247-9.
- 51 On this controversial subject, see Gómez-Lobo 1977, 43-4; Dixsaut 2001, 221; Ionescu 2013, 41-64, and Teisserenc 2007, 244-5.
- 52 We translate the terms γένος and εἶδος, which Plato uses synonymously and indistinctly, by Form to differentiate them from the objects of the division. Translation based upon Cordero 1993.
- 53 See Gómez-Lobo 1977, 39-40, and Fronterotta 2007, 416, n. 221.
- 54 See Moravcsik 1962, 51; Bluck 1975, 125-7; Ackrill 1997, 108-9, and Movia 1994, 307-10. Also Fronterotta 2007, 414, n. 221 and Fosheim 2012, 107-10, seem to think of this division as a prominent part of the dialectic.
- 55 De Chiara-Quenzer 1998, 119, n. 39, notes these differences between the two uses of the division.

- 56 See Cornford 1935, 332-47; Ross 1951, 134-7; Lacey 1959, 43-9; Cherniss 1962, 45-6; Cordero 1993, 258, n. 292; Ackrill 1997, 95; Dixsaut 2001, 125, and Fronterotta 2001, xiv, and 2007, 423.
- 57 See Socrates' intervention at the beginning of the dialogue (*Sph.* 217a6-8) and the Stranger's question (*Sph.* 255c8-10), both structured with *verba sentiendi* and around the terms γένος and ὄνομα, passages that seek to point out that the names are not clear indicators of the kind of reality that concerns the things they designate.
- 58 Translation based upon Cordero 1993.
- 59 We follow here the translation proposed by Dixsaut 2000b, 215.
- 60 See Cordero 1988.
- 61 With regard to the alleged promises of the writing of *Philosopher*, see *Sph.* 216c2-217b4, 218b6-c1; 253b9-254b6 and *Plt.* 257a1-c2 and 258b2-3.
- 62 See Dixsaut 2000, 215.
- 63 See Cornford 1935, 330, and Miller 2004, 10.
- 64 Notomi 1999, 24, argues that there is no textual evidence to confirm with certainty that Plato intended to write such a dialogue and Gill 2012, 1, n. 2, warns against the impossibility that the dialogue was written and lost.
- 65 Similar theses are held by, among others, Blondell 2002, 324, n. 39, and Gill 2012. Griswold 1989, 163 n. 13, lists a number of problems with that reading.

