**Phainesthai and Aletheia in the Republic**

In the *Republic* the link between *aletheia* and *phainesthai* is of utmost importance. In different passages “truth” is defined by a juxtaposition with a “falsehood” consisting in a deceptive appearance of things. Such is the case in 380D (*phantazetai*), in 382A (*phantasma*), and 382E (*phantasia*). *Phainesthai* is therefore a characteristic feature of the *dokoumena*, that is of objects belonging to the lowest level of knowledge (e.g. 479B-480A and 509D-510A). This does not entail, however, that *phainesthai* should be understood as a mere error or deception. Its meaning is in fact much wider, and not only a negative one. Plato stresses how the whole ascent to the ideas takes place within the *phainesthai* of the *horoumena*. Each step undertaken by the *dialektike techne* (starting from *ta en hydasi phantasmata* and ending up with *tou phanotatou en horatoi topoi*) is related to different ontologic “appearances” of things (532C1 and 7-8). The same applies to the soul which hides behind its exterior aspect although being perceivable through a *blepein* (611B-612A): even here, Plato’s disavowal of visibility seems to lead to the establishment of another, “superior” kind of “what can be seen”.


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