

**Understanding the εἶναι and ἀληθῆ δοκεῖν εἶναι and the structural semantics of the ποιεῖν.
(*Sophist*, 234A-240C)**

**Compreendendo o εἶναι and ἀληθῆ δοκεῖν εἶναι e a estrutura semântica do ποιεῖν.
(*Sofista*, 234A-240C)**

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RESUMO:

Este artigo interpreta passagem chave do diálogo “Sofista”, em que Platão apresenta a arte do sofista como uma espécie de encantamento capaz de levar pessoas sem experiência a acreditarem presente e existente o que quer que queira. O Autor explora e esclarece o texto desde perspectiva ontológica. O texto contribui para o aprofundamento dos debates sobre o significado da Sofística, muito importantes para a Filosofia do Direito.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

Platão. Sofista. Sofística. Verdade. Aparência. Ser. Tempo.

ABSTRACT:

This article interprets the key passage of the "Sophist" dialogue, in which Plato presents the art of the sophist as a kind of enchantment capable of bringing inexperienced people to believe present and present whatever he want. The author explores and clarifies the text from an ontological perspective. The text contributes to the deepening of the debates about the meaning of the Sophistic, very important for the Philosophy of Law.

KEY WORDS:

Plato. Sophist. Sophistry. Truth. Appearance. Being. Time.

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1. The production of fiction question.

But what then? Might it be that as regards lectures we also expect there to be a certain skill with which he [the sophist] is able to charm young people, who are still very detached from the truth of situations, with the words that pass through their ears, and show them false images regarding all things, in such a way that he makes them believe that he is talking the truth and, thus, in speaking, appears to be more learned than anyone as regards all things? (...) Now is it not true that the majority of those listening will of necessity be obliged, with the passing of enough time and the reaching of a certain age, to find themselves at close hand in such situations as may occur at any given moment and that, via the difficult experiences they pass through during their lives, they will end up seeing clearly things as they really are and will thus need to change the opinions they formulated previously, so that things which seemed to be very important are now of little importance, others that seemed difficult to endure are now tolerable and all the phantasmagorical images created by words as regards everything have been turned inside out by the consequences of the situations in which they found themselves on each occasion? (234c2-e2)

The horizon on which a sophist moves is that of producing semblances. His existential objective is to win absolute control over the expert or technical knowledge occurring on that horizon, in order to obtain the power to: “*make it seem that he is telling the truth*” (“ποιεῖν ἀληθῆ δοκεῖν λέγεσθαι”, 234c6)” and, thus, gain influence over whoever it is regarding all matters. Ποιεῖν δοκεῖν ἀληθῆ λέγεσθαι is a euphemism. In fact, *to make it seem* is to shape an opinion, create an illusion or produce a semblance. All this presupposes not only that the truth is not spoken but also that lies are told. Making a semblance, therefore, appear to be the truth. What ποιεῖν is this capable of δοκεῖν ἀληθῆ λέγεσθαι of producing fictions that insinuate themselves and gain the value of what really and actually truly exists?

Oh really! My dear fellow, we are faced with the most difficult of questions. Because making appear, shaping an opinion of what does not exist and pronouncing things that are not true, all this has always created many difficulties for us both in the past and the present. ὄντως, ὦ μακάριε, ἐσμὲν ἐν

παντάπασιν χαλεπῇ σκέψει. Τὸ γὰρ φαίνεσθαι τοῦτο καὶ τὸ δοκεῖν, εἶναι δὲ μή, καὶ τὸ λέγειν μὲν ἅττα, ἀληθὴ δὲ μή, πάντα ταῦτά ἐστι μεστὰ ἀπορίας ἀεὶ ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν χρόνῳ καὶ νῦν. (236d9-e3)

2. Language as the fundamental element in the charming.

The expert knowledge, τέχνη, of a sophist, therefore, finds an application in the λόγοι and in the λέγεσθαι. The milieu in which a sophist moves is that of language and the pragmatic situation describing it best is *being in a conversation with someone and talking about a particular question*. Except that, instead of sincerity, a sophist produces the semblance, by means of words, of pronouncing the truth to the other persons listening to them. In fact, by means of his τέχνη (234c3), a sophist is able (δυνατόν, *ibid.*) to “[bewitch], γοητεύειν, young people who are still detached from the truth of things” (“τοὺς νέους καὶ ἔτι πόρρῳ τῶν πραγμάτων τῆς ἀληθείας ἀφεστῶτας”, 243c4-5). There is, thus, a constitutive interaction, a reciprocal implication and a mutual involvement between the person exercising the power of language and anyone in some way exposed to it. Here it is a question of an unchangeable vertical relationship in which one exercises power actively and the other is passively exposed to it. One is a charmer and the other is charmed. It is not surprising, then, that a sophist, being one of the sorcerers, γοήτων τις, “appears to be the most knowledgeable of all people as regards all things” (“σοφώτατος πάντων ἅπαντ’ εἶναι”).²

The milieu in which a sophist moves allows him to captivate, create illusions, produce semblances and form opinions in the heads of those listening. He generates meaning and, therefore, being. But how? The power of action of a ποιεῖν ἀληθῇ δοκεῖν sophist involves a multiple λέγεσθαι that makes use of various arts embracing all the domains of reality. These “arts” contaminate the truth of what exists in reality with the imperceptible semblance of reality of what is not. εἰδωλοποιική, art producing εἰδῶλα, εἰκαστική, art producing εἰκόνες and φανταστική art producing φαντάσματα join together in the general possibility the human horizon has of dealing with imitations, μιμήσεις, which are mere reproductions of reality and admit a second degree ability to reproduce, a μιμητική τέχνη. These arts generating falsifications of reality are not confined to what we commonly identify as images, photographs, drawings, sphinxes, statues, statuettes, idols, monsters, apparitions and other imitations, whether course or refined, of reality.

In fact, it is precisely in language that we find the means *par excellence* of producing fiction and simulation. When one tells lies, stories or inventions and when one makes believe, one seduces, persuades and dissuades, manipulates and convinces or tries to.

It is precisely this that the Stranger wants to tell us in this passage, in distinguishing words or expressions of meaning as particular forms of εἶδωλα, i.e. as phenomena produced by μίμησις. It is that the “products” that a sophist devises and makes appear to be are precisely idols, εἶδωλα, icons, εἰκόνες, imitations, μιμήσεις, phantoms, φαντάσματα, apparently true apparitions, φαινομένα, and occurrences in contrast with that which is, τὰ ὄντα. The discussion in this passage tries to distinguish the possibility of (“δείκνυσθαι”, c5) spoken εἶδωλα and therefore auditory λεγόμενα, that work their charm through the ears (“διὰ τῶν ὠτῶν, c5”), being produced and manifesting themselves.

A sophist, thus, marks out the radical possibility of the horizon in which we find ourselves and produces apparitions, φαινομένα, that derive from an active effort to deceive and lie. His art is an active way of dealing with things, with himself and with others, but in such a manner that he knows well the way he is, therefore, trying to escape from the deficiencies of the point of view and deactivating the possibility of exposing himself to illusions, semblances and lies. That is, it is one thing to passively and unconsciously deceive and beguile ourselves and be influenced by semblances producing themselves spontaneously in the open depending on the way we, at each moment and always, find ourselves in the midst of things, and another, completely different thing for someone to work at isolating this deficiency, in order to understand how it works and, then, develop it with art, i.e. reinforce as actively as possible the possibility of the human making believe in the illusion and semblance both of oneself for oneself and of oneself for others.

Sophistry is *stricto sensu* ἀπατική the art of actively lying and deceiving and of creating semblances. The success of sophistic output depends on the particular condition of the way in which our point of view gets formed (cf. 264d5). The risk in a sophism is that, as such, it also is an entity. Lying and deceiving in some way generate circumstances and the situations we come across in fact create situations. In conversations with others talking about a particular question, the radical possibility of language as the atmosphere and milieu in which we move with others when talking gets exorcised. It is language that makes it possible to set out from backstage and carry the question about which we are

² Cf. 233b1-2: καθ’ ὅντινα τρόπον ποτὲ δυνατόι τοῖς νέοις δόξαν παρασκευάζειν, ὥς εἰσὶ πάντα πάντων αὐτοὶ σοφώτατοι.

talking with others to the front.³

3. ποιήσεις in general, in fiction and in reality

The particular ability of the ποιεῖν ἀληθῆ δοκεῖν as a λέγεσθαι exists in a general picture of fiction production that generates false opinions, illusions and semblances. It is in this general production scenario, ποιήσεις, defined at the beginning of the dialogue, that we shall have to try to understand that even at the radical limit of the production of semblances, semblance is the determinative complement of an inextirpable occurrence on the meaning horizon, itself understood as actively producing. It is already said in 219b4:

that all that which did not exist previously and is brought into existence subsequently involves a bringing and a brought respectively dependent on a making and a being made. (πᾶν ὅπερ ἂν μὴ πρότερόν τις ὄν ὕστερον εἰς οὐσίαν ἄγῃ, τὸν μὲν ἄγοντα ποιεῖν, τὸ δὲ ἀγόμενον ποιεῖσθαι ποῦ φαμεν, 219b4-6).

A sophist's specific skill is that of creating reproductions or representations of the reality of that which is: μῖμνήματα τῶν ὄντων, but in such a way that his deceitful, false, illusory and apparently true representations superimpose themselves on that specific and concrete or general and abstract reality that they claim to represent. I.e. a sophist is well aware of the milieu in which he moves. Imitations of reality or reproductions of it depend on a production or fabrication skill. The fiction exists and is effective because it joins in the general scenario of the human meaning and comprehension horizon. The meaning and its comprehension occur in a production horizon that not only gives us something to understand, but also produces misunderstandings, where lies and mistakes are taking place.

What we try to perceive, at first, is the fact that reality is obliterated by the semblance, i.e. of sophisms, while the object produced by sophistic art really exists, even if only to hide the truth and show the deception. Secondly, we try to see how the entity, that very thing which is, the entity that lets itself be seen, on the basis of itself, as what it really is, occurs rooted in a meaning production occurrence which, as such, is not real, in a philosophically modern but highly effective qualification. What is, the ὄντως ὄν, is as unreal as what merely appears, τὸ φαινόμενον, and what appears, τὸ φαινόμενον, is as

³ Without speaking, things remain hidden there in the background and we remain without subject matter. Such a situation, nevertheless, is not just created, when in fact one is conversing with someone about a question. At that time it is just recreated, given that this is the underlying situation in which we always find ourselves with ourselves: talking from us to us about a particular question related to us. It is within this possibility that we can also deceive ourselves regarding ourselves, by creating illusion, generating semblances, etc., etc..

effective as what is, ὅντως ὄν. At a third stage we shall need to understand how it is that from the meaning of the particular production of phenomena and entities we are able to understand the idea of being as a making, in being made on the basis of itself. Being as making is the continuous transformation of what is not into what is, the permanent production of presence from an intrinsic and effective possibility that at each and every moment activates a later moment in time, bringing it or taking it as far as existence and its particular form of presence.

4. Production of fiction in its various forms.

Before we can unequivocally understand the ability of language to make believe, when forged by a specific art that creates linguistic – spoken and written, heard and read – idols, we need to understand that in everything language joins together in a same sense of fiction production that leads to other skilled knowledge. The εἰδῶλα of the εἰδωλοποιική, the εἰκόνες of the εἰκαστική and the φαντάσματα of the φανταστική join together in the general potential of the human horizon to make imitations, mere reproductions of reality. These various *products*, on the other hand, widen and enlarge reality as it were, i.e. as a minimum they duplicate it. That is, a longer inspection would show them to be independent and clearly identifiable realities. As reproductions, *apparitions* or fictions these products also belong to a horizon that does not go beyond that of reality.

Thus idols, icons, phantoms and apparitions, fictions and imitations are forms of appearing that can be ontologically identified. But the way in which these products of fiction can appear to us has a particular form that removes their false and doubtful character, of copies and imitations, and presents them as originals. Not as fictitious versions of an original but as what reality is itself. The doubtful character of the appearance of these products derives precisely from their ambiguity: at one moment they are entities and at another they pass for the original they present. As long as they are not denounced as semblances or reduced to their ontological insignificance, they pass for what they are not. There is, thus, a possible spontaneous oscillation in our point of view between semblance and reality, in which on some occasions what is a semblance appears to be reality itself and on others it emerges as what it is, as a semblance, illusion, lie and fiction. It is for this reason that phantoms and ghosts can haunt. This is its particular form of being and it will be thus that it will always appear to us.

5. The assimilable and assimilative character of idols.

We can see that when we identify the being of each apparition as the being of the icon, of the idol, of the imitation, of the apparition and of the phantom, its content is, as it were, erased, as Husserl would say, and appears lessened and diminished in its difference and deficit compared to that which really is and exists. In this sense, idols, icons, images, appearances, phantoms and apparitions are seen and understood to be fictitious and unreal products and radically different from what presents itself as that which is, τὰ ὄντα. When icons, idols, imitations and fictions are seen to be mere apparitions, that which really is appears in all its splendour of self-sufficiency and independence and ostensibly shows and displays itself as what it actually is. One can thus, from time to time, or always and on the majority occasions, understand the difference between τὰ φαινόμενα and τὰ ὄντα *as being inherent to* horizons with well-defined outlines, that of fiction and that of reality, even if one can be intrusive in relation to the other. It is important here to see the particular form in which fiction escapes from its being and stops presenting itself as the reality with which it appears to us or in what way reality subtly insinuates itself into or is intrusive in fiction. It is important here to indicate the fact of the revelation, even if relative, of fiction as fiction and reality as reality and also the fact that there can be the contamination of one meaning horizon in the other.

There is a link between icons, idols and fantasies and their originals, i.e. that which on each occasion and in a specific form they present or, in this case, represent. The ability of each of these products to render presented, ἀπεργάζεσθαι, φαντάζεσθαι, μιμεῖσθαι, its originals, that of which they are representations or substitutes depends on the comprehension of the symmetrical and assimilative character of the apparition. It is what Teeteto asks the Stranger regarding the εἰδωλον:

τί δῆτα, ὦ ξέने, εἰδωλον ἂν φαῖμεν εἶναι πλὴν γε τὸ πρὸς τἀληθινὸν
ἀφωμοιωμένον ἕτερον τοιοῦτον;

But why Stranger! Can we assert that an idol is other than what resembles the truth and manifests itself as being original, when it is the contrary? (240a7-8).

Through this form of assimilation to the original and through the possibility offered by the original to stop being assimilated by its double we can also see the symbiosis of presence existing between one and the other. The idol resembles the original and the original is assimilated by it because there is a symmetry between both of them. This symmetry is not extrinsic and corresponds only to the fact that there is an exchange of homothety from one to the other. The symmetry of assimilation in question here is intrinsic and relates to the fact of the idol rendering the original present and the original

stopping being represented by the idol. The intrinsic possible relationship between the apparition and what actually is resides in the fact of the presence of the absence of the original in the duplicate. Our Lady is not a statuette, but she can become present for us when we see a statuette. The same occurs as regards all the forms of that which Husserl calls *Bildbewusstsein*.

In all sophisms we can see the intrinsic symmetry between them and the original which consists of the particular synchrony between image and imagined. Even if an image is made of completely different materials from its original, it has the power to represent, or rather, evoke the object serving as the basis for the representation as a representation. On the other hand, the original is symmetric and has to do with the copy, because it can be synchronized with it. The symbiosis of presences - original/idol - can, nevertheless, collapse, for example when there is an interruption of the exchange from the idol to the original, from the photograph, statuette, sketch, portrait, sphinx, etc., etc., to the original. When such an interruption occurs, even if only partially, there is an interference towards the original. The interruption of the presentation of the original results in us not being already absorbed and transported towards the truth of the idol.

If the original is as it were presented, it is represented, by a sort of vicarious function in such a way that it is it that as it were presents itself, and the icon, idol, fantasy and image do not appear as they are, precisely idols, icons, fantasies and images. On the other hand, it can be seen that when the symbiosis of co-presences is interrupted, the ontologically static character of this interruption becomes scandalously clear. We remain with the essence of the material of which it is made - celluloid, marble, wood, bronze, *res extensa*, *res materialis* or *res corpórea* – even if it is never possible to completely interrupt in this *ens realissimum* its being referential towards the original which shows it to be a falsification.⁴ It is a parallel phenomenon of assimilation and disintegration which makes it possible to pass from the apparition to what is displayed in it or for us to remain just with the brutal fact of the naked truth of the interrupted apparition of the co-presence of the original. Even so, this argument does not make it possible to see how there can be a total immersion of reality in an apparition, or, on the other hand, if the totalising apparition of the things that are out there is a symbiotic apparition of the absent presence of the original, with what one is left with if there is an interruption of the referential

⁴ At an initial stage it is important to understand how it is that an ontology of reality interprets icons, idols, fantasies, images, photographs, statues or statuettes, films and drawings. It is a question of things. It is a question of things that are without doubt different, given their function of presenting the absent and disappeared, but even so of physical things, material occurrences in space and time, *res materiales*, *corporeae extensae*, if one can say this. On the other hand, they can be artefacts but also images of a mental nature, or alternatively things which in nature recall others.

from the apparition to the original that presents itself out there.

6. Os εἰδῶλα λεγόμενα.

It is in this general picture of production of μιμήματα, conceived here as real falsifications of reality itself, that the Stranger tries to call attention to the specific interpretation of the εἰδῶλα λεγόμενα as particular forms of reproduction, imitation and falsification of meaning itself and as such, therefore, with the power to recreate everything in its entirety, as if it was a mirror, and thus also to be a production of fiction. The εἰδῶλα, as μιμήματα, are ὁμώνυμα τῶν ὄντων (Cf. 234b5-10), whether the homonymy is based on a graphical, visual or auditory representation. The sophistry is accomplished in an extreme form in the use of skilled knowledge that has the pretension not of “contradicting or saying no, but of knowing how, with a single skill, to produce and make all things in their entirety” (“μὴ λέγειν μηδ’ ἀντιλέγειν, ἀλλὰ ποιεῖν καὶ δρᾶν μιᾷ τέχνῃ συνάπαντα ἐπίστασθαι πράγματα” 233d9-10.). The Stranger has to explain to the young man Teeteto what τὰ σύμπαντα πράγματα are: “I say, in fact, that they are you and me from among everyone and moreover all other things, living beings and trees, σὲ καὶ ἐμὲ τῶν πάντων καὶ πρὸς ἡμῖν τᾶλλα ζῶα καὶ δένδρα.” (233e-6). Such a ποιήσις and such a ποιητής “is capable of making all this and the sea and land and sky and the gods of all other things that there may be in their entirety and, in truth, it is capable, by making them very quickly, of selling them very cheaply.” (234a2-5).⁵

Here the ποιεῖν δοκεῖν ἀληθῆ λέγεσθαι meets its primordial element. The sophist’s pretence is total. It is in language as an element of human beings that he moves, in making believe that he knows everything about what he is talking about when in conversation with someone. In talking about everything, especially in talking for the sake of talking, he can create the illusion in others that he knows what it is that is being talked about. His success in creating appearances and shaping opinions, and in making believe that he is telling the truth derives from his managing to pretend with someone over some time. With the rapidity and agility of a magician he manages to deceive. The same occurs with the sophist in ourselves. It is able to beguile and deceive us.

The question is, of course, how can the situation created and nurtured in us by a sophist be made reversible? What is the criterion of truth that makes it possible for us to deactivate opinions already for

Cloud formations that make us recall real figures. There are texts of Plato mentioning precisely this fantastic dimension of entities: shadows, dreams, sphinxes or variations, together with idols, icons, images, fantasies, etc., etc..

⁵ Cf. Same passage in Republic X.

a long time ankylosed in us? Can a sophist manage to deceive all the potential and imaginable people that have existed, exist and have to exist during all time? Will this *mendax* be able to deceive all people at the same time and forever and ever?

The power of appearing created by language produces fictions that, once they have insinuated themselves and invaded us, lodge forever in each one of us. As we can see, this mega- or proto-sophist is not necessarily a person of a particular type. He is, rather, the very possibility in us of appearance insinuating itself and lodging in our soul, sticking itself to it like a crust, passing unnoticed by ourselves and deceiving us about who we are and what we are doing, and about how it is with us for all our lives. The ποιεῖν in the ποιεῖν δοκεῖν ἀληθῆ λέγεσθαι is a ποίησις τις with the ability to create illusions and produce an appearance, that are constant and with damage, that can be irreversible, to our lucidity. He pretends everything. He passes off that which is as that which is not, that which is not as that which is. The charming of εἰδωλα that language is capable of producing, tamed by the sophist determines fictions more potent than all illusions, apparitions, phantoms, images, icons and idols, and than all appearance. In truth, the birthplace of all these apparitions is precisely language. They haunt us down.

7. Iconoclasm.

But might it be that in contrast to what appears, as the result of the production of apparent knowledge, there is the borderline possibility of unmasking denouncing the way in which things appear with the pretence of a truth they do not have? The truth as disoccultation at the opposite end is the ability to reveal that which is as that which is and that which is not as that which is not. It is also in the domain of language that truth makes things true, tearing them from absence and revealing them in the presence of itself/themselves.⁶

Now, is it not true that the majority of those listening [i.e. to sophists] will, with the passing of enough time and as they get older, be necessarily bound to

⁶ Knowing is making. The effectiveness criterion already present in the *Politeia* is that of knowing. In the technique area, for example, a table painted by a painter who animates it and renders it present through its lines, as if he portrays it, presents but does not render present; it is the *tectôn* that in fact transforms the wood of a tree into a piece of furniture; and the person using it and giving it utility who communicates to a carpenter, through the symbiosis of use, by making use of the table as a point of specific application for a given use or function (eating, playing cards, cutting meat or working), ways to fit it out in the best way possible. The difficulty is in knowing how in the practical domain one can know how to act and express a given situation. In daily life, only a person who has experienced the situations can do it,

find themselves in those situations that exist at each moment and that by way of the difficult experiences through which they pass during their lives and touching transparently those things that really are and? thus have to transform their previously shaped opinions in such a way that things that appeared very important are now unimportant and those that were difficult to bear are bearable and all the phantasmagorical apparitions created by words as regards everything are turned inside out by the consequences of the situations in which they find themselves in each moment? (234d2-e2)

Without the experiences we go through in life it is not possible to get close to the truth of things. Iconoclasm can only be achieved by cancelling the distance from the meaning horizon and creation of the nearness of the circumstances and situations that interpellate us and to which we have to respond. The apprenticeship or comprehension content does not necessarily imply that all lives are lived in order to know how it is. It is not a question of an empirical test or an adventure based on a free variation. It is precisely a question of the dissoculation of the apparent fiction in which the life of each one of us can find itself. But such a dissoculation implies an absolute engagement in the obtaining of the truth, a waste of time, if one can say this, in order to at least be able to cancel the powerful bewitching action of idols. On the other hand, the time that has to elapse and about which we are talking here can not be chronological and one can not wait until it is too late. It is of another nature, even if it is difficult to ascertain what it is. The passing of time is not the grafting of time with time in time; it is not prolonging that ages. In the extreme case all the time in the world can pass by without anything be learnt, because nothing has happened. The time of which the Stranger speaks implies passing through... and learning with.... But even if in passing through situations one does not learn with them, could it be that one can learn without passing through them?

The cancellation of the distance situation vis-à-vis the truth of situations, πόρρω τῶν πραγμάτων τῆς ἀληθείας and of the separation from it in which we find ourselves arises from actually getting close to that which really is and happens, τοῖς οὖσι προσπίπτειν ἐγγύθεν, because it compels us to touch transparently what is and happens, ἀναγκάζεται ἐναργῶς ἐφάπτεσθαι τῶν ὄντων. It is this that produces a metamorphosis in opinions generated previously and turns inside out everything we think about things, making it reversible. The question is one of knowing how one can methodologically, without the passing in fact of time, learn or comprehend ἄνευ τῶν παθημάτων, i.e. get as close as

possible to the meaning of the situations that can occur. With this human possibility of thinking of things from within the time of comprehension, will it not be, like sophisms, a fictitious time, produced effectively, at best, but nevertheless completely unreal?

In truth, a sophist operates within the possibility of his own lucidity: he produces apparitions, creates illusions using the time itself in which he renders present and exorcises the fiction itself. In other words, what is at stake is understanding the very nature of the production, producing or making, which is at the basis both of appearance and of truth itself. It is the unreal but no less effective character of the production that makes it possible to understand on the one hand the production of appearance at a given present moment as well as the present that presents itself on the basis of its own production and agency. Time itself is the agent of the radical *ποίησις* that in fact makes and produces all things. It is time that makes an absence present and a presence absent.

There is, thus, no *metábasis eis allo génos*. The original horizon in which *being and happening* are conceived is, thus, that of a *poiêsis*: a *eis ousían agein*: bringing to presence. *Making* what at each moment is made is, thus, making what happens at each moment happen, a carrying to presence (*agôn*) of what is at each moment brought to presence or made to happen. *Being* is this continuous carrying of what is carried (*tò agómenon*):— from absence to presence and from presence to absence (cf. *Sophistes*, 219b4-6).

Just as the *dokeîn* makes what is not be, an *einai* makes be, by structuring everything solidly in its whole, from the actual unreality of the passage from not being (absence) to being (presence). Being is thought of as the poiesis that radically alters that which is not into that which is, at each moment in the world, bringing and carrying no to yes, that which does not exist to that which does and that which is not to that which is, in a total sphere of action and mediation.

We can, therefore, at a first stage, define the particular ability of a *ποιεῖν ἀληθῆ δοκεῖν* as a *λέγεσθαι* existing in an overall scenario of deceiving or false production of illusions or production creating appearances. It is in this overall production scenario, *ποίησις*, defined at the beginning of the dialogue that we have to try to understand that right on the radical confine of the production of appearance, appearance is the determinative complement of an inextirpable occurrence on the meaning horizon itself understood as actively producing. It is already said in 219b4: “that all that did not exist previously and is brought to existence at a later moment implies a bringing and a brought respectively dependent on a making and a being made” (“*πᾶν ὅπερ ἂν μὴ πρότερόν τις ὄν ὕστερον εἰς οὐσίαν ἄγει* ,

τὸν μὲν ἄγοντα ποιεῖν, τὸ δὲ ἀγόμενον ποιεῖσθαι πού φαμεν”, 219b4-6). In other words, the overall picture of the meaning horizon on which a sophist moves is one of a production of previously inexistent existences or previously absent presences. ἄγειν and ἄγεσθαι are verbs portraying movement and transportation, in the active sense of that which moves and transports and the passive sense of that which is moved and transported. Here they have to be interpreted as radical forms of change, κίνησις, because their meaning transforms a μὴ ὄν into an ὄν and an ἀπουσία into an οὐσία. The radical difference is extrinsically understood via previous time and subsequent time. There is an ascertainable fact between one moment in which something did not exist and the moment in which something comes to be. But the intrinsic determination of what occurs between these two moments, in the folding as it were of the time absent into the time present, is understood as the field of application of a production. There is a tension between what causes the change and the change caused, between operator and operated. This possibility can be thought of in a radical way not in consideration of something particular that did not exist and comes to exist, however different the specific and specialized ways in which production or handling skills operate in transforming a given material. The radicalisation of the transformation process implies the comprehension of the possibility of producing the intrinsic relationship between the moment before and the moment after, in fact the formal production of present time extracted from absent time, independently, here, of such a production or change being conceived out of the future or the past.

The hermetic hypothesis of Platonic analysis, in trying to provide meaning to the general principle of change, is reflected in the paradigm of production or transformation. The ποιεῖν and the ποιεῖσθαι is formally the structural way of bringing an entity which did not exist into existence or bringing an absence to presence. Its field of application is the horizon, unreal but formally producing reality, which makes that which is not be and renders that which is absent present, the time sandwiched between before and after. This horizon is the *between times* before and after but conceived in such a way that it is beforeness and afterness as such that are produced. In truth, what is human has a defect of finiteness as regards the surgical ability to intervene on this horizon. Much as we might want, we can not create time. And, nevertheless, it is this unfolding and stretching out, in which time transforms and extends itself, that the production is conceived, i.e. the production of presences and thus also of present contents in contrast to absence and absent contents.

Sophistry make it appear that the *products* of these skills are independent and clearly identifiable realities and, as *fictions* or *apparitions*, inscribed in a horizon that goes beyond that of reality. Thus,

eidola, *eikones*, *phantasmata* and *phainoména* are unreal products of a meaning horizon different from the horizon in which we have found ourselves since the beginning with *tà onta*. In other words, *tà phainoména* and *tà onta* are on horizons with well-defined outlines, that of fiction and that of reality, even if one can be intrusive as regards the other.

At a second stage, there is an attempt to isolate and identify the production horizon of things which are, *tà ónta*. I.e. the question for the *einai* is identical to the question for the *dokeîn*. There is a correlation between *einai* and *tà onta* parallel to the correlation between *dokeîn* and *phainoména* (sc. *eidola*, *eikones*, *phantasmata*). All beings have a same sense of structuration and originate from a *poieîn*. *Dokeîn* and *einai* are conceived as forms of *poieîn*.

There is, thus, no *metábasis eis allo génos*. The original horizon on which *being* and *appearing* are conceived is, thus, that of a *poiêsis*: an *eis ousían agein*: bringing to presence. *Making* what at each moment is made is, thus, making what at each moment happens happen, a carrying to presence (*agôn*) of what is at each moment brought to presence and made to happen. *Being* is this continuous carrying of what is carried (*tò agómenon*):— from absence to presence and from presence to absence (cf. *Sophistes*, 219b4-6). Just as the *dokeîn* makes what is not be, the *einai* makes be, structuring everything solidly in its whole, from the actual unreality of the passage from not being (absence) to being (presence). Being is conceived of as the *poiesis* that radically alters that which is not into that which is, at each moment in the world, bringing and carrying no to yes, that which does not exist to that which does and that which is not to that which is, in a total sphere of action and mediation.

Recebido em 19.12.2016

Aprovado em 20.01.2017