The concept of the simulacrum: Deleuze and the overturning of Platonism

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Abstract. This article examines Gilles Deleuze's concept of the *simulacrum*, which Deleuze formulated in the context of his reading of Nietzsche's project of "overturning Platonism." The essential Platonic distinction, Deleuze argues, is more profound than the speculative distinction between model and copy, original and image. The deeper, practical distinction moves between two kinds of images or *eidolon*, for which the Platonic Idea is meant to provide a concrete criterion of selection "Copies" or icons (*eikones*) are well-grounded claimants to the transcendent Idea, authenticated by their internal resemblance to the Idea, whereas "simulacra" (*phantasmata*) are like false claimants, built on a dissimilarity and implying an essential perversion or deviation from the Idea. If the goal of Platonism is the triumph of icons over simulacra, the inversion of Platonism would entail an *affirmation* of the simulacrum as such, which must thus be given its own concept. Deleuze consequently defines the simulacrum in terms of an internal dissimilitude or "disparateness," which in turn implies a new conception of Ideas, no longer as self-identical qualities (the *auto kath' hauto*), but rather as constituting *a pure concept of difference*. An inverted Platonism would necessarily be based on a purely immanent and differential conception of Ideas. Starting from this new conception of the Idea, Deleuze proposes to take up the Platonic project anew, rethinking the fundamental figures of Platonism (selection, repetition, ungrounding, the question-problem complex) on a purely differential basis. In this sense, Deleuze's inverted Platonism can at the same time be seen as a rejuvenated Platonism and even a completed Platonism.

1. Introduction

The concept of the simulacrum, along with its variants (simulation, similitude, simultaneity, dissimulation), has a complex history within twentieth-century French thought. The notion was developed primarily in the work of three thinkers – Pierre Klossowski, Gilles Deleuze, and Jean Baudrillard – although each of them conceived of the notion in different yet original ways, which must be carefully distinguished from each other. Klossowski, who first formulated the concept in his extraordinary series of theologico-erotic writings, retrieved the term from the criticisms of the church fathers against the debauched representations of the gods on the Roman stage (*simulacrum* is the Latin term for "statue" or "idol," and translates the Greek *phantasma*).[1] Deleuze, while acknowledging his debt to Klossowski, produced his own concept of the simulacrum in *Difference and Repetition*, using the term to

describe differential systems in which "the different is related to the different *through* difference itself."[2] Baudrillard, finally, took up the concept of the simulacra to designate the increasingly "hyperreal" status of certain aspects of contemporary culture.[3] It would thus be possible to write a philosophical history of the notion of the simulacrum, tracing out the intrinsic permutations and modifications of the concept. In such a history, as Deleuze writes, "it's not a matter of bringing all sorts of things under a single concept, but rather of relating each concept to the variables that explain its mutations."[4] Such a history, however, still remains to be written. What follows is a single sequence of that history, one that focuses on Deleuze's work, and attempts to specify the components of Deleuze's own concept of the simulacrum. As such, it can be conceived as a contribution to a broader reconsideration of the role that the notion of the simulacrum has played in contemporary thought.

2. The reversal of platonism

Deleuze developed his concept of the simulacrum primarily in *Difference and Repetition* (1968) and *Logic of Sense* (1969).[5] The problem of the simulacrum arises in the context of Deleuze's reading of Plato, or more precisely, in the context of his reading of Nietzsche's reading of Platonism. Nietzsche had defined the task of his philosophy, and indeed the philosophy of the future, as the reversal of Platonism. In an early sketch for his first treatise (1870–1871), he wrote: "My philosophy an *inverted Platonism*: the farther removed from true being, the purer, the finer, the better it is. Living in semblance as goal."[6] Deleuze accepts this gauntlet that Nietzsche throws down to future philosophy. But what exactly does it mean to "invert Platonism"? This is the question that concerns Deleuze, and the problem is more complex than it might initially seem. Could not every philosophy since Aristotle be characterized as an attempt to reverse Platonism (and not simply a footnote to Plato, as Whitehead once suggested)? Plato, it is said, opposed essence to appearance, the original to the image, the sun of truth to the shadows of the cave, and to overturn Platonism would initially seem to imply a reversal of this standard relation: what languishes below in Platonism must be put on top; the super-sensuous must be placed in the service of the sensuous. But such an interpretation, as Heidegger showed, only leads to the quagmire of positivism, an appeal to the *positum* rather than the *eidos*.[7] More profoundly, the phrase would seem to mean the abolition of *both* the world of essence *and* the world of appearance. Yet even this project would not be the one announced by Nietzsche: Deleuze notes that "the double objection to essences and appearance goes back to Hegel, and further still, to Kant" (LS, p. 253).

To discover "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable,"[8] Deleuze argues, one must go back even further, to Plato himself, and attempt to locate in precise terms the motivation that led Plato to distinguish between essence and appearance in the first place. In Deleuze's interpretation, Plato's singularity lies in a delicate operation of sorting or selection that *precedes* the discovery of the Idea, and that turns to the world of essences only as a criterion for its selective procedures. The motivation of the theory of Ideas lies initially in the direction of a will to select, to sort out, to *faire la différence* (literally, "to make the difference") between true and false images. To accomplish this task, Plato utilizes a method that will master all the power of the dialectic and fuse it with the power of myth: the method of division. It is in the functioning of this method that Deleuze uncovers not only the sense of Nietzsche's inverted Platonism, but also what was the decisive problem for Platonism itself – namely, the problem of simulacra.

3. The method of division as a dialectic of rivalry (Amphisbetesis)

"The creation of a concept," Deleuze writes, "always occurs as the function of a problem."[9] The problem that concerned Plato was the problem of the Athenian democracy – or more specifically, the agonistic problem of *rivalry*. This can be clearly seen in the *modus operandi* of two of Plato's great dialogues on division, the *Phaedrus* and the *Statesman*, each of which attempts to isolate, step by step, the true statesman or the true lover from the claims of numerous rivals. In the *Statesman*, for example, Plato proposes a preliminary definition of the statesman as "the shepherd of men," the one who knows the pastoral care of men, who takes care of humans. But in the course of the dialogue, numerous rivals – including merchants, farmers, and bakers, as well as gymnasts and the entire medical profession – come forward to say, "*I* am the shepherd of men!" In the *Phaedrus*, similarly, an attempt is made to define madness, or more precisely, to distinguish well-founded madness, or true love, from its false counterparts. Here again, all sorts of rivals – lovers, poets, priests, soothsayers, philosophers – rush forward to claim, "*I* am the possessed! *I* am the lover!" In both cases, the task of the dialogue is to find a means to distinguish between the true claimant from its false rivals. "The one problem which recurs throughout Plato's philosophy," writes Deleuze, "is the problem of measuring rivals and selecting claimants" (DR, p. 60).

Why did these relations of rivalry become "problematized" for Plato? Jean-Pierre Vernant and Marcel Detienne, in their work on the origins of Greek thought, have shown that such rivalries constituted an essential characteristic of the Athenian city. The path from myth to reason was not some sort of

inexplicable "miracle" or "discovery of the mind," they argue, but was conditioned historically by the social structure of the Greek *polis*, which "laïcized" the mythic forms of thought characteristic of the neighboring empires by bringing them into the agonistic and public space of the agora.[10] In Deleuze's terminology, imperial states and the Greek cities were types of social formations that "deterritorialized" their surrounding rural territories, but they did so according to two different models. The archaic States "overcoded" the rural territories by relating them to a superior *arithmetic* unity (the despot), by subordinating them to a *transcendent* mythic order that was imposed upon them from above. The Greek cities, by contrast, adapted the surrounding territories to a *geometric* extension in which the city itself became a relay-point in an *immanent* network of commercial and maritime circuits. These circuits formed a kind of international market on the border of the eastern empires, organized into a multiplicity of independent societies in which artisans and merchants found a freedom and mobility that the imperial states denied them.[11]

This geometric organization was in turn reflected in the internal civic space of the cities. Whereas the imperial *spatium* of the state was centered on the royal palace or temple, which marked the transcendent sovereignty of the despot and his god, the political *extensio* of the Greek city was modeled on a new type of geometric space (*isonomia*) that organized the polis around a common and public center (the *agora*), in relation to which all the points occupied by the "citizens" appeared equal and symmetrical.[12] What the Greek cities invented, in other words, was the *agon* as a community of free men or citizens, who entered into agonistic relations of rivalry with other free men, exercising power and exerting claims over each other in a kind of generalized athleticism. In the Greek city, for example, a magistracy is an object of a claim, a function for which someone can pose a candidacy, whereas in an imperial State such functionaries were named by the emperor. This new and determinable type of human relation (agonistic) permeated the entire Greek assemblage: agonistic relations were promoted between cities (in war and the games), within cities (in the political Assembly and the legal magistratures), in family and individual relations (erotics, economics, dietetics, gymnastics), and even in the relation with oneself (for how could one claim to govern others if one could not govern oneself?).[13] What made philosophy possible, what constituted its historical condition of possibility, in Deleuze's view, was precisely this *milieu of immanence* that was opposed to the imperial and transcendent sovereignty of the State, and implied no pre-given interest, since it on the contrary presupposed rival interests.[14]

Finally, these agonistic relations of rivalry, and the social conditions that produced them, problematized the image of the thinker in a new way. Whereas

imperial empires or states had their wise men or priests, possessors of wisdom, the Greeks replaced them with the philosopher, *philo-sophos*, the *friend* or lover of wisdom, one who searches for wisdom but does not possess it – and who is therefore able, as Nietzsche said, to make use of wisdom as a mask, and to make it serve new and sometimes even dangerous ends.[15] For Deleuze, this new definition of the thinker is of decisive importance: with the Greeks, the friend becomes a presence *internal* to thought. The friend is no longer related simply to another person, but also to an Entity or Essence, an Idea, which constitutes the object of its desire (*Eros*). "I am the friend of Plato," says the philosopher, "but even more so, I am the friend of Wisdom, of the True, of the Concept." If the philosopher is the friend of wisdom rather than a wise man, it is because wisdom is something to which he lays claim, but does not actually possess. In this manner, however, friendship was made to imply not only an amorous desire for wisdom, but also a jealous *distrust* of one's rival claimants. This is what makes philosophy Greek and connects it with the formation of cities: the Greeks formed societies of friends or equals, but at the same time promoted relations of rivalry between them. If each citizen lays claim to something, he necessarily encounters rivals, so that two friends inevitably become a claimant and his rival. The carpenter may claim the wood, as it were, but he clashes with the forester, the lumberjack, and the joiner, who say, in effect, "*I* am the friend of the wood!" These agonistic relations would also come to determine the realm of thought, in which numerous claimants came forward to say, "*I* am the friend of Wisdom! *I* am the true philosopher!" In the Platonic dialogues, this rivalry famously culminates in the clash between Socrates and the sophists, who "fight over the remains of the ancient sage."[16] The "friend," the "lover," the "claimant," and the "rival" constitute what Deleuze calls the *conceptual personae* of the Greek theater of thought, whereas the "wise man" and the "priest" were the personae of the State and religion, for whom the institution of sovereign power and the establishment of cosmic order were inseparable aspects of a transcendent drama, imposed from above by the despot or by a god superior to all others.[17] While it is true that the first philosophers may have been sages or wise men immigrating to Greece in flight from the empires, what they found in the Greek city was this immanent arena of the agon and rivalry, which alone provided the immanent milieu for philosophy.[18]

It is within this agonistic milieu that Deleuze contextualizes the procedures of division found in the *Phaedrus* and the *Statesman*. What Plato criticized in the Athenian democracy was the fact that anyone could lay claim to anything, and could carry the day by force of rhetoric. The Sophists, according to Plato, were claimants for something to which they had no right. In confronting such situations of rivalry – whether in the domain of love, politics, or thought

itself – Plato confronted the question, How can one separate the true claimant from the false? It is in response to this problem that Plato would create the *Idea* as a philosophic concept: the Idea is used as a criterion for sorting out these rivals and judging the well-foundedness of their claims, authenticating the legitimate claimants and rejecting the counterfeits, distinguishing the true from the false, the pure from the impure.[19] But in so doing, Deleuze argues, Plato wound up erecting a *new* type of transcendence, one that differs from the imperial or mythic transcendence of the States or empires (although Plato would assign to myth its own function). With the concept of the Idea, Plato invented a type of transcendence that was capable of being exercised and situated *within* the field of immanence itself. Immanence is necessary, but it must be immanent *to* something transcendent, to an ideality. "The poisoned gift of Platonism," Deleuze comments, "is to have introduced transcendence into philosophy, to have given transcendence a plausible philosophical meaning. . . . Modern philosophy will continue to follow Plato in this regard, encountering a transcendence at the heart of immanence as such."[20]

From this point of view, Deleuze argues that Aristotle's later criticisms misconstrue the essential point of Plato's method. Aristotle interprets division as a means of dividing a genus into opposing species in order to subsume the thing being investigated under the appropriate species – hence the continuous process of specification in search for a definition of the angler's art. He correctly objects that division in Plato is a bad and illegitimate syllogism because it lacks a "reason" – the identity of a concept capable of serving as a middle term – which could, for example, lead us to conclude that angling belongs to the arts of acquisition, and to acquisition by capture, and so on.[21] But the goal of Plato's method of division is completely different. The method of division is not a dialectic of contradiction or contrariety (*antiphasis*), a determination of species, but rather a dialectic of rivals and suitors (*amphisbetesis*), a selection of claimants.[22] It does not consist of dividing genera into species, but of selecting a pure line from an impure and undifferentiated material; it attempts to distinguish the authentic and the inauthentic, the good and the bad, the pure and the impure, from within an indefinite mixture or multiplicity. It is a question of "making the difference," but this difference does not occur between species, but lies entirely within the depths of the immediate, where the selection is made *without mediation*. Plato himself likens division to the search for gold, a process which likewise entails several selections: the elimination of impurities, the elimination of other metals "of the same family," and so on. This is why the method of division can appear to be a capricious, incoherent procedure that jumps from one singularity to another, in contrast with the supposed identity of the concept. But, Deleuze asks, "is this not its strength from the viewpoint of the Idea"? With the method of division, "the

labyrinth or chaos is untangled, but without a thread or the assistance of a thread" (DR, p. 59)?

4. The Platonic idea as a criterion of selection

How does the concept of the "Idea" carry out this selection among rival claimants? Plato's method, Deleuze argues, proceeds by means of a certain irony. For no sooner has division arrived at its actual task of selection than Plato suddenly intervenes with a *myth*: in the *Phaedrus*, the myth of the circulation of souls appears to interrupt the effort of division, as does the myth of archaic times in the *Statesman*. Such is the second trap of division, the second irony: the first is the sudden appearance of rival claimants; the second, this sudden appearance of evasion or renunciation. The introduction of myth seems to confirm all the objections of Aristotle: division, lacking mediation, has no probative force, and must thus allow itself to be replaced by a myth which could furnish it with an equivalent of mediation in an imaginary or narrative manner. Once again, however, this Aristotelian objection misses the sense of Plato's project. For the myth, says Deleuze, interrupts nothing, but is on the contrary the integrating element of division itself. If it is true that myth and dialectic are two distinct forces in Platonism in general, it is division which surmounts this duality and integrates, internally, the power of dialectic with that of myth, making myth an element of the dialectic itself.

Why is this the case? In the Platonic dialogues, according to Deleuze, myth functions primarily as a narrative of *foundation*. In accordance with archaic religious traditions, the myth constructs a model of circulation by which the different claimants can be judged; it establishes a foundation which is able to sort out differences, to measure the roles and pretensions of the various rivals, and finally to select the true claimants.[23] In the *Phaedrus*, for example, Plato describes the circulation of souls prior to their incarnation, and the memory they carry with them of the *Ideas* they were able to contemplate. It is this mythic contemplation, the nature and degree of this contemplation, and the type of situations required for its recollection, that provide Plato with his selective criterion and allow him to determine the value and order of different types of madness (i.e. that of the lover, the poet, the priest, the prophet, the philosopher, etc.). Well-founded madness, or true love, belongs to those souls that have seen much, and retain many dormant but revivable memories. True claimants are those that "participate" in contemplation and reminiscence, while sensual souls, forgetful and narrow of vision, are denounced as false rivals. Similarly, the *Statesman* invokes the image of a god ruling both mankind and the world in archaic times. The myth shows that, properly speaking, only

this archaic god merits the definition of the statesman as "king-shepherd of men." But again, the myth furnishes an ontological measure by which different men in the City are shown to share unequally in the mythical model according to their degree of participation – from the political man, who is closest to the model of the archaic shepherd-god; to parents, servants, and auxiliaries; and, finally, to charlatans and counterfeits, who merely parody the true politician by means of deception and fraud.[24]

The Platonic conception of "participation" (*metechein*, lit. "to have after") must be understood in terms of the role of this foundation: an elective participation is the response to the problem of a method of selection. "To participate" means to have a part of, to have after, to have secondhand. What possesses something firsthand is precisely the foundation itself, the Idea – only Justice is just, only Courage is courageous. Such statements are not simply analytic propositions but designations of the Idea as the foundation that possesses a given quality firsthand: only the Idea is "the thing itself," only the Idea is "self-identical" (the *auto kath' auto*). "It is what objectively possesses a pure quality, or *what is nothing other than what it is*" (WP, pp. 29–30). Empirically speaking, a mother is not only a mother, but also a daughter, a lover, perhaps a wife; but what Plato would call the Idea of a mother is a thing that would only be what it is, a mother that would be nothing but a mother (the notion of the Virgin Mary could be said to be the Christian approximation of the Idea of a pure mother).[25] Plato's innovation is to have created a veritable concept of the Idea of something pure, a pure quality. The Idea, as foundation, then allows its possession to be shared, giving it to the claimant (the secondhand possessor), but only insofar as the claimant has been able to pass the test of the foundation. In Plato, says Deleuze, things (as opposed to Ideas) are always something *other* than what they are: at best, they are only secondhand possessors, mere claimants or "pretenders" to the Idea itself. They can only lay *claim* to the quality, and can do so only to the degree that they *participate* in the pure Idea. Such is the doctrine of judgment. The famous Neo-Platonic triad follows from this: the unparticipated, the participated, the participant. One could also say: the father (the foundation), the daughter (the object of the claim), and the suitor (the claimant). The triad produces a series of participations in length, a hierarchy (the "chain of being") that distinguishes different degrees and orders of participation depending on the distance from or proximity to the foundational principle.[26]

What is the mechanism that allows the Idea to judge this degree of elective participation? If the foundation as essence is defined by the original and superior identity or *sameness* of the Idea, the claimant will be well-founded only to the degree that it *resembles* or imitates the foundation. This resemblance is not merely an external correspondence, as the resemblance of one thing with

another, but an *internal* and spiritual (or "noetic") resemblance of the thing to the Idea. The claimant conforms to the object of the claim only insofar as it is modeled internally on the Idea, which comprehends the relations and proportions that constitute essence. The act of founding endows the claimant with this internal resemblance and, on this condition, makes it legitimately participate in the quality, the object of the claim. The ordering of claimants or differences (classification) thus takes place within the comparative play of two similitudes: the exemplary similitude of an original identity, and the imitative or "mimetic" similitude of a more or less similar copy. This in itself marks a philosophic decision of the greatest importance to Deleuze: Platonism allows differences to be *thought* only by subordinating them to the principle of the Same and the condition of Resemblance (DR, p. 127). The concept of the Idea, in Deleuze's analysis, thus consists of three components:

1. The differential quality that is to be possessed or participated in (e.g., being just);
2. The pre-existent foundation that possesses it firsthand, as unparticipatable (e.g., Justice itself);
3. The rivals that lay claim to the quality (e.g., to be a just man) but can only possess it at a second, third, or fourth remove . . . or not at all (the simulacrum) (WP, p. 30).

For Plato, then, "pretension" is not one phenomenon among others, but the nature of every phenomenon. The claimant [*prétendant*] appeals to the foundation, and it is a claim [*prétention*] that must be founded (e.g., the claim to be just, courageous, or pious; to be the true shepherd, lover, or philosopher), that must participate, to a greater or less degree, in the object of pretension, or else be denounced as without foundation. If Platonism is a response to the agonistic relations of power in the Greek world, the foundation is the operation of the logos: it is a test that sorts out and measures the differences among these pretensions or claimants, determining which claimants truly participate in the object of the claim.

5. The counter-method of the *Sophist*: The simulacrum

An obvious implication follows from this analysis: does there not lie, at the limit of participation, the state of an *unfounded* pretension? The "truest" claimant, the authentic and well-founded claimant, is the one closest to the foundation, the secondhand possessor. But is there not then also a third- and fourth-hand possessor, continuing down to the nth degree of debasement, to

the one who possesses no more than a mirage or simulacrum of the foundation, and is itself a mirage and a simulacrum, denounced by the selection as a counterfeit?[27] If the just claimant has its rivals, does it not also have its counterfeits and simulacra? This simulacral being, according to Plato, is in fact none other than the Sophist, a Protean being who intrudes and insinuates himself everywhere, contradicting himself and making unfounded claims on everything.

Thus construed, Deleuze considers the conclusion of the *Sophist* to be one of the most extraordinary adventures of Platonism. The third of the great dialogues on division, the *Sophist*, unlike either the *Phaedrus* or the *Statesman*, presents no myth of foundation. Rather, it utilizes the method of division in a paradoxical fashion, a "counter-utilization" that attempts to isolate, not the true claimant, but the false one, the sophist himself. From this point of view, Deleuze distinguishes between two spatial dimensions in Plato's thought. The dialogues of the *Phaedrus* and the *Statesman* move upward toward the "true lover" or the "true statesman," which are legitimated by their resemblance to the pure model and measured by their approximation to it. Platonic *irony* is, in this sense, a technique of *ascent*, a movement toward the principle on high, the ascetic ideal.[28] The *Sophist*, by contrast, follows a descending movement of *humor*, a technique of *descent* that moves downward toward the vanity of the false copy, the self-contradicting sophist. Here, the method of division can make no appeal to a foundational myth or model, for it is no longer a matter of discerning the true sophist from the false claimant, since *the true sophist is himself the false claimant*.

This paradoxical usage of the method of division leads the dialogue to a remarkable conclusion. "By dint of inquiring in the direction of the simulacrum," writes Deleuze, "Plato discovers, in the flash of an instant as he leans over its abyss, that the simulacrum is not simply a false copy, but that it calls into question the very notion of the copy . . . and of the model" (LS, p. 294). In the final definition of the Sophist, Plato leads his readers to the point where they are no longer able to distinguish the Sophist from Socrates himself: "The dissembling or ironical imitator, . . . who in private and in short speeches compels the person who is conversing with him to contradict himself."[29] The sophist appears in Deleuze as a particular "type" of thinker, an "antipathetic" persona in the Platonic theater who haunts Socrates at every step as his double. Plato wanted to reduce the sophist to a being of contradiction, that is, the lowest power and last degree of participation, a supposed state of chaos. But is not the sophist rather the being that raises all things to their simulacral state, and maintains them in that state? Platonism in this manner "confronts sophism as its enemy, but also as its limit and its double: because he lays claim to anything and everything, there is the great risk that

the sophist will scramble the selection and pervert the judgment" (ECC, p. 136). This is the third moment of irony in Plato, irony pushed to its limit, to the point of *humor*, and it gives us another indication of what the overturning of Platonism entails for Deleuze. "Was it not necessary that irony be pushed to this point?" he asks, "and that Plato be the first to indicate this direction for the overthrow of Platonism?" (LS, p. 295).

The essential Platonic distinction is thus more profound than the speculative distinction between model and copy, original and image. The deeper, practical distinction moves between two kinds of claimants or "images," or what Plato calls *eidola*.[30] (1) "Copies" (*eikones*) are well-grounded claimants, authorized by their internal resemblance to the ideal model, authenticated by their close participation in the foundation; (2) "simulacra" (*phantasmata*) are like false claimants, built on a dissimilarity and implying an essential perversion or deviation from the Idea. "It is in this sense that Plato divides the domain of *image-idols* in two: on the one hand the *iconic copies*, on the other the *phantastic simulacra*."[31] The great manifest duality between Idea and image is there only to guarantee the latent distinction between these two types of images, to provide a concrete criterion of selection. Plato does not create the concept of the model or "Idea" in order to oppose it to the world of images, but rather to select the true images, the icons, and to eliminate the false ones, the simulacra. In this sense, says Deleuze, Platonism is the *Odyssey* of philosophy; as Foucault comments, "with the abrupt appearance of Ulysses, the eternal husband, the false suitors disappear. *Exuent* simulacra."[32]

In Deleuze's reading, then, Platonism is defined by this will to track and hunt down phantasms and simulacra in every domain, to identify the sophist himself, the diabolical insinuator (Dionysus). Its goal is "iconology," the triumph of icons over simulacra, which are denounced and eliminated as false claimants. Its method is the selection of difference (*amphisbetesis*) by the institution of a mythic circle, the establishment of a foundation, and the creation of the concept of the Idea. Its motivation is above all a *moral* motivation, for what is condemned in the simulacra is the malice by which it challenges the very notion of the model and the copy, thereby turning us away from the Idea of the Good (hence Plato's condemnation of certain poets along with the sophists). Put in naturalistic terms, the aim of Platonism is to deprive nature of the being that is immanent to it, to reduce nature to a pure appearance, and to judge it in relation to a moral Idea that transcends it, "a transcendent Idea capable of imposing its likeness upon a rebellious matter."[33] Finally, Platonism inaugurates a domain that philosophy would come to recognize as its own, which Deleuze terms "representation." Although the term "representation" will take on various avatars in the history of philosophy, Platonism ascribes to it a precise meaning: every well-founded pretension in this world

is necessarily a re-presentation, since even the first in the order of pretensions is already second in itself, in its subordination to the foundation. The Idea is invoked in the world only as a function of what is not "representable" in things themselves.[34]

6. The concept of the simulacrum

With this portrait of Platonism in hand, we are in a position to understand what Nietzsche's "inverted Platonism" means for Deleuze. It does not simply imply the denial of the primacy of the original over the copy, of the model over the image (the "twilight of the idols"). For what is the difference between a copy and a simulacrum? Plato saw in the simulacrum a "becoming-unlimited" pointing to a subversive element that perpetually eludes the order that Ideas impose and things receive.[35] But in subordinating the simulacrum to the copy, and hence to the Idea, Plato defines it in purely negative terms: it is the copy of a copy, an endlessly degraded copy, an infinitely slackened icon. To truly invert Platonism means that the difference between copies and simulacrum must be seen, not merely as a difference of degree but as a *difference in nature*. The inversion of Platonism, in other words, implies an *affirmation* of simulacra as such. The simulacrum must then be given its own concept and be defined in affirmative terms. In creating such a concept, Deleuze is following a maxim that lies at the core of his philosophical methodology: "What is the best way of following the great philosophers, to repeat what they have said, or *to do what they have done*, that is, to create concepts for problems that are necessarily changing?" (WP, p. 28). The Deleuzian concept of the simulacrum can be defined in terms of three characteristics, which stand in contradistinction to the three components of the Platonic Idea summarized above.

First, Deleuze claims that whereas "the copy is an image endowed with resemblance, the simulacrum is an image *without* resemblance" (LS, p. 257). How are we to understand this rather strange formula? Deleuze suggests that the early Christian catechisms, influenced by the Neoplatonism of the church fathers, have familiarized us somewhat with the notion of an image that has lost its resemblance: God created man in His own image and to resemble Him (*imago Dei*), but through sin, man has lost the resemblance while retaining the image. We have lost a moral existence and entered into an aesthetic one; we have become simulacra. The catechism stresses the fact that the simulacrum is a demonic image; it remains an image, but, in contrast to the icon, its re-semblance has been *externalized*. It is no longer a "resemblance," but a mere "semblance."[36] If the resemblance of an icon is like the engendered resem-blance of a son to his father, stemming from the son's internal participation

in the father's filial line, the semblance of the simulacra, on the contrary, is like the ruse and trickery of an imposter: though his appearance may reflect the father's, the relation is purely external and coincidental, and his claim to inheritance a subversion that acts "against the father," without passing through the Idea.[37] The simulacrum still simulates the *effects* of identity and resemblance, but these are now completely external effects (like "optical effects"), divorced from any internal principle, and produced by completely different means than those at work in the copy.[38]

Deleuze's theological references here are not fortuitous, for there was a whole range of Christian experience that was familiar with the danger of the simulacrum. In *On Christian Doctrine*, for instance, Augustine developed a Platonic semiotic aimed at "making the difference" between true signs and false signs, or rather between two modes of interpretation of the same sign. He located his criterion of selection, not in an Idea but in God himself, the only "thing" that can (and must be) enjoyed in itself. What he called *caritas* is the interpretation of signs as "iconic copies" that propel the restless movement of the soul toward the enjoyment of God (for his own sake, as the first-hand possessor) and the enjoyment of one's self and one's neighbor (for the sake of God, as second-hand possessors). *Cupiditas*, on the contrary, is the interpretation of signs for their own sake, the enjoyment of "one's self, one's neighbor, or any corporeal thing" for the sake of something other than God. Augustine was explicit about the aim of his theology: "the destruction of the reign of cupidity" (simulacra).[39] Augustine's polemic against Varro in the *City of God* would recapitulate many aspects of Plato's polemic against the Sophists.[40]

If simulacra later became the object of demonology in Christian thought, it is because the simulacrum is not the opposite of the icon, the demonic is not the opposite of the divine, Satan is not the Other, the pole farthest from God, the absolute antithesis, but something much more bewildering and vertiginous: *the Same*, the perfect double, the exact semblance, the *Doppelgänger*, the angel of light whose deception is so complete that it is impossible to tell the imposter (Satan, Lucifer) apart from the "reality" (God, Christ), just as Plato reaches the point where Socrates and the Sophist are rendered indiscernible. This is the point where we can no longer speak of deception or even simulation, but rather, as Nietzsche expressed it, the "power of the false." The Temptation and the Inquisition are not episodes in the great antagonism of Good versus Evil, but variants on the complex insinuation of the Same: How does one distinguish a revelation from God from a deception of the devil, or a deception sent by God to tempt men of little faith from a revelation sent by the devil to simulate God's test (God so closely resembling Satan who imitates God so well . . .). The demonic simulacrum thus stands in stark contrast to

the theological "symbol" (as defined, for instance, by Paul Tillich or Mircea Eliade), which is always iconic, the analogical manifestation of a transcendent instance. It is this experience of the simulacrum that Klossowski has revived and explored throughout his work. Foucault suggests that the concern over simulacra continued through the Baroque period, and did not finally fall into silence until Descartes's great simulacrum: the Evil Genius of the first *Meditation*, God's "marvellous twin," who simulates God and can mime all his powers, decreeing eternal truths and acting as if $2 + 2 = 5$, but who is expelled from any possible existence because of his malignancy.[41] If Plato maligns the simulacrum, it is not because it elevates the false over the true, the evil over the good; more precisely, the simulacrum is "beyond good and evil" because it renders them *indiscernible* and internalizes the difference between them, thereby scrambling the selection and perverting the judgment.

Second, Plato himself specifies how the simulacrum obtains this non-productive external effect of resemblance: "the simulacrum implies huge dimensions, depths, and distances that the observer cannot master. It is precisely because he cannot master them than he experiences an impression of resemblance" (LS, p. 258). The simulacrum, in other words, is constructed on an *internal difference*, a fundamental internal disparity, which is not derived from any prior identity: it has 'the disparate' [*le dispars*] as a unit of measurement and communication. "Placing disparates in communication, resonance, forced movement, would thus be the characteristics of the simulacrum."[42]

Certain twentieth-century modernist writers, including James Joyce, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Raymond Roussel, Pierre Klossowski, and Witold Gombrowicz, whose work has nothing to do with Platonism or its reversal, have nonetheless made the "internal difference" constitutive of the work of art evident in their literary techniques. In Roussel's novels, for example, a single narrative is made to tell two different stories *simultaneously*. The procedure of *La Doublure* rests on the double meaning of a homonym (the title can mean either "The Understudy" or "The Lining"), which opens up a space in the heart of the work that allows objects to take on a double meaning, each participating in two stories at the same time. *Impressions of Africa* complicates this procedure, starting with a quasi-homonym (*b*illard/*p*illard), but hiding the second story within the first.[43] Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* can be said to have pushed such techniques of internal disparity to their limit, invoking a letter that makes all the divergent series or stories of the "chaosmos" communicate at once in a transversal dimension. When Deleuze writes that "modernity is defined by the power of the simulacrum" (LS, p. 265), he seems to be implying that each era must create its own anti-Platonism, and that his own "simulacral" version is informed, at least in part, by the structures and techniques of modernist literature. Yet all the arts, even pre-modernist arts, can be said to be characterized

by a constitutive disparity. Even painting and sculpture, Deleuze notes, have their own techniques of internal difference. "It is not enough to multiply perspectives in order to establish perspectivism. To every perspective or point of view there must correspond an autonomous work with its own self-sufficient sense . . . . Representation has only a single center, a unique and receding perspective, and consequently a false depth . . . . Movement for its part implies a plurality of centers, a superposition of perspectives, a tangle of points of view, a coexistence of moments which essentially distort representation: paintings or sculptures are already such 'distorters,' forcing us to create movement" (DR, p. 69, 55–56).

But the point extends beyond art, even if art is a privileged example. In an inverted Platonism, *all* things are simulacra, and as simulacra, they are defined by an internal disparity. "Things are simulacra themselves, simulacra are the superior forms, and the difficulty facing everything is to become its own simulacrum . . . . The important thing, for the in-itself, is that the difference, whether small or large, be internal" (DR, p. 67, 120–121). The simulacrum differs in nature from the copy because it has *internalized* a difference, and is constructed upon a "'disparateness' within an original depth" (DR, p. 51). The copy is submerged in dissimilitude, at the same time as the model is plunged into difference, so that it is no longer possible to say which is the model and which is the copy. Identity and resemblance persist, but they are now simply the external effects of the internal differential machinery of the simulacrum. "Resemblance is always on the exterior, and difference – small or large – occupies the center of the system" (RP, p. 171).

For this reason, Deleuze makes an oft-overlooked distinction between the concept of the Identical and the concept of the Same. In Platonism, "the model can be defined only by a positing of identity as the essence of the Same (*auto kath' hauto*), as the essence of Ideas, and the copy by an affection of internal resemblance, the quality of the Similar" (DR, p. 265). In an inverted Platonism, however, this link between the Same and the identical is severed. When the Same passes to the side of things rather than Ideas, and indicates the indiscernibilty of things and their simulacra (Socrates is indiscernible from the Sophists, God from Satan), it is the identity of things that suffers a corresponding loss. "The distinction between the same and the identical bears fruit only if one subjects the Same to a conversion which relates it to the different, while at the same time the things and beings that are distinguished in the different suffer a corresponding radical destruction of their *identity*. Only on this condition is difference thought in itself, neither represented nor mediated."[44]

The third characteristic of the simulacrum, finally, concerns the *mode* under which it is apprehended. In the famous passage of the *Republic*

(X, pp. 601d–608b) where he expels the artist from the City, Plato appeals to the user–producer–imitator triad in order to preserve an "iconic" sense of imitation (imitation as *mimesis* rather than *apate* or "deception").[45] The user is at the top of the Platonic hierarchy because he makes use of true *knowledge*, which is the knowledge of the model or Idea. Copies then produced by the craftsman (*demiourgos*) are iconic to the degree that they reproduce the model internally: though the craftsman cannot be said to operate by true knowledge of the Idea, he is nonetheless guided by a correct judgment or *right opinion* of the user's knowledge, and by the relations and proportions that constitute essence. Right opinion, in other words, apprehends the external resemblance between the copy and the Idea only to the degree that it is guaranteed by their internal ("noetic") similarity. What then is left for the false resemblance and internal dissemblance of the simulacrum? Imitation takes on a pejorative sense in Plato only when it is applied to the simulacrum, which does not reproduce the *eidos* but merely produces the effect of resemblance in an external and unproductive way, obtained neither through true knowledge (the user) nor right opinion (the craftsman), but by trick, ruse, or subversion, an art of *encounter* that lies outside of knowledge and opinion (the artist or poet).[46] The simulacrum can only appear under the mode of a *problem*, as a *question*, as that which forces one to think, what Plato calls a "provocative" ("Is it true or false, good or evil?").[47] The *Republic* does not attack art or poetry as such; it attempts to eliminate art that is simulacral or phantastic, and not iconic or mimetic. Perhaps the genius of the Pop Art of the twentieth century lay precisely in its ability to push the multiplication of images to the point where the mimetic copy changes its nature and is reversed into the simulacrum (which is the originary model for Warhol's series of Campbell soup cans?).[48]

The "problematic" nature of simulacra points to the fact that there is something that contests *both* the notion of copy *and* that of model, and undermines the very distinction between the two. "By simulacrum we should not understand a simple imitation but rather the act by which the very idea of a model or privileged position is challenged and overturned" (DR, p. 69). With the simulacrum, the order of participation is rendered impossible, since there is no longer any possible hierarchy, no second, no third. There is no privileged point of view, nor is there an object common to all points of view. Sameness and resemblance persist, but only as effects of the differential machinery of the simulacrum (will to power): the simulacrum simulates the father, the fiancée, and the claimant all at once in a superimposition of masks, for behind every mask there is not a true face, but another mask, and another mask behind that. "The only illusion," Deleuze writes, "is that of unmasking something or someone" (DR, p. 106), the illusion of presuming a face behind the mask, an originary model behind the copy.

As a simulacrum, then, the false claimant can no longer be said to be false in relation to a supposedly true model; rather, the "power of the false" (*pseudos*) now assumes a positivity of its own, and is raised to a higher power (NP, p. 96). "The activity of life is like a power of falsehood: duping, dissimulating, dazzling, and seducing. But, in order to be brought into effect, this power of the false must be selected, redoubled or repeated, and thus elevated to a higher power . . . . It is *art* that invents the lies that elevate the false to this higher affirmative power, that turns the will to deceive into something that is affirmed in the power of the false. *Appearance*, for the artist, no longer signifies the negation of the real in this world, but this kind of selection, this correction, this redoubling, this affirmation. Then truth perhaps takes on a new signification. Truth is appearance. Truth signifies the effectuation of power, raising it to the highest power. In Nietzsche, 'we the artists' = 'we the seekers after knowledge or truth.'"[49] The true world is no longer opposed to the false world of simulacra; rather, truth now becomes an affirmation of the simulacrum itself, falsity affirmed and raised to a higher power.

7. Pure difference as an immanent idea

These characterizations of the simulacrum lead us to a new consideration of the status of an inverted Platonism. Deleuze's project of overturning Platonism must not be taken as a rejection of Platonism; on the contrary. "That the overturning [of Platonism] should conserve many Platonic characteristics," writes Deleuze, "is not only inevitable but *desirable*" (DR, p. 59). The simulacrum may be the focus of Deleuze's analysis of Platonism, but it is not the final word. The simulacrum scrambles the criteria of selection established by Plato, and perverts the system of judgment. Far from refusing Platonism in its entirety, however, Deleuze's inverted Platonism retrieves almost every aspect of the Platonic project, but now reconceived from the viewpoint of the simulacrum itself. The simulacrum thus plays a double role in Deleuze's reading of Platonism: it shows how Plato failed in his attempt to "make the difference," but at the same time it opens up a path toward a retrieval of the Platonic project on a new basis. In this sense, Deleuze's inverted Platonism can at the same time be seen as a rejuvenated Platonism and even a completed Platonism.

What is the nature of this rejuvenated Platonism? Plato's error was to have remained "attached to that old Wisdom, ready to unfold its transcendence again" (WP, p. 148). Deleuze refuses Platonism's appeal to transcendence, and its consequent reliance on the principle of identity. "Every reaction against Platonism," he writes, "is a restoration of immanence in its full extension and

in its purity, which forbids the return of any transcendence" (ECC, p. 137).[50] A purely immanent theory of Ideas must thus begin with the simulacrum: there is a *being* of simulacra, which Plato attempted to deny. If the resemblance of the iconic copy is built upon the model of the identity of an ideal sameness, we must say that the *disparity* of the simulacrum is based upon another model, a model of *difference*, from which the dissimilitude or "internalized difference" of the simulacrum derives its power. "Simulacra are those systems in which the different relates to the different *by means of* difference itself. What is essential is that we find in these systems no *prior identity and internal resemblance*: it is all a matter of difference" (DR, 299). Indeed, was it not the differential nature of simulacra that motivated Plato to exorcise them in the first place? "On the basis of a first impression (difference is evil), [Plato] proposed to 'save' difference by representing it" (DR, p. 29). An inverted Platonism, in return, implies the affirmation of difference itself as a "sub-representative" principle that accounts for the constitutive disparity of the simulacrum itself. "The cruelty [of the simulacrum], which at the outset seemed to us monstrous, demanding expiation, and could be alleviated only by representative media-tion, now seems to us to constitute *the pure concept or Idea of difference*" (DR, p. 67). Simulacra, which are built on a fundamental disparity, require a new conception of Ideas: Ideas that are *immanent* to simulacra (rather than transcendent) and based on a concept of pure *difference* (rather than identity). *Immanence* and *internal difference* are thus the two touchstones of Deleuze's rejuvenated Platonism in *Difference and Repetition*.

Where does Deleuze find resources for developing his immanent dialec-tic? Deleuze notes that difference and the dissimilar (becoming) occasionally appear, in several important texts of Plato himself, not only as an inevitable characteristic of created copies, as a defect that affects images, a counterpart to their resemblance (they must differ in order to resemble), but as *a possi-ble model that rivals the good model of the Same*, a Platonic equivalent to Descartes' evil demon.[51] An echo of this tension resonates in the dialogues when Socrates asks, ironically: Is there an Idea of *everything*, even of mud, hair, filth and excrement – or is there rather something that always and stub-bornly escapes the Idea? Plato raises these possibilities only to conjure them away, but they bear witness to the persistent though subterranean activity of a Dionysian world in the heart of Platonism itself, and to the possibility of its own domain.[52] But it was primarily Kant who inaugurated a purely *imma-nent* interpretation of Ideas, and exposed the illusion of assigning to Ideas a transcendent object. In the "Transcendental Dialectic" of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant identified three primary transcendent Ideas, which he identi-fied as the terminal points of traditional metaphysics: the Self, the World, and God. Such Ideas can have a positive use, Kant argued, when they are

merely employed in a regulative manner, as horizons or focal points outside of experience that guide the systematization of our knowledge (the legitimate *immanent* employment of Ideas). But when we grant Ideas a constitutive employment, and claim that they refer to corresponding objects, we fall into an *illusion* of reason (the illegitimate *transcendent* employment of Ideas).

But even Kant was unable to push the immanent conception of Ideas to its limit. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant was willing to resurrect the transcendent Ideas and give them a practical determination as the postulates of the moral law. Deleuze's own project follows an initiative inaugurated by Salomon Maimon, who was the first post-Kantian to insist that Kant's own philosophy of immanence could only be completed through a return to the work of Hume, Spinoza, and Leibniz. For Deleuze, Ideas are immanent within experience because their real objects are *problematic* structures, that is, multiplicities constituted by converging and diverging series of singularities-events. In Kant, it is only the transcendent form of the Self that guarantees the connection of a series (the categorical "and . . . and"); the transcendent form of the World that guarantees the convergence of continuous causal series that can be extended (the hypothetical "if . . . then"); and the transcendent form of God that guarantees disjunction in its exclusive or limitative use (the disjunctive "either . . . or"). Freed from these appeals to transcendence, Deleuze argues, Ideas finally take on a purely immanent status, and the Self, the World, and God share a common death. "The divergence of the affirmed series forms a 'chaosmos' and no longer a World; the aleatory point which traverses them forms a counter-self, and no longer a self; disjunction poses as a synthesis exchanges its theological principle of diabolic principle . . . . The Grand Canyon of the world, the 'crack' of the self, and the dismembering of God" (*Logic of Sense*, p. 176).

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze will develop a set of formal criteria for characterizing Ideas in this purely immanent sense: difference, repetition, singularity, problematic, multiplicity, event, virtuality, series, convergence and divergence, zones of indiscernibility, and so on. *Difference and Repetition*, in this sense, presents a new conception of the *dialectic*. Platonism is dominated by the idea of establishing a criterion of selection between the thing itself and its simulacra: "Plato gave the establishment of difference as the supreme goal of the dialectic" (DR, p. 67). But difference here remains an *external* difference between the authentic and the inauthentic; Platonism is able to "make the difference" only by erecting a model of the Same that assesses differences by their degree of resemblance to a transcendent Idea. In Deleuze's inverted Platonism, however, the distribution of these concepts is changed. If the difference between the thing and its simulacra is rendered indiscernible, then difference becomes *internal* to the thing itself (at the same

time that its resemblance is externalized). Difference no longer lies between things and simulacra, since they are the Same; rather, difference is internal to things (things are themselves simulacra). What is required is thus a pure Idea of difference, an Idea that is *immanent* in things themselves. The immanent Idea is no longer a pure quality, as in Plato, but rather "the reason behind qualities" (DR, p. 57). Deleuze describes his rejuvenated Platonism in explicit terms: "Every object, every thing, must see its own identity swallowed up in difference, each being no more than a difference between differences. Difference must be shown *differing* . . . . The object must therefore be in no way identical, but torn asunder in a difference in which the identity of the object as seen by a seeing subject vanishes. Difference must become the element, the ultimate unity; it must therefore refer to other differences which never identify it but rather differenciate it" (DR, p. 56). This immanent theory of Ideas constitutes what Deleuze calls a "transcendental empiricism." Identity and resemblance still persist, but they are now merely effects produced by the differential Idea. Difference, Deleuze writes, "produces an image of identity as though this were the *end* of the different. It produces an image of resemblance as the external *effect* of 'the disparate' . . . . However, these are precisely a simulated identity and resemblance . . . . It is always differences that resemble one another, which are analogous, opposed or identical: difference is behind everything, *but behind difference there is nothing*" (DR, p. 301/57).

8. Figures of an inverted Platonism

Once the theory of Ideas is reconceived as both immanent and differential, the Platonic dialectic can be taken up anew: "*each moment of difference must then find its true figure*: selection, repetition, ungrounding, the question–problem complex" (DR, p. 68, emphasis added). Our final task is to analyze the function these four figures play in Deleuze's inverted Platonism, and the link they have to Deleuze's theory of immanent Ideas.

8.1. The question–problem complex

First, Deleuze pursues his inverted Platonism by carrying out his critique at the level of what he calls the "question–problem complex" (DR, p. 66). In archaic myth, there is always a task to be performed, a riddle to be solved: the oracle is questioned, but the oracle's response is itself a problem. In Plato, this question–problem complex reappears in a new form: the appeal to the Idea as a criteria of selection appears in the dialogues as the response to a particular *form of question*. "The idea, the discovery of the Idea, is not

separable from a certain type of question. The Idea is first of all an 'objectity' [*objectité*] that corresponds, as such, to a way of posing questions."[53] In Plato, this questioning appears primarily in the form, What is. . .? [*ti estin*?].[54] Plato wanted to oppose this major form of the question to all other forms – such as Who? Which one? How many? How? Where? When? In which case? From what point of view? – which are criticized as being minor and vulgar questions of opinion that express confused ways of thinking. When Socrates, for instance, asks "What is beauty?" his interlocutors almost always seem to answer by citing "the one that is beautiful." Socrates triumphs: one cannot reply to the question "What is beauty?" by citing *examples* of the beautiful, by noting *who* is beautiful ("a young virgin"), just as one cannot answer the question "What is justice?" by pointing to *where* or *when* there is justice, and one cannot reach the essence of the dyad by explaining *how* "two" is obtained, and so on. To the question "What is beauty?" one must not point to beautiful things, which are only beautiful accidentally and according to becoming, but to Beauty itself, which is nothing but beautiful, that which is beautiful in its being and essence. Socrates ridicules those who are content to give examples rather than attain Essences. The question "What is. . .?" thus presupposes a particular way of thinking that points one in the direction of essence, it is for Socrates *the* question of essence, the *only* question capable of discovering the Idea.[55]

One of Deleuze's most constant themes is that the critique of philosophers must take place at this level of questions or problems. "A philosophic theory," he wrote in his first book, "is a developed question, and nothing other. By itself, in itself, it consists not in resolving a problem, but in developing *to its limit* the necessary implications of a formulated question. It shows us what things are, what they would have to be, supposing that the question is a good and rigorous one. To place in question means to subordinate, to submit things to the question in such a way that, in this constrained and forced submission, they reveal an essence, a nature. To criticize the question means to show under what conditions it is possible and well-posed, that is, how things would not be what they are if the question were not posed in that way. Which is to say that these two operations are one and the same; or if you prefer, there is no critique of solutions, but only a critique of problems."[56] Thus the reversal of Platonism necessarily implies a critique of the question "What is. . .?"; for while it is certainly a blunder to cite an example of something beautiful when asked "What is beauty?", it is less certain that the question "What is. . .?" is a legitimate and well-formulated question, *even and above all for discovering essence*.

Indeed, already in Plato himself, the Socratic method only animates the early "aporetic" dialogues, precisely because the question "What is. . .?"

prejudges the Idea as a simple and abstract essence, which is then obliged to comprehend the non-essential, and to comprehend it *in its essence*, which leads these dialogues into inextricable aporias. This is perhaps because the primary purpose of these early elenchic dialogues is preparative – their aim is to silence empirical responses in order to open up the region of the Idea *in general*, while leaving it to others to determine it *as* an Idea or as a problem. When Socratic irony is no longer taken *à la lettre*, when the dialectic is no longer confused with its propadeutic, it becomes something serious and positive, and assumes other forms of questioning: Which one? in the *Statesman* and the *Phaedrus*, as we have seen; How many? in the *Philebus*; Where? and When? in the *Sophist*; In what sense? in *Parmenides*. The "minor" questions of the sophists, Deleuze argues, were the result of a worked out method, a whole sophistic art that was opposed to the Platonic dialectic and implied *an empirical and pluralistic conception of essence*, no longer as a foundation, but as an event or a multiplicity. "No doubt, if one insists, the word 'essence' might be preserved, but only on condition of saying that the essence is precisely accident, the event . . . . The events and singularities of the Idea do not allow any positing of an essence as 'what the thing is'" (DR, p. 191). Even in the Platonic texts, such a conception of the Idea was prefigured by the sophist Hippias, "he who refuses essences and yet is not content with examples" (NP, p. 76). The fact is that the question "What is. . .?" poses the problem of essence in a blind and confused manner. Nietzsche wanted to replace the question "What is. . .?" with "Who is. . .?": rather than posing the question, "What is truth?" he asks, "*Who* is in search of truth? What do those who ask 'What is truth?' really want? What type of will is being expressed in them?"[57] Similarly, when we ask "What is beauty?" we are asking, "From what viewpoint do things appear beautiful?" – and something that does not appear beautiful to us, from what viewpoint would it become so? Where and When? (NP, p. 75–79). If the sophists must be reproached, it is not for having utilized inferior forms of questioning, but for their inability to have determined the conditions within which they take on their transcendental meaning and their ideal sense, beyond empirical examples (MD, p. 92).

Indeed, Deleuze suggests that if one considers the history of philosophy, one will in fact search in vain for a philosopher who was satisfied with the question "What is. . .?" Aristotle's questions "*ti to on*?" and "*tis he ousia*?" do not signify "What is being?" or "What is substance?" but rather "*Which* [things] are beings?" ["*Qui, l'étant*?"] (DR, p. 244n). Kant asked "What is an object?" but only within the framework of a more profound question, "*How* is this possible?" When Leibniz was content to ask "What is. . .?" he only obtained definitions that he himself considered nominal; when he attained real definitions, it was because of questions like "How?" "From what point of

view?" "In which case?" Even Heidegger, when he formulated the question of Being, insisted that we can only gain access to Being by asking, not "What is Being?" but rather "*Who* is it?" (Dasein).[58] If Hegel took the question "What is?" seriously, it was because of his theological prejudices, since "the answer to 'What is X?' is always God as the locus of the combinatory of abstract possibilities" (DR, p. 188). Deleuze's pluralist art does not necessarily deny essence, but it makes it depend in all cases upon the spatio-temporal and material coordinates of a problematic Idea that is purely *immanent* to experience, and that can *only* be determined by questions such as Who? How? Where and When? How many? From what viewpoint? and so on. These "minor" questions are those of the accident, the inessential, of multiplicity, of difference – in short, of the event (problematics as opposed to theorematics).

8.2. Repetition

Second, in an inverted Platonism, the notion of *repetition* can be said to assume an autonomous power along with that of *difference* (hence the title of Deleuze's magnum opus). Platonism relies on what Deleuze calls a "naked" model of repetition (representation): the copy repeats the identity of the ideal model as the first term in a hierarchical series (just as in archaic religion, ritual is said to repeat myth). Naked repetition thus presupposes a mechanical or brute repetition of the Same: it is founded on an ultimate or originary instance or first time (A), which is then repeated a second, third, fourth time, and so on (A′, A″, A‴, etc.). In cases of psychic repetition, this originary term is subject to disguises and displacements, which are secondary yet necessary. In Freud, for instance, our adult loves "repeat" our childhood love for the mother, but our original maternal love is repressed and disguised in these subsequent loves by various mechanisms of condensation (metonymy) and displacement (metaphor). I repeat because I repress (amnesia), and the task of therapy, through transference, is to recover this hidden origin (not to eliminate repetition, but to verify the authentic repetitions). In Plato, the form of time is introduced into thought under the category of reminiscence (anamnesis). The ultimate term or model is the Idea, but since Plato is unable to assign an empirical moment in the past when the Idea was present, he invokes an originary moment: the Idea has been seen, but in another life, in a mythical present (e.g. the circulation of souls in the *Phaedrus*). If to learn is to remember, it is because the real movement of learning implies a distinction in the soul between a "before" and an "after": there is a first time, in which we forget what we knew, and a second time in which we recover what we have forgotten.[59] In either case, bare repetition refers back to a former present, whether empirical or mythical, which has a prior identity and provides the "thing"

to be repeated. It is this originary identity, now lost or forgotten, that conditions the entire process of repetition, and in this sense remains independent of it.

But the question Deleuze poses is the following: are the disguises and variations, the masks and costumes, something added secondarily "over and above" the original term, or are they on the contrary "the internal genetic elements of repetition itself, its integral and constituent parts"? (DR, p. 17). In this case, we would no longer have a naked repetition of the Same but a "clothed" repetition of the Different. In Proust's novel *In Search of Lost Time*, the hero's various loves (for Gilberte, Mme. de Guermantes, Albertine) indeed form a series in which each successive love adds its minor differences and contrasting relations to the preceding loves. (Indeed, each particular love itself assumes a serial form – beginning, course, termination – in which which the hero first explicates the hidden world enveloped in his lover, and then retraces his steps in forgetting her.) But in Proust, the series of loves does not refer back to the hero's mother: the childhood love for his mother is *already* a repetition of other adult loves (Proust's hero replays with his mother Swann's passion for Odette), and the mother's love in turn refers to repetitions he has not himself experienced. There is no first term in what is repeated that can be isolated from the series. My parents are not the ultimate terms of my individual subjectivity, but rather the middle terms of a much larger intersubjectivity. At the limit, the series of all our loves transcends our experience, and links up with repetitions that are not our own, thereby acceding to a transubjective reality. The personal series of our loves thus refers both to a more vast transpersonal series and to more restricted series constituted by each love in particular.[60]

What then is being repeated throughout these series? "What is this content which is affected or 'modified' in the third form of time?"[61] In clothed repetition, what is repeated is not a prior identity or originary sameness, but rather a virtual object or event (an "object = x") which, in Lacan's terminology, is always displaced in relation to itself and has no fixed identity. The repeated object is *a difference that differentiates itself in being repeated*.[62] There is indeed an essence that governs the series of our loves, but this essence, Deleuze insists, "is always difference," and this difference differs from itself every time it is repeated.[63] The variations, in other words, do not come from without, but express differential mechanisms which belong to the essence and origin of what is repeated. There is not an originary "thing" (model) which could eventually be uncovered behind the disguises, displacements, and illusions of repetition (copies); rather, *disguise and displacement are the essence of repetition itself*, which is in itself an original and positive principle. "Repetition is constituted only with and through the *disguises* which affect the terms

and relations of the real series, but it is so because it depends upon the virtual object as an immanent instance which operated above all by *displacement* . . . . What is displaced and disguised in the series cannot and must not be identified, but exists and acts as the differenciator of difference."[64] The clothed repetition of an inverted Platonism must be thus between distinguished from the naked repetitions (representation) of Platonism itself. "*Re*-petition opposes *re*-presentation: the prefix changes it meaning, since in the latter case difference is said only in relation to the identical, while in the former it is the univocal which is said of the different . . . . When the identity of things dissolves, being escapes to attain univocity, and begins to revolve around the different" (DR, p. 67). Temporally, the differential object $= x$ refers neither to an empirical moment or a mythical moment, but belongs essentially to the past, and as such is unrememberable in itself: what is repeated can never be represented in the present, but it always disguised in the roles and masks it produces. Clothed repetition, in other words, does not refer to something underneath the masks, but rather is formed from one mask to the other, in a movement of perpetual differentiation.

8.3. Ungrounding

Third, these two immanent principles of difference and repetition can be said to come together in the notion of an "ungrounding," a *sans-fond*. Plato saw chaos as a contradictory state that must be subject to order or law from the outside: the Demiurge subjugates a rebellious matter, imposing on it the effect of the Same. He thus reduced the Sophist to contradiction, to that supposed state of chaos, the lowest power and last degree of participation. In reality, however, the Sophist is not the being (or non-being) of contradiction, nor the being of the negative; rather, the Sophist is the one who raises everything to the level of simulacra – that is, to the level of difference – and who maintains and affirms them in that state. Far from being a new foundation, the simulacrum allows no installation of a foundation-ground; rather, it swallows up all foundations, it assures a universal collapse, an "un-founding" [*effondement*], but as a positive event, a "gay science." The Platonic project of opposing the cosmos to chaos finds itself replaced by the immanent identity of chaos and cosmos themselves, the "chaosmos." There is no longer a thread to lead us out of Plato's cave, to inaugurate our ascent toward the transcendent Idea: "Behind every cave," writes Nietzsche, "there is, there must necessarily be, a still deeper cave – a more comprehensive, stranger, richer world beyond the surface, an abyss beneath every bottom, beneath every 'foundation.'"[65] "By 'ungrounding,'" Deleuze comments, "we should understand the freedom of the non-mediated ground, the discovery of a ground behind every other ground, the relation between the

groundless and the ungrounded, the immediate reflection of the formless and the superior form which constitutes the eternal return" (DR, p. 67). Deleuze thus links the immanent identity of cosmos and chaos with Nietzsche's concept of the eternal return – the third form of repetition, beyond both naked and clothed repetition. The eternal return "is not an external order imposed upon the chaos of the world; on the contrary, the eternal return is the internal identity of the world and of chaos, the Chaosmos" (DR, p. 299). If Plato reduced the simulacrum to the lowest power and last degree of participation, the eternal return raises the simulacrum to the highest power, the '*n*th' power. The '*n*th' power does not pass through varying degrees of participation (second, third …), but rather is immediately affirmed of chaos itself in order to constitute the highest power. Difference itself is a plastic and nomadic principle that operates beyond or beneath forms themselves; it is a principle that is "contemporaneous with the process of individuation, no less capable of dissolving and destroying individuals that of constituting them" (DR, p. 38). The eternal return is the form of repetition that affirms difference itself, and raises it to the highest power. "Repetition in the eternal return appears as the peculiar power of difference, and the displacement and disguise of that which repeats only reproduce the divergence and the decentering of the difference in a single movement of *diaphora* or transport. The eternal return affirms difference, it affirms dissemblance and disparateness, chance, multiplicity, and becoming" (DR, p. 300).

8.4. Selection

Finally, the project of selection takes on a new form as well.[66] The Platonic dialectic is dominated by the idea of establishing a criterion of selection between the thing itself and its simulacra. "The question," Deleuze writes, "is whether such a reaction [against Platonism] abandons the project of a selection among rivals, or on the contrary, as Spinoza and Nietzsche believed, draws up *completely different methods of selection*. Such methods would no longer concern claims as acts of transcendence, but the manner in which an existing being is filled with immanence . . . . Selection no longer concerns the claim, but power" (ECC, p. 137). This is what distinguishes the *moral* vision of the world (Plato, Kant) from an *ethical* vision of the world (Spinoza, Nietzsche). If morality defines any set of "constraining" rules that consists in *judging* actions or beings by relating them to transcendent values, ethics defines those sets of "facilitative" rules that *evaluates* what do or think according to the immanent mode of existence it implies. What would these immanent methods entail? The selective difference, can no longer be an external difference (between true and false claimants), but must depend on an internal difference (between

active and reactive/passive power). The selection, in short, must be based on the purely immanent criterion of a thing's *power* or capacities, that is, by the manner in which it actively deploys its power by going to the limit of what it can to, or on the contrary, by the manner in which it is cut off from its capacity to act. An immanent *ethical* difference (good/bad) is in this way substituted for the transcendent *moral* opposition (Good/Evil). The "bad" is an exhausted and degenerating mode of existence that judges life from the perspective of its sickness, that devaluates life in the name of "higher" values (the True, the Good, the Beautiful). The "good" is an overflowing, ascending, and exceptional form of existence, a type of being that is able to transform itself depending on the forces it encounters, always increasing its power to live, always opening new possibilities of life.[67] This ethical difference is internal to the existing being, and requires no appeal to transcendent criteria. "Only the philosophies of pure immanence escape Platonism," writes Deleuze, "from the Stoics to Spinoza or Nietzsche."[68]

9. Exuent simulacra

Deleuze summarizes these contrasts between the copy and the simulacrum – between Platonism and inverted Platonism – by inviting us to consider two formulas: "Only that which resembles differs" and "Only differences can resemble each other." The first is an exact definition of the world as an icon; it bids us to think of difference only in terms of similarity, or a previous identity, which become the conditions of difference (Plato). The second defines the world of simulacra; it posits the world itself as a phantasm or simulacrum, inviting us to think of similarity and even identity as the result of a fundamental disparity, products or effects of a primary difference, or a primary system of differences (Nietzsche). "What we have to ask," writes Deleuze, "is whether these two formulas are simply two ways of speaking that do not change much; or if they are applied to completely different systems; or if, being applied to the same systems (at the limit, to the system of the World), they signify two incompatible interpretations of unequal value, one of which is capable of changing everything."[69] Deleuze's analysis of the simulacrum entails more than a reading of Platonism; it also constitutes one of the fundamental problems of contemporary thought. "Modern thought," Deleuze writes in the preface to *Difference and Repetition*, "was born out of the failure of representation, as the loss of identities, and the discovery of all the forces that were acting under the representation of the identical. The modern world is one of simulacra . . . . All identities are only simulated, produced like an 'optical effect' by a more profound play [*jeu*] which is that of difference and

repetition. *We would like to think difference in itself, and the relation of the different with the different, independent of the forms of representation that lead it back to the Same*."[70] Deleuze's entire philosophical project can be seen as an explication of this declaration of intent.

An assessment of Deleuze's theory of Ideas (which passes through a reappraisal of Kant as well as Plato) lies beyond the scope of this paper. It was initially through his reading of Plato that Deleuze was able to pose the problem that lies at the genesis of his theory of Ideas (the problem of simulacra), and to indicate the role that the overturning of Platonism plays in his thought. However, there is a coda to this story. After the publication of *Difference and Repetition* (1968), the concept of the simulacrum more or less disappears from Deleuze's work in favor of the concept of the *agencement* or "assemblage." "It seems to me that I have completely abandoned the notion of the simulacrum," Deleuze noted in 1993.[71] There seem to be two reasons for this evolution. On the one hand, the notion that things simulate a transcendent Idea has a meaning only in the context of Platonism. In Deleuze's own ontology, things no longer "simulate" anything, but rather "actualize" immanent Ideas that are themselves real, though virtual. Deleuze thus uses the notion of the simulacrum to pose the Nietzschean problem of "anti-Platonism" within Plato himself, but then drops the notion as he forges his own ontological terminology. In Deleuze's own work, the concept of the simulacrum is ultimately replaced by the concept of the assemblage, and the process of simulation is more properly characterized as the process of actualization (or even more precisely, the complex process of "different/ciation"). On the other hand, Deleuze does not ascribe to Greek thought the importance that one finds in Nietzsche (for whom post-Greek thought was little more than the history of a long error)[72] or Heidegger (who tended to fetishize Greek and German language and thought). Nietzsche said that a truth never reveals itself immediately, at its birth, but only in its maturation. Similarly, Deleuze's philosophical heroes, so to speak, tend to be found, not at the origins of philosophical thought (Socrates, Plato), but in its maturation in the seventeenth-century (Spinoza, Leibniz). After *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*, Plato's work does not receive a sustained discussion in Deleuze's writings until *What is Philosophy?*. In this sense, Deleuze's sketch of Nietzsche's anti-Platonism serves as a propadeutic endeavor whose primary role is to outline the motivations of Deleuze's own philosophical project. Finally, one could say that, as the concept of the simulacrum disappeared from Deleuze's writings, it was taken up by other writers (such as Baudrillard) and taken in a different direction, with different coordinates and in response to different problematics. Concepts, in this sense, have their own autonomy and history that goes beyond the diversity of their adherents.

Notes

1. See, for instance, Pierre Klossowski, "Sacred and Mythical Origins of Certain Practices of the Women of Rome" [1968], in *Diana at her Bath and The Women of Rome*, tr. Sophie Hawkes (Boston: Eridanos Press, 1990), pp. 132–138, as well as Jean–François Lyotard's commentaries (notably on the Augustine–Varro debate) in *Libidinal Economy* [1974], tr. Iain Hamilton Grant (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 66–76. In Klossowski, a *phantasm* is an obsessive but uncommunicable image produced within us by the unconscious forces of our impulsive life; a *simulacrum* is a reproduction of the phantasm that attempts to simulate (necessarily inadequately) this invisible agitation of the soul in a literary work, in a picture or a sculpture, or in a philosophical concept. Klossowski's concept of the simulacrum thus has very different components than those assigned to the concept by Deleuze.
2. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, tr. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) (hereafter, DR), p. 299, tr. mod.
3. See Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, tr. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), esp. "The Precession of Simulacra," pp. 1–42. For an analysis of Baudrillard's conception of simulacra, see Douglas Kellner, *Jean Baudrillard: From Marxism to Postmodernism and Beyond* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), pp. 76–84.
4. Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, tr. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995) (hereafter, N), p. 31.
5. See Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, tr. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale; ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990) (hereafter, LS), which includes Deleuze's well-known article "Plato and the Simulacrum" as an appendix. This article itself is a revised version of an earlier piece entitled "Renverser le platonisme," which first appeared in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 71, no. 4 (Oct–Dec 1966), pp. 426–438; an English translation by Heath Massey is included as an appendix to Leonard Lawlor, *Thinking Through French Philosophy: The Being of the Question* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), pp. 163–177, under the title "Reversing Platonism (Simulacra)" (hereafter, RP).
6. Nietzsche, *Grossoktavausgabe* (Leipzig, 1905 ff.), Vol. 9, p. 190, as cited in Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche* Vol. I: *The Will to Power as Art* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 154.
7. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol. I: *The Will to Power as Art*, pp. 151–152. Heidegger himself analyzes Nietzsche's anti-platonism in terms of the "raging discordance" between truth and art (see, pp. 151–220).
8. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, tr. Walter Kaufman, in *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking Press, 1954), pp. 485–486.
9. Deleuze, *Abécédaire*, "H as in 'History of Philosophy'" (overview by Charles J. Stivale available on-line at <http://www.langlab.wayne.edu/Romance/FreDeleuze.html>.)
10. See, above all, Jean-Pierre Vernant, *The Origins of Greek Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), and Marcel Detienne, *The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece*, tr. Janet Lloyd (New York: Zone Books, 1999), esp. Ch. 5, "The Process of Secularization" (in French, *laïcisation*), both of whom link the advent of "rational" thought to the structure of the Greek *polis*, and explore the complex relations of philosophy to its precursors. Pierre Vidal–Naquet provides a helpful overview of the debates in "Greek Rationality

and the City," in *The Black Hunter: Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World*, tr. Andrew Szegedy-Maszak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 249–262.

11. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) (hereafter, WP), pp. 86–88. On the distinction between the state and the city as social formations, see Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, tr. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987) (hereafter, TP), pp. 432–433.

12. On the spatial organization of the Greek polis, see Jean–Pierre Vernant, *Myth and Thought among the Greeks* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), Part 3, esp. Ch. 8, "Space and Political Organization in Ancient Greece," pp. 212–234. On relations of rivalry, see Jean–Pierre Vernant, "City–State Warfare," in *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece* (New York: Zone Books, 1990), esp. pp. 29/41–42.

13. This is the theme of Michel Foucault's *The Use of Pleasure*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985). Foucault argues that, within this agonistic field of power relations, the Greeks invented a new and specific form of power relation which he termed "subjectivation" (the relation of oneself to oneself), whose historical variations constituted the object of his research in last two volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, and of which sexuality or erotics constituted only a part.

14. We are here drawing on the political theory that Deleuze and Guattari develop in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, in which they sketch out a typology of different social formations ("primitive" societies, cities, states, capitalism, war machines) and the correlative "images of thought" they imply. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, tr. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking Press, 1977), pp. 139–271, and TP, pp. 351–473.

15. Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981) (hereafter, NP), pp. 5–6/107. See also Alexandre Kojève, "Tyranny and Wisdom," in Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny* (New York: Free Press, 1963), p. 156. Nietzsche adds that although the early philosophers could not help but adopt the mask of the wise man or priest, this strategy proved decisive for philosophy, since the philosopher increasingly came to adopt that mask as his own.

16. WP, p. 9, tr. mod. This concept of the "friend" is explored by Deleuze and Guattari in their introduction to *What is Philosophy?*. See also N, pp. 162–163; Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, tr. Sean Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), pp. 100–103; and Gilles Deleuze, *Périclès et Verdi* (Paris: Minuit, 1988), p. 16.

17. The important notion of "Conceptual Personae" is developed by Deleuze and Guattari in Ch. 3 of *What is Philosophy?*, pp. 61–83. See also Vernant, *Origins*, pp. 102–118.

18. Jean–Pierre Faye, *La raison narrative* (Paris: Balland, 1990), pp. 15–18: "It took a century for the word 'philosophers,' no doubt invented by Heraclitus of Ephesus, to find its correlate in the word 'philosophy,' no doubt invented by Plato the Athenian. The first philosopher were foreigners, but philosophy is Greek."

19. The word "claimant" translates the French *prétendant*, which can also mean "pretender," "suitor," or even "candidate." Its translation as "claimant" emphasizes the relation of the *prétendant* to its *prétention* ("claim"), but loses the connotations associated with the words "pretender" and "pretentious," which are also present in the French.

20. Gilles Deleuze, "Plato, the Greeks," in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, tr. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) (hereafter, ECC), p. 137.

21. See Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, I, p. 31, and *Posterior Analytics*, II, p. 5/13, along with Deleuze's comments in LS, 254 and DR, pp. 59–60.

22. Plato, *Statesman*, 303 d–e. On the distinction between *antiphasis* and *amphisbetesis*, see DR, p. 60, and LS, p. 293.

23. DR, pp. 61–62. On the relation between Platonism and archaic religion, see Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954). Eliade characterizes archaic religion by "the repetition of mythic archetypes" and the "symbolism of the center," and notes its explicit parallels with Platonism: "It could be said that this 'primitive' ontology has a Platonic structure; and in that case Plato could be regarded as the outstanding philosopher of 'primitive mentality,' that is, as the thinker who succeeded in giving philosophic currency to the modes of life and behavior of archaic humanity" (p. 34).

24. Deleuze and Guattari argue that philosophy is a discipline that consists in the creation of concepts, but Plato's concept of the Idea is an illuminating example of the complexity of this claim. Plato says that one must contemplate the Ideas, but *it was first of all necessary for him to create the concept of the Idea*. In this sense, writes Deleuze, Plato teaches the opposite of what he actually does: "Plato creates the concept of the ideas, but he needs to posit them as representing the uncreated that precedes them. He places time in the concept, but this time must be the anterior. He constructs the concept, but as testifying to the preexistence of an objectity, under the form of a difference in time capable of measuring the distance or proximity of the possible constructor. This is because, in Platonic plane, truth is posited as presupposed, as already there" (WP, p. 29).

25. See DR, p. 85: "Beyond the lover and beyond the mother, coexistent with the one and contemporary with the other, lies the never-lived reality of the virgin."

26. For Deleuze's interpretation of the Neo-platonic heritage, see "Les plages d'immanence," in *L'art des confins: Mélanges offerts àMaurice de Gandillac*, ed. Annie Cazenave and Jean-François Lyotard (Paris: PUF, 1985), pp. 79–81; and "Immanence and the historical components of expression," in Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, tr. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1990), pp. 169–186.

27. In Augustine, for example, "absolute" dissimulation implies nothingness; thus the last of beings, if it is not nothingness, is at least an illusory simulacrum. See Etienne Gilson, *Introduction àl'étude de saint-Augustin* (Paris: Vrin, l929), p. 268.

28. On height, depth, and surface as orientations of thought, see LS, Series 18, "Of the Images of Philosophers," pp. 127–133.

29. Plato, *Sophist*, 268b.

30. Plato, *Sophist*, 236c: "These then are two sorts of image-making [*eidolopoiïke*] – the art of making likenesses [*eikones*], and phantastic or the art of making appearances [*phantasmata*]." See also *Sophist*, pp. 264c–268d; and *Republic*, Book 10, 601d ff.

31. LS, 296. Jean-Pierre Vernant has questioned the importance Deleuze ascribes to this distinction in "The Birth of Image," in *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays*, ed. Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 164–185, esp. p. 169. But he nonetheless supports the thrust of Deleuze's reading when he says that the problem of the *Sophist* is "to articulate what an image is, not in its seeming but in its being, to speak not of the seeming of appearance but of *the essence of seeming, the being of semblance*" (p. 182).

32. Michel Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 167. Deleuze employs the Homeric image in LS, p. 254.

33. DR, p. 128. For a reading of Deleuze's work along naturalistic lines, see Alberto Gualandi, *Deleuze* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1998). Gualandi argues that, for Deleuze, the task

of a true philosophy of Nature would be "to eliminate any trace of transcendence, and at the same time, to give back to the nature its authentic depth, the becoming and the virtualities that are inherent in it, the being that is immanent to it" (p. 36). For Nietzsche, this naturalistic project found its precursor in Heraclitus; for Deleuze, its great ancient representative was Lucretius, whose naturalism Deleuze analyzes in his article, "Lucretius and the Simulacrum" (in LS, pp. 266–279): "To distinguish in men what amounts to myth and what amounts to Nature, and in Nature itself, what to distinguish what is truly infinite from what is not – such is the practical and speculative object of Naturalism. The first philosopher is a naturalist: he speaks about nature, rather than speaking about the gods. His condition is that his discourse shall not introduce into philosophy *new myths* that would deprive Nature of all its positivity" (p. 278). The latter is clearly a reference to Plato.

34. On the use of the term "representation," see Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), which identifies a "classic" world of representation in the 17th-century and outlines its limitations. Deleuze's characterization of Platonism bears certain affinities with this statement of Richard Rorty's: "Philosophy's central concern is to be a general theory of representation, a theory which will divide culture up into areas which will represent reality well, those which represent it less well, and those which do not represent it at all (despite their pretense to do so)." Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 3.

35. *Philebus,* p. 24d. On this theme, see LS, Series 1, "On pure becoming," pp. 1–3.

36. Stanley Rosen has criticized Deleuze's reading of the *Sophist*, noting that "an image that does not resemble X cannot be an image of X." But Rosen here collapses Deleuze's distinction: an "image" can be either a *resemblance* (a true copy or icon that participates internally in the model) or a mere *semblance* (a false simulacrum or phantasy that feigns a merely external reflection). Though their usages overlap, these English terms nonetheless indicate the essential distinction between an icon and a simulacrum that Deleuze is attempting to establish. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines resemblance as "the quality of being like or similar. . . . A likeness, image, representation, or reproduction of some person or thing" (several of the historical examples in the OED refer, significantly, to the prelapsarian state of creation). Semblance, on the contrary, is defined as "the fact of appearing to view . . . . An appearance or outward seeming *of* something which is not actually there or of which the reality is different from its appearance." Rosen's comment, it seems, would tend to collapse such terms as "image," "resemblance," "semblance," and even "mimesis" into mere synonymy. See Stanley Rosen, *Plato's Sophist: The Drama of Original and Image* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 172–173.

37. Jacques Derrida, in his essay "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 61–171, locates a similar trinity at the heart of platonism: the father of logos, logos itself, writing. Much of Derrida's early work focused on the Platonic conception of "writing" for precisely this reason: *writing is a simulacrum*, a false claimant in that it tries to capture the logos through violence and trickery without going through the father. In LS, p. 297, Deleuze finds the same figure in the *Statesman*: the Good as the father of the law, the law itself, constitutions. Good constitutions are copies, but they become simulacra the moment they violate or usurp the law by evading the Good.

38. The simulacrum, in short, is a *differential system*, "a system where difference is related to difference *through* difference itself" (DR, p. 277). It is precisely such systems that Deleuze analyzes in *Difference and Repetition*.

39. Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1978), esp. pp. 88–89.

40. Augustine, *Concerning The City of God Against the Pagans*, tr. Henry Bettenson (New

York: Penguin Books, 1984), esp. Book VI. Klossowski's text "*Diana at Her Bath*" is explicitly presented as a kind of polytheistic inversion of Augustine's monotheistic *The City of God*; see his commentaries in *Diana at her Bath and The Women of Rome*, pp. 82–84/131–138.

41. On all these themes, see Michel Foucault's important essay on Klossowski, "La Prose d'Acteon," in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, 135 (1964), pp. 444–459.

42. "Reversing Platonism (Simulacra)," pp. 170–171.

43. For a discussion of Roussel's work, see Michel Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986), especially Ch. 2. For Deleuze's analyses, see DR, pp. 22/121, and LS, pp. 39/85. Roussel's language rests not simply on the combinatorial possibilities of language – the fact that language has fewer terms of designation than things to designate, but nonetheless can extract an immense wealth from this poverty – but more precisely on possibility of saying two things with the same word, inscribing a maximum of difference within the repetition of the same word.

44. DR, p. 66. See also p. 301: "The Same, forever decentered, effectively turns around difference only once difference, having assumed the whole of being, applies only to simulacra which have assumed the whole of being."

45. The notion of *mimesis* appears not to have used in discussions of art prior to the fifth-century. Until that time, following Gorgias, the fifth-century founder of the theory of artistic prose, the art of the poet had been regarded as one of "deception" (*apate*), and it is precisely this form of image-making that Plato aims to send into exile. See Vernant, "The Birth of Images," p. 165, and note 2.

46. LS, p. 265. On these points, see Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol. 1: *The Will to Power as Art*, tr. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 162–199.

47. Plato, *Republic*, VII, 523b ff.

48. For an analysis of Warhol's work in this context, see Paul Patton, "Anti-Platonism and Art," in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 141–156.

49. NP, p. 103 (tr. mod.). See Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, "Reason in Philosophy," § 6: "For 'appearance' in this case [the artist] means reality *once more*, only by way of selection, reinforcement, and correction. The tragic artist is no pessimist: he is precisely the one who says Yes to everything questionable, even to the terrible – he is *Dionysian*" (p. 484).

50. ECC, p. 137. Deleuze claims that "only the philosophies of pure immanence escape Platonism – from the Stoics to Spinoza or Nietzsche."

51. See DR 319, note 30. In the *Theaetetus*, for example, Socrates speaks of "two patterns eternally set before humanity, the one blessed and divine, the other godless and wretched" (176e). Similarly, the *Timaeus* (27d–28d) sets before the demiurge two possible models for the creation of the world, and before humanity two possible models for science ("Which of the patterns had the artificer in view when he created the world – the pattern of that which is unchangeable, or of that which is created?"). In *A Thousand Plateaus* (pp. 361–374), Deleuze analyses various "minor" sciences (Archimedean geometry, the physics of the atomists, the differential calculus, etc.) that were based on such a model of becoming. They replaced the hylomorphic model (the static relation of form-matter), which searches for laws by extracting constants, with a hydraulic model (the dynamic relation of material-forces), which placed the variables themselves in a state of continuous variation.

52. See DR, p. 127: "Insinuated throughout the Platonic cosmos, difference resists its yoke . . . . It is as though there were a strange *double* which dogs Socrates' footsteps and haunts

even Plato's style, inserting itself into the repetitions and variations of that style." On the effect that this "double" has on Plato's style, see DR, p. 319, note 29: "Plato's arguments are marked by stylistic reprisals and repetitions which testify to a meticulous attention to detail, as though there were an effort to 'correct' a theme in order to defend it against a neighboring, but dissimilar, theme that is 'insinuating' itself into the first."

53. Gilles Deleuze, "La méthode de dramatisation," in *Bulletin de la Sociétéfrançaise de Philosophie*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (July–Sept. 1967) (hereafter, MD), p. 91. See also DR, p. 64: "Being (what Plato calles the Idea) 'corresponds' to the essence of the problem or the question as such. It is as though there were an 'opening,' a 'gap,' an ontological 'fold' which relates being and the question to one another."

54. On the question "What is...?" in Plato, see Richard Robinson, *Plato's Earlier Dialectic*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), esp. Ch. 5, "Socratic Definition," pp. 49–60.

55. Contemporary "antifoundationalism" implies, at the very least, the rejection of this platonic form of questioning, of this search for a foundational essence. "I cannot characterize my standpoint better," wrote Wittgenstein, "than to say it is opposed to that which Socrates represents in the Platonic dialogues. For if asked what knowledge is (*Theatatus* 146a) I would list examples of knowledge, and add the words 'and the like' ..., whereas when Socrates asks the question 'What is knowledge?' he does not even regard it as a *preliminary* answer to enumerate cases of knowledge." Ludwig Wittgenstein, manuscript p. 302, ¶14, as quoted in Garth Hallett, *A Commentary to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 33–34; see also *Philosophical Investigations* ¶65. In general, however, Deleuze was hostile to Wittgenstein's philosophy, which he thought had had a pernicious effect on Anglo–American philosophy; see Deleuze, *Abécédaire*, "W as in Wittgenstein" (see note 9 above).

56. Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, tr. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 119.

57. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, tr. Walter Kaufman (New York: Random House, 1967), §556, p. 301: "The question 'What is that?' is an imposition of meaning from some other viewpoint. 'Essence,' the 'essential nature,' is something perspectival and already presupposes a multiplicity. At the bottom of it there always lies 'What is that for *me*' (for us, for all that lives, etc.)?"

58. See Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, tr. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. 119–120. On all these points, see MD, pp. 91–92/105–106/115; DR, p. 188; NP, pp. 75–78.

59. See DR, pp. 16–19 (on Freud); and pp. 87–88/141–142 (on Plato).

60. On the theme of series in Proust, see Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), Ch. 6, "Series and group," pp. 67–83. One of the essential critiques that Deleuze and Guattari level against psychoanalysis is that it reduces the unconscious to the familial coordinates of the primal scene or the oedipal triangle ("daddy–mommy–me"); see, for instance, *Anti-Oedipus,* pp. 97/91: "The father, mother, and the self are directly coupled to the elements of the political and historical situation: the soldier, the cop, the occupier, the collaborator, the radical, the resister, the boss, the boss's wife .... The family is by nature eccentric, decentered .... There is always an uncle from America; a brother who went bad; an aunt who took off with a military man .... The father and mother exist only as fragments ... inductors or stimuli of varying, vague import that trigger processes of an entirely different nature."

61. DR, p. 299.

62. Jacques Lacan develops this theme most famously in his "Seminar on *The Purloined Letter*," tr. Jeffrey Mehlman, *Yale French Studies*, p. 48 (1972), p. 55: "What is hidden is never but what is *missing from its place*, as the call slip puts it when speaking of a volume lost in the library. And even if the book be on an adjacent shelf or in the next slot, it would be hidden there, however visibly it may appear." See also LS, pp. 40–41, which cites a parallel text of Lewis Carroll's.

63. See Deleuze, *Proust and Signs, p. 75: The Complete Text*, tr. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). Chapter six of this book explores the mechanisms of difference and repetition exemplified in Proust's serial conception of love: difference as the law or essence of the series; the repetition of the terms as variation and displacement. In the conclusion of Part I ("The image of thought," pp. 94–102), Deleuze analyzes the the "anti-Greek" image of thought found in Proust, implicitly aligning it with Nietzsche's theme of an "inverted Platonism."

64. DR, p. 105/300.

65. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, tr. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage, 1966), §289/229. See also LS, pp. 129/263.

66. For a discussion of the process of selection in a philosophy of immanence, see Daniel W. Smith, "The place of ethics in Deleuze's Philosophy: Three Questions of Immanence," in *Deleuze and Guattari: New Mappings in Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Heller (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. 251–269.

67. See DR, p. 54: "Nietzsche reproaches all those selection procedures based upon the opposition or conflict with working to the advantage of the average forms and operating to the benefit of the 'large number.' Eternal return alone effects the true selection, because it eliminates the average forms and uncovers 'the superior form of everything that is.'"

68. ECC, p. 127; cf. pp. 41–42 on the immanence of Christ.

69. DR, p. 117; see also LS, pp. 261–262. The two formulas are derived from Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, tr. Rodney Needham (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), p. 77. Arthur Danto makes a similar point in *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 171: "The paradigm of a philosophical difference is between two worlds, one of which is sheer illusion, as the Indians believed this one is, and the other of which is real in the way we believe this very world is. Descartes' problem of distinguishing waking experience from dream experience is a limited variation of the same question . . . . A world of sheer determinism might be imagined indistinguishable from one in which everything happens by accident. A world in which God exists could never be told apart from one in which God didn't . . . . Carnap would have said that such a choice is meaningless precisely because no observation(s) could be summoned to effect a discrimination . . . . Whatever the case, it is plain that philosophical differences are external to the worlds they discriminate."

70. DR, p. ix, tr. mod. See also DR, 301: "The history of the long error is the history of representation, the history of icons."

71. See Gilles Deleuze, "Lettre-préface," in Jean-Clet Martin, *Variations: La philosophie de Gilles Deleuze* (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 1993), p. 8.

72. See LS, p. 129: "Nietzsche takes little interest in what happened after Plato, maintaining that it was necessarily the continuation of a long decadence."