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> Was it not Plato himself who pointed out the direction
> for the reversal of Platonism?
> ———*Gilles Deleuze,* The Logic of Sense

1. Developing an itinerary: guides and lineages

A single question marks our departure, a question that, while apparently straightforward, has assumed so many shapes and disguises that it would not be unjust to claim it has infected all of Western history. In its current manifestation, however, we will take our cue from Plato in phrasing it thus: What is a Sophist? When Plato first formulated the question in these terms, he well understood that its self-evident simplicity could be deceptive and that its effects might proliferate uncontrollably. As Jacques Derrida comments, "The question of what the Sophists really were is an enormous question" (Olson 17). In Plato's case, attempting to "hunt down" the Sophist led from a disturbing journey through the world of images to an unsettling encounter with the existence of nonbeing.

Of course, the issue of Plato's distaste for sophistry is well-covered ground, so well-covered, in fact, that nearly all contemporary rhetorical scholarship that attempts to assert the value of sophistic rhetoric does so by reproducing an antagonism between sophistry and Platonism (see, e.g., Poulokos, Jarratt, Vickers).[1] A particularly interesting example, simply because it is so persistently skeptical of most conventional assumptions about sophistry, is G. B. Kerford's *The Sophistic Movement*. It is an excellent and careful treatment of sophistry in which he insists on the importance of approaching the Sophists without prior assumptions as to their relationship to the history of thought or politics—something that he shows has been far too prevalent in previous appropriations. Nevertheless, in his treatment of Plato's dialogue the *Sophist,* he writes, "It is clear that [Plato's] character-

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izations in the Sophist constitute an outright condemnation" (5). Given the wealth of readings of different dialogues that express sentiments similar to Kerford's, the antagonistic structure of Platonic-Sophistic relations is apparently quite certain; it is something we know.

It is also true that as a result of the many forays across the terrain of this antagonism, we know a great many other things about the relationship between Plato and sophistry. We know, for instance, that Plato was an idealist who abhorred the Sophist's interest in practical discursive wisdom. We know, as well, that Plato was a reactionary aristocrat who resented the Sophists for selling speeches and encouraging democracy. Without question, the many trips across this oppositional territory have been important expeditions for both Philosophy and Rhetoric, providing each discourse with a sense of its own distinct identity.[2] At very least, the mutual suspicion that often characterizes contemporary relations between these two disciplines is symptomatic of our inheritance of this Platonic mantra.

It is, of course, quite difficult to avoid repeating this mantra of opposition between Philosophy and Rhetoric. Any attempt to champion one of the terms—even the supposedly underprivileged one, Rhetoric—overtly reproduces this opposition. But so too do most efforts to reduce one term to the other (i.e., claims stating that Philosophy is inevitably rhetorical) insofar as they must begin with the assumption that they know what rhetoric is; in other words, they must begin with what may schematically be characterized as a philosophical relation to rhetoric and to philosophy. Said differently, the two common disciplinary strategies that generate the opposition between rhetoric and philosophy, (1) championing the Sophists over Plato and (2) claiming that Plato is rhetorical, both effectively privilege the very notion of philosophy that they are attempting to discredit, i.e., one that is based on the notion of a preexistent, recognizable, and knowable identity, a fundamental truth.

Given the renewed scholarly interest in the Sophists as early rhetoricians, it is curious that very few and very brief rhetorical engagements exist with the Platonic dialogue the *Sophist*—largely, one suspects, either because everyone already "knows" that it contains yet another indictment of sophistry or because it is deemed too philosophical, too concerned with the abstract questions of being and nonbeing. As for philosophical treatments of the dialogue, Martin Heidegger points out that they frequently proceed by separating form from content, focusing entirely on an alleged "main point"—the question of being and nonbeing. As Stanley Rosen argues in his comprehensive study of the dialogue, "the ontological approach

to the Sophist . . . errs in disregarding the dramatic context of the narrowly technical passages" (28). For Rosen, as for Heidegger, such divisions are in no way authorized by the text and actually present the reader with unaccountable difficulties (161). It may prove fruitful to follow Rosen and Heidegger's direction in this, taking the structure of the dialogue—a "search" in which two characters attempt to "track down the Sophist"—as inseparable from any supposed point. Thus, the recognizably performative character of this attempt to track the Sophist through Plato is not only authorized, but required by an engagement with Plato that does not simply want to reproduce the all-too-familiar contemporary distinction between Philosophy and Rhetoric. In other words, rather than merely saying what Plato said (along philosophical lines), or showing how Plato said it (along rhetorical lines), this search will attempt to articulate a third trajectory by doing what Plato did, with the hopes of uncovering some novel relations between the Philosopher and the Sophist.

It is worth noting that even as we must set out along this "antagonistic" course of contemporary readings of Platonism, the very fact that we know Plato, that we can trust in his opposition to sophistry, makes him an ideal guide with whom to pursue the question of the Sophist. No doubt, as Plato consistently shows us through the figure of Socrates, thought always requires a guide; therefore, the character of this guide, his reliability and trustworthiness, will prove integral to any pursuit of the Sophist. In the figure of Plato, we are perhaps fortunate to have a guide whose allegiances we recognize even (or especially) if we do not share those allegiances. In short, we know where Plato stands and can rely upon the stability of this inheritance before we even encounter the dialogue in which he attempts to track down the Sophist—or so it would appear.

For Plato, at least, the pursuit of the Sophist requires a guide of a very different character, one whose figure is far more ambiguous. In the opening lines of the *Sophist,* when the visitor from Elea is introduced, Socrates immediately hesitates, suspicious that this man might not be what he appears. How can we be sure, wonders Socrates, that this man is not a god in disguise who has come to assess the goings of men? After all, he continues, even the philosopher is a shape-shifter, adopting countless masks in his earthly pursuit of wisdom, sometimes assuming the form of a Statesmen, sometimes that of a Sophist, and sometimes that of a madman (216c–d). Plato accentuates Socrates' suspicions by never directly naming our guide, referring to him only as "the Stranger," "Xenos," indicating an alien presence or force. In other words, this figure who will serve as Plato's guide in

tracking down the Sophist is himself unidentifiable; he is nameable only as a figure who, like many of the Sophists, comes from somewhere else. Further, the Stranger readily acknowledges that, in the course of his pursuit, he will, like a Sophist, "shift [his] position to and fro" (242a–b). It may be the case that, through such overt parallels, Plato is indicating that in order to track down the Sophist, we must retain a guide who is himself a Sophist. Thus, we cannot rule out the possibility that retaining Plato as our guide may prove a great deal less stable than we first imagined.

But, as Plato will also repeatedly insist, we cannot allow ourselves to get bogged down by such ambiguity. In order to track down the Sophist, we must be certain not to become paralyzed by apparent contradictions. In Theaetetus's words, we must try to "keep pace with the argument" (224e). From the very start, if we want to move anywhere, we must abandon simple indeterminacy by welcoming this alien figure. This is why the guide's name, Xenos, in addition to resonating with a sense of the unfamiliar and uncertain, also intimates a necessary sense of hospitality (Greek lexicon). This guide is a stranger-friend, or rather, a stranger who must be welcomed as a friend in order to proceed. After all, it would appear that this stranger-friend is not wholly alien. There may be an important sense in which he is familiar. When Theaetetus first introduces the Stranger, he introduces him as one who comes from the lineage (the "genos") of Eleatic scholars, Parmenides and Zeno (216). While Plato will consider the implications of this particular inheritance later, we are, perhaps, relieved to find that, from the beginning, our guide is attributable to a lineage.

This is important for Plato precisely because, in tracking down the Sophist as he does, he is less interested in simple taxonomy than it may appear. As Deleuze points out in his reading of the *Sophist,* the task of taxonomy, of categorizing different species, "is only the superficial aspect" of Plato's obsessive division (254). Instead, the task of tracking down the Sophist is that of distinguishing descent and assigning him to a hereditary line. This is why, in the final words of the dialogue, our guide claims to have successfully distinguished "the blood and lineage which can, with perfect truth, be assigned to the Sophist" (268d).

Indeed, the Sophist's lineage is in question from a number of angles. First, he claims to be a teacher of wisdom, but, as Plato makes clear in the *Protagoras,* the *Gorgias,* and the *Phaedrus,* there is reason to suspect that he may, in fact, be nothing more than a false pretender to this lofty lineage, a counterfeiting thief whose very presence threatens the proper inheritance of wisdom.

Further, unlike other men, the Sophist does not confine himself to claiming a discrete territory for his wisdom. Instead, he claims to possess "the capacity for disputation on any subject whatsoever" (232e). As our guide tells us, such enigmatic claims indicate that this Sophist is "a many sided animal" (226), making him "a very troublesome sort of creature to hunt down" (218d). Not only might he be a false pretender to the throne of wisdom, a thief intent on stealing another's rightful claim, but he is also a pretender who "insinuates himself" everywhere, claiming everyone's property, producing an unbounded social movement. So not only does the Sophist threaten the proper lineage of wisdom, but, as a result of his polymorphous character, he challenges the very integrity of inheritance itself.

In fact, the Stranger's first effort to track the Sophist produces six completely distinct lineages, all of which may be rightfully assigned to the Sophist. Among these multiple claims to inheritances are two that blur any distinction not only between Philosophy and Sophistry, but between the search itself and its object: the Sophist, our stranger-guide tells us, comes from the lineage of (1) purifiers of souls through disputation—a lineage which he also attributes to the Philosopher and (2) hunters of other men—a line of descent which implicates the very effort to hunt down the Sophist in sophistry (231d). These multiple claims to inheritance and their multiple resonances complicate the very possibility of assigning a lineage. It is clearly more difficult than we imagined to distinguish between philosophy and sophistry. But it also seems difficult to distinguish between the Sophist and ourselves—no doubt, as our guide contends, this Sophist is nothing but disruptive to proper filiation.

Of course, Socrates had already made this concern apparent in other dialogues: in the *Protagoras,* he disapprovingly comments that Sophists are forever coaxing sons away from their families and from their filial responsibilities. In the *Apology,* he further describes the Sophist as a figure who steals young men away from the responsibilities and associations of citizenship (19e–20a). As these examples demonstrate, Plato recognizes that the Sophist is intrinsically dangerous to the proper inheritance of both social and familial responsibilities. For this reason, tracking down and apprehending the Sophist means "assigning . . . a lineage" to him, straightening him out before his disregard for the propriety of inheritance enables him to corrupt too many others.

Since we know that one of the characteristics of the Sophist is that he disrupts the decency of lineage, Plato would appear to be offering some stability in the fact that the stranger-guide is "of the genos of Elea" (216),

which is less a geographical location than an indication that this stranger is faithful to the propriety of inheritance. Perhaps it is this comfort that allows Socrates to quickly forget his suspicions and accept that this ambiguous figure must somehow be necessary to the task at hand. Of course, this faithful descendant will soon upend his inheritance by proving one of Parmenides' claims wrong, prompting his own suspicion that he is "turning into a sort of parricide" (241d). It may be that, in welcoming this stranger as a friend, we are welcoming a figure who is more alien than we thought. For our part, we can only hope that our "faithful" stranger-guide will not lead us on a wild goose chase; we are, after all, searching for an unfeathered biped—or so we imagine. . . .

2. Sophistic targets, sophistic topography

What is it that we are really searching for when we undertake to hunt down the Sophist and attach a lineage to him? And if we are not able to answer this question, how will we know when we find him?

Of course, as our guide shows us, to imagine that one knows beforehand what one is looking for is to be deceived, a characteristic of brazen youthfulness (234d–e). As he explains, in order to know a creature such as the Sophist, one must spend a great deal of time living with the "realities which [one] encounters in the actual conduct of life" (234d–e). In other words, in order to know what one is searching for, one must search, confronting whatever one encounters along the way. This is a confusing strategy; not only are we uncertain as to precisely what our stranger-guide is indicating in calling for such "encounters" with reality, but he makes clear from the start that we cannot know what a Sophist is before setting out.[3] We do not have a photograph or some other image of the Sophist that would enable us to recognize him when (and if) we found him. And, as we will soon discover, even if we did possess such an image, we would have good reason to distrust its reliability.

This strategy, however, does not doom our journey to one of aimless drifting. Just because we cannot know our goal in advance does not mean that we will just wander randomly across the terrain. We still have a direction in that we sense a certain polymorphism about our quarry, an apparent malleability which disregards lineages and proliferates uncontrollably. It is, therefore, not paradoxical to assert that refusing to identify the goal of

our search actually focuses its trajectory: because the Sophist may be everywhere, not having a model of him beforehand effectively increases the likelihood of finding him. Thus our guide instructs us that we do have a direction, though we must not know our goal in advance.

But neither do we possess a map of the territory that would allow us to know its topography. Just as in the case of the Sophist himself, we have no preexisting model of the terrain. We do not, for example, possess a list of lineages to which we could refer in the course of our search. Even our guide does not know the ropes here. In fact, he indicates that we have to make the map as we proceed (that, even now, we are doing so). Certainly, this is at least in part necessary so that we can retrace our steps if required. But more important, our guide instructs us that it is the very making of the map that produces the territory we want to cover. The territory must not preexist our mapping; otherwise there would be no reason why dividing that territory into lineages would scare out the allegiances of this Sophist. This is why, on the couple of occasions when Theaetetus hesitates in the face of the Stranger's questions, uncertain of how this stranger-friend wants him to respond, the latter indicates that it makes no difference which path they take (e.g., 222b). Our guide knows quite well that what matters is only that Theaetetus respond and keep the search moving, continuing to track down the Sophist by continuing to produce filial territory.

Admittedly, however, things are beginning to appear increasingly uncertain—and we have only recently set out. We know, for example, that we will be tracking the Sophist across a terrain that is irreducibly sophistic, unable to determine where to go next until we get there (keeping in mind, of course, that the Sophist may be the terrain itself). As our stranger-guide indicates on several occasions, the very movement of tracking the Sophist must be a distinctly exterior movement, composed of a number of accidental encounters. This is why, when searching for the angler, one can happen upon the Sophist (221d–e), or, when searching for the Sophist, one can "stumble unawares" upon the Philosopher (253c): the search itself is internally structured as an encounter with the exteriority of accident.

What now of this stranger-guide who seems to demonstrate increasingly suspicious affiliations with the Sophist? After all, he provides us with no preexisting model of either the Sophist or the terrain, but encourages us to proceed, as it were, blindly, claiming at one point that his "eyes are too dim" to lead the way (232e). At very least, we certainly cannot accept that, as a guide, he is some detached expert who comprehends the field and the task. Instead, he seems, like us, to be an itinerant stranger on a search for

something he does not know beforehand, providing us more with a certain style of movement than with any definitive answers. While the nomadic style of this figure indicates that our search may be a long one, it cannot affect our faith in him as a guide, simply because we can decide only later whether or not he will have been effective. For now, we can note only that we will be tracking the Sophist across a sophistic terrain, led by a guide who may himself be a Sophist—and all without knowing very precisely what this name indicates.

What about ourselves, we who are intent upon this search and upon hunting down the Sophist? Given what we know about the Sophist, we cannot reject the possibility that we need not go far at all in order to track him down, as he might have insinuated himself into us as well. In other words, in our brief trip so far, it appears that things may be as Plato indicates: tracking down the Sophist is, quite possibly, indistinguishable from a becoming-Sophist, a search through which we ourselves are as much at stake as our alleged quarry. But we can't be sure. And we must keep moving.[4]

3. Resembling thought

It's true that we're a little lost now. Our search has so far uncovered a series of unexpected connections: those linking the polymorphous figure of the Sophist to the terrain, to our stranger-guide, and even to ourselves. But these connections haven't really clarified anything about our quarry. Quite the opposite. They seem to have done nothing other than immersed us in a thickening haze of confusion. Perhaps this ambiguity is a necessary condition for tracking the Sophist, but, as our guide consistently demonstrates, we cannot allow such ambiguity to paralyze us. We must keep going.

It may be the case that the connections we have stumbled upon are, in fact, a series of resemblances among different figures. If so, we must be careful that we do not allow this haze of proliferating resemblances to grow so thick that it entirely impedes our vision. In our guide's words, "a cautious man should, above all, be on his guard against resemblances; they are a very slippery sort of thing" (231a). Of course, as Plato shows throughout his dialogues, resemblance is deeply important for thought, enabling the movement from one category to another. Indeed, it would not be an overstatement to claim that resemblance is the very condition of possibility for

Plato's dialectical movement—but Plato reminds us that, even so, resemblance needs to be negotiated carefully for one simple reason: it is structured by an inherently slippery image economy.

We know, for example, that the Sophist "possesses a sort of reputed and apparent knowledge on all subjects, but not the reality" (233c). In other words, the Sophist's knowledge is an image of Real Knowledge, but one that does not truly resemble it. Instead, the Sophist's image of knowledge simply produces the effect of such resemblance: it functions through a resemblance-effect rather than true resemblance. In contrast, the Philosopher's knowledge depicts an image that also produces the effects of resemblance to Real Knowledge, but for very different reasons: his knowledge does truly resemble Real Knowledge.

Both the Sophist's and the Philosopher's knowledge are images insofar as they are derivative of the Original, or the Model (what Plato elsewhere calls the Idea). As images, then, both types are pretenders to the Model's lineage, meaning that, at best, they participate in the Model in a secondary fashion. The Philosopher's knowledge, because it truly resembles the Model, is the true pretender, while the Sophist's knowledge is a false pretender. However, in any given case, the task of distinguishing true resemblances from resemblance-effects is a very difficult one, as both figures' knowledge appears to resemble the Model.

This task of adjudicating between resemblances is made even more "slippery" because not only do both claimants—the Sophist's and the Philosopher's knowledge, in this case—appear to resemble the Model, but they resemble each other as well. As difficult as it will be to decide between these two claims to the Model, it is even more difficult to tell them apart, marking a second-order resemblance between the two claimants, the resemblance between two images. As our guide indicates, both figures are equally difficult to perceive (254a–b), and, further, while searching for one, one may in fact be searching for the other (253c).[5] So powerful is the effect of this particular resemblance that the very dynamic of resemblance itself, and therefore dialectical thought, is at stake. Plato recognizes this, and it is the reason why our stranger-guide pursues the seemingly foreign discussion about the nature of sameness and difference and their relation to reality.[6]

Our stranger-guide indicates, schematically, that resemblance requires that two different things exist, two different and discrete identities, which blend with each other in particular ways and differ from each other in particular ways (260b). In this configuration, both difference and resemblance

must be an effect of a preexisting identity. The resemblance between the sophistic and philosophical claimants troubles this dynamic by introducing the question of whether or not there are, in reality, two different and competing claims, two different preexisting identities. But as we have already seen, from the very beginning of the dialogue, our guide (as well as Socrates) indicates that these identities cannot preexist, but must be tracked down, pursued, elaborated through a certain conceptual/discursive movement. It must therefore be the case that the resemblance between the Sophist and the Philosopher—predicated, as all resemblances must be, on separate and discrete identities—is based on a distinction that is entirely real, but only insofar as it is a product of our own movement, of the map that we and our guide are making. In this case, as the dialogue demonstrates, if resemblance is the condition of possibility of dialectical thought, discursive movement is the condition of possibility of resemblance.

So, as our guide explains, it is a certain discursive movement, a movement that "does not merely name something, but gets you somewhere" (262d), which enables us to get somewhere in our preparations, elaborating two discrete and rival claims of resemblance to the Model. While this discovery hints at the possibility that the very notions of lineages and claimants may be an invention of our quarry, the Sophist, we must remember to be cautious. Even if we recognize that image-identities are a product of a certain style of discursive movement, they nevertheless produce very real effects. Therefore, the problem of resemblance remains: we must still consider how to differentiate among the various resemblances we have so far uncovered (those connecting the Sophist, the terrain, our guide, ourselves, and now, dialectical thought and the Philosopher). And we must do so by making certain distinctions in the order of resemblance, by determining which are true resemblances and which are merely resemblance-effects.

4. Distinguishing images

a. Supplementing vision

Our stranger-guide informs us that this distinction in the order of resemblance is attributable to the structure of two different types of images: true resemblances are the product of Copies, while resemblance-effects are the

product of Simulacra-Phantasms (236a–c). As images, both types are pretenders to a lineage, meaning that, at best, they participate in the Model in a secondary fashion. But even if they are not primary, Copies are at least faithful pretenders. This faithfulness is due to the fact that Copies "conform to the proportions of the original in all three dimensions, and give moreover the proper color to every part" (235d–e). In other words, Copies are distinct from their Models because they are derivative, but they are nevertheless constructed from an internal correspondence to the properties of the Model. The fact that Copies are structured as internally proportionate to their Model is therefore the basis of true resemblance.

Simulacra, on the other hand, are not internally proportionate to the original, thus their resemblance-effects are produced by an entirely different mechanism. Our guide indicates, schematically, that resemblance-effects are obtained by introducing the external regime of appearance: from an external perspective, simulacra appear to be proportionate to the original (236b). Like an enormous statue that looks proportionate to the subjective eye, Simulacra incorporate an external perspective into their structure, thereby producing their resemblance-effect.

Clearly, these two types of images are visually indistinguishable—if vision is taken in its usual sense as referring to an external, subjective perspective. One cannot possibly determine, simply by looking at the Sophist and Philosopher, which is the Copy and which the Simulacrum. But if this is the case, our guide's persistent metaphorics of attempting to "shed light" on the problem or his difficulties in getting "a clear view of the man" (236d) can be nothing but an ironic sort of jest. If Simulacra and Copies are visually indistinguishable, no amount of light nor any clearing of the visual field will ever differentiate them. When our guide further asserts that both the Sophist and the Philosopher are difficult to perceive, the former because he resides in darkness and the latter because his region is so bright (254a–b), our impending journey begins to discard its last semblance of seriousness. Of course, we cannot simply dismiss the possibility that our guide is having a bit of fun at our expense; as Plato comments in one of his letters, "no serious man will ever think of writing about serious realities" (314c).

Yet our guide also recognizes the problems with visually distinguishing the Copy from the Simulacrum. This is why he indicates that, in a certain sense, something must be added to vision in order to differentiate it from a mere external subjective perspective, an addition that will enable the distinction between the Simulacrum and the Copy. Simulacra, he ex-

plains, are "able to deceive the innocent minds of children," but are less likely to fool those who have "advanced in age . . . and are forced by experience to apprehend things as they are" (234b–d). While this distinction might, at first glance, appear to be attributable simply to age or experience, our guide explains otherwise. The young, he says, "are still far removed from the reality of things," which is why the Simulacrum can have deceptive effects; it is seen only "at a distance" (234b–c). The characteristic of old age, on the other hand, is that it has "come into closer touch with realities" (234d). The distinction between youth and age, then, is no mere chronological difference, but is somehow related to a particular kind of distance, distance between the subject and the image.

While youth is characterized by an increased distance, making it more susceptible to the deceptions of Simulacra, it is also characterized by a seemingly paradoxical clarity: "You young people see more clearly" (232e). For youth, in other words, vision remains at the level of an external subjective perspective, one that has not yet truly encountered reality.

The vision of old age, however, overturns such clarity; when one gets closer to reality and actually encounters it, clarity first becomes confusion: "when I was younger, I thought I understood quite clearly when someone spoke of this thing that is now puzzling us—'the unreal.' But now you see how completely perplexed we are about that" (243b). In other words, perceiving a concept from a distance, as if one were somehow a removed spectator, enables one to clearly understand the concept, but this clarity can only be superficial, the understanding of youth. In order to encounter the concept itself in anything other than this detached way, something else is necessary. Our guide provides us a hint of this supplement when he tells us that such true encounters, "force them [those who are advanced in age] to abandon those former beliefs, so that what seemed important will now appear trifling and what seemed easy, difficult" (234d). In other words, in order to truly encounter reality, something more than mere perception must be involved: in the encounter, the subject's beliefs must be at stake. Confusion, therefore, results from the fact that in the encounter, unlike the clear distance of youth, the subject necessarily becomes something different, "abandon[ing] its former beliefs" in the act of actually "encountering reality" (234d).

Distance, then, is the name for a type of visual interaction predicated on a discrete distinction between subject and image—it is the domain of clarity and youth. The encounter, however, characterizes an interaction in

which the subject and its beliefs are also at stake—it is the domain of confusion and old age.

But this doesn't get us very far. Even if the encounter must be added to vision in order to make it something other than a simple external perspective, this encounter appears to produce nothing but obfuscation. We cannot simply accept that all of the seemingly privileged visual metaphors in the *Sophist* are actually aimed at confusion. Clearly, this encounter must contain some additional component that will help produce the distinction between the Copy and the Simulacrum.

So far, we know that the encounter with reality is a necessary aspect of true learning. This learning produces confusion because it involves an alteration of the subject itself: one can no longer trust all the things one used to believe. But to remain in this confusion, as our guide says, "to take pleasure in perpetually parading such contradiction . . . may be recognized as the too recent contact with reality" (259d). The experience of confusion, then, results from an encounter with reality. As such, it is an advancement over the detached perspective of youth, but it is nevertheless still characterized by a "too recent contact with reality": one has not lived with reality long enough if one is still embedded in confusion. In order to achieve this second clarity, one that is different from that of the youthful perspective and that produces the distinction between the Simulacrum and the Copy, one must encounter reality again and again, adding a repetitive quality to the visual encounter.

But it would be too easy to characterize this temporal addition as the acquisition of a habit: our guide, after all, rebukes Theaetetus for simply following the force of argument out of habit (236d). Habit is characterized by a repetition that still remains abstract and distant, youthful, and does not partake of an encounter with reality—it is not true repetition. True repetition, however, persistently goes through the encounter, preventing one from being satisfied with confusion, and forcing one to continue on to the next encounter, to continue living with reality by continuing to go elsewhere. Unlike habits, then, repetition is a differential kind of movement, the movement of difference itself: "What is hard and sometimes worth the effort is something different" (259c). This movement of difference is not simply reducible to "shallow quibbling" about the same being different or the different the same. It is characterized by the very movement of differential repetition, a series of encounters with reality in which the subject must consistently be at stake and not simply moving, as it were, in the detached perspective of habit.

Clearly, there are several ways to go astray here. Unless the encounter is added to vision as a type of experience in which the subject itself is at stake, vision remains detached and youthful, unable to rise above the level of perception. Unless one adds the movement of a differential repetition to this encounter, vision remains mired in confusion. The second, more profound clarity, true clarity, in fact, is achieved only through the movement of differentially repeated encounters. As a result, clarity is no longer simply a less opaque visual perspective at which one can arrive; it is not a location, but a style of movement characterized by differentially repeated encounters with reality. One must continually go elsewhere. As our guide says, when faced with the confusion of "reality and unreality":

> Since reality and unreality are equally puzzling, there is henceforward some hope that any light, whether dim or bright, thrown upon the one will illuminate the other to an equal degree, and if, on the other hand, we cannot get sight of either, at any rate we will make the best we can of it under these conditions and force a passage through the argument with both elbows at once. (251a)

This call for differential movement indicates that we cannot simply follow the flow of discourse—that sort of false movement would remain at the detached level of habit and avoid the encounter with reality. But neither can we remain mired in the confusion of a "too recent contact with reality"—in this case, a contact that has made the very concepts of "reality and unreality" seem puzzling. Thus, we can neither remain in the realm of confusion nor simply be carried along by the argument. Instead, we must encounter reality through the repetition of differential movement: we must attempt to shed some light on the matter or, what amounts to the same thing, we must "force a passage through the argument." It is only this movement, a differentially repeated encounter with reality, a more profound clarity, that produces the distinctions between the Copy and the Simulacrum.

b. The becoming simulacrum

This conclusion, that the distinction between the Copy and the Simulacrum emerges only through the repeated and differential movement of encounters, is perhaps less provocative than it appears. What it amounts to is nothing more than the point our guide has been showing us all along (had we only been able to see): in order to hunt down the Sophist, one must travel—

not because the Sophist is located elsewhere, but because travel is the necessary condition for locating. In terms of our search, this means that the only way to determine if the resemblances we have so far uncovered (those linking the Sophist, dialectical thought, the terrain, our guide, and ourselves) are true resemblances or merely resemblance-effects is to go elsewhere, to travel.

But even if we know that we need to travel, that we need to differentially encounter reality in order to distinguish between the Simulacrum and the Copy, thereby tracking the Sophist, our guide indicates that we need not proceed blindly. We might somehow apprehend something of these two images by shedding light on the mechanisms through which the two images produce their respective effects: a resemblance-effect and a true-resemblance.

The Copy, as we discovered, is structured by its correspondence with the Model, and therefore faithfully appeals to the Model through a locatable internal proportionality. It is the image of proper filiation and true resemblance. The Simulacrum, then, first appears as simply an unfaithful Copy, an offspring that has gone astray and refuses to pay tribute to the Model. But if the simulacrum were merely a case of unfaithfulness to a lineage, if it were merely a case of parricide, it would be much less of a threat than it is. As our guide explains, the Simulacrum has no real concern for the Model, appealing, instead, to an external perspective. In other words, this image is not so much unfaithful as it is extra-faithful. What makes the Simulacrum so unruly is that its structuring principle has no real relation to the Model whatsoever, not even one of a refusal. For the Simulacrum, then, the Model does not preexist, meaning that, in effect, the Simulacrum is not really a claimant at all, as it is entirely unrelated to the regime of filiation. Instead, its internal structure is composed of a necessary relationship to the outside, to a subjective perspective, making it seem impossible to actually locate. The Simulacrum does not exist either in the image or the subject who perceives the image, but in a nonlocatable movement between the image and the subject: both are internally implicated in its structure. In other words, the Simulacrum is not simply an object that produces an effect on a subject, but a subject-object complex that is characterized by a differential movement between the two.

This movement of the Simulacrum threatens not only filiation, but, as Plato recognizes, the very condition of filiation: existence itself. When commentators like Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns claim that Plato's discussion of existence in the dialogue is "apparently arbitrarily hung on

the figure of the Sophist," they are demonstrating an example of youthful detachment, as nothing could be further from the truth. Like the Simulacrum, the Sophist is characterized by a differential movement; in our guide's words, he "is at home . . . in the darkness of non-being" (254a). He "exists" in this middle space, a space in which "what is not has some sort of being" (240c); in other words, he lives in a space which is not, in reality, a space. While it would appear to be a contradiction to claim that "what is not" exists, our guide demonstrates at length that the realm of nonbeing does, in fact, have existence. Succinctly phrased, this so-called "realm" is more accurately conceived as the movement of difference: "to speak of that which is not, is not to indicate that it is the opposite of existence," but only that it "partakes of difference" (255d–257c). In other words, nonexistence, the "home" of the Sophist, is not opposed to existence, but is the partaking of difference, a differential movement—the Sophist is, quite simply, the differential movement of the Simulacrum.[7]

Yet, as we already discovered, this differential movement of the Simulacrum is precisely the kind of travel that must be undertaken in order to truly encounter reality in the first place, in order to differentiate between the Simulacrum and the Copy. Perhaps we were still too distant when we perceived that the Simulacrum was entirely unrelated to the regime of filiation, as it now appears that the Simulacrum itself induces the movement through which the Simulacrum and the Copy become identified and distinguished. More precisely, the Simulacrum produces not only its effect of resemblance, but also a Copy-effect and a Model-effect as true Copies and Models. The Simulacrum, therefore, generates the very criteria for identifying both itself and the Copy. This is why, as Plato recognizes quite clearly, the only way to track down the Sophist is to encounter the Simulacrum through differential movement, to become a Sophist.

c. Future travels

If, as our previous discovery indicates, the Copy is implicated in the differential movement of the Simulacrum, if it is a particular style of Simulacrum, this implies that its filial dynamics may not be as locatable as they first appeared. After all, the Copy is itself characterized by a certain type of movement: the internal movement of reference/reverence. As in an act of tribute, its structure inherently gestures toward an outside in the name of the Model. In other words, the seemingly locatable internal proportionality

of the Copy is itself composed of an external relation to the Model, a gesturing towards the outside.

Likewise, the metaphorics of possession and location that are integral to our guide's search—in short, the entire distribution of property that the dialogue undertakes—are implicated in this differential movement of filiation, a movement that is structured in relation to an outside termed the Model. Simply put, the Simulacrum is not opposed to filiation and the distribution of property, as filiation is only a particular style of Simulacrum, a particular style of external gesturing.

No doubt, the style of this external gesturing is what distinguishes the filial Copy from other Simulacra. On the one hand, the Simulacrum gestures toward an outside that is not locatable insofar as it is always yet to come. As we have discovered on several occasions, the gesture of the Simulacra is characterized by an outside that is both spatially and temporally elsewhere—a particular style of futurity. Copies, on the other hand, gesture toward a very precise kind of outside, one figured as the Model.

But it would be too hasty to simply claim that the Model preexists the Copy and that it is on the basis of this preexistence that the gestures are distinguished. The Copy recognizes quite clearly that, at very least, the Model cannot be known in advance, that, as we have already seen, knowing true reality requires the repetition of differential encounters. In terms of lineages, the Copy insistently demonstrates that one cannot know the father except through the act of paying tribute. For example, in the dialogue, our guide achieves some semblance of a Model of the Sophist, assigning to him a true "blood and lineage," only after an enormously long and nomadic quest—a quest that Plato must differentially repeat in a number of other dialogues.

But further, if the Model itself cannot be known in advance, then neither can its existence be apprehended. There is no way to know, before the differential encounter, if the Model even exists at all—nor would there be any reason to suspect that it did. In fact, if the Model does preexist, and our guide repeatedly insists that it does, one can know of this preexistence only through traveling. In other words, the preexistence of the Model must come later; it must be an effect of sophistic travel. In the Copy, then, we encounter an astonishing example of the temporal force of this particular style of Simulacrum: through the Copy, the Model is simultaneously realized and posited as preexisting. More precisely, through the Copy, the Model is realized as preexisting: the future is differentially encountered as past. In other words, the exterior movement of the Copy produces the very existence of the past in its gesture toward the Model.

It is precisely this temporal movement of the Copy, this retroactive production—a production of the encounter as the past—that not only characterizes the external gesture of the Copy, but also drives the filial project itself. As the dialogue demonstrates, a lineage is nothing but the production of a preexisting filial relation, an assignment of the true blood and lineage through an encounter with reality. Thus, the rivalry between the Copy and the Simulacrum appears at first as the rivalry between the past and the future, between a reactive desire to hold onto a filial past and a progressive desire to be detached from that past. But as our discoveries so far indicate, these youthful distinctions are insufficient, as the movement of the Copy is generated by that of the Simulacrum. In other words, the rivalry between the two images is one that takes place between two different Simulacra, two different gestures toward futurity: one which produces that encounter as past, and the other which produces it as future. The Copy, as the production of the outside as preexistent Model, elaborates a peculiar movement of futurity often termed "the past." The Simulacrum, as the production of the outside as outside, elaborates an equally peculiar movement of futurity often termed "the future." But as the dialogue shows, both dynamics of the Simulacrum are mutually implicated and only distinguishable through travel, through the encounter.

5. Repetitions

We have, no doubt, come a long way in our search. We know, for instance, that the Sophist, like the Simulacrum, is less a determinate identity than a differential movement of the encounter in which the subject itself must be at stake—it is the very movement through which, for Plato, one comes into true contact with reality. This is why Plato shows us that we must become a Sophist in order to track the Sophist—not because we must think like the Sophist so that we can figure out where he is hiding, but because itinerant travel is the inventive rhythm of becoming itself: *becoming a Sophist, cultivating the differential encounter with reality outside of youth and habit, is precisely what it means to hunt the Sophist*. We also know that this sophistic movement is not opposed to that of the filial Copy, but is the Copy's enabling engine. Of course, we also recognize that it is important not to equate the two, as they are characterized by different temporal rhythms, two variations of futurity: the past and the future.

These are things we now know. By eliminating the specificity of the discursive movement that elaborated these discoveries, in other words, by producing these few sentences as Copies of our past journey, we can now say that we possess this information as knowledge, as property. Of course, because our future travel must be characterized by the differential encounter with reality, we cannot be certain that this knowledge will remain intact when we proceed elsewhere (say, to a discussion of the *Phaedrus,* to a discussion of writing as itinerant travel). More to the point, in order to encounter Plato's dialogues in anything other than the detached mode of youthful habit, we cannot allow ourselves simply to re-mark the inherited disciplinary distinctions between Rhetoric and Philosophy either by privileging one or the other or by claiming that one is reducible to the other. Instead, Plato points out the direction for a reversal of these oppositional dynamics by calling for a true encounter with reality, the differential movement of an encounter in which the subject itself must be at stake when reading his dialogues.

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Notes

1. A provocative counterexample to this trend, one that was published too recently to be included in this discussion, is Richard Marback's "Plato's Dream of Sophistry," which, through a reception history of platonism and sophistry, demonstrates the complex historical intertwining of the two practices. It was not until very recently, Marback argues, that an opposition emerged between sophistry and the platonic philosophical legacy.

2. I am thinking here of the psychoanalytic argument, which contends that one particularly effective mechanism in the formation of subjective identity is negation of the Other (cf. Judith Butler on performativity). The logic is familiar: I know what I am precisely through rejecting what I am not. My identity (as a positive content) emerges through such negation. This negation is never final, but must be endlessly repeated; for example, as Butler points out, one can never be man enough and must constantly reject that which is feminized. At the level of a disciplinary formation like rhetoric, one key Other that has served the function of negated object and practice is the discipline of Philosophy. No doubt, there are a number of contemporary Others that are relevant for Rhetoric—theory, cultural studies, literature, or even composition—but Philosophy seems to preserve a rather privileged position because of its historical link to the emergence of rhetoric in ancient Greece. The synechdochical figure for this opposition is Plato vs. the Sophists: as the idealist philosopher who rejected the Sophist's concern for practical opinion and championed in its place an absolute truth, Plato has functioned in contemporary rhetoric (both in the realm of theory and historiography) as a pivotal figure of opposition in the dialectic of rhetoric/philosophy. Suffice it to say that the performative movement I will attempt to articulate and to demonstrate throughout this paper is something other than one that functions primarily through opposition and negation. As a result, this mode of "travel" aspires to move differently from most articulations of performativity.

3. This is made clear by the very fact that one must set out to track down the Sophist—if one already knew who he was, there would be no reason for the search or for the dialogue.

4. Here, it is worth noting a further complication with our map. Many of the complexities and ambiguities that we have discerned so far come from an approximately fifteen-page portion of the text of the *Sophist* that was omitted in the standard 1935 translation by F. M. Cornford. No doubt, this information was irrelevant to a different kind of search.

5. This second claim—that the search for the Sophist is, in fact, a search for the Philosopher—is one of the guiding themes of Heidegger's intricate reading of the dialogue. My reading here, however, attempts to highlight not that two different searches are intertwined with each other, but that one must produce the very notion of resemblance, and thereby of differing identities, in order to read the dialogue as a search for two different (though closely related) identities. In other words, we cannot presuppose that the search for the Philosopher and the search for the Sophist are simply interrelated—they may, quite literally, be the same search.

6. Indicative of a certain style of philosophical reading, Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, in their introduction to the dialogue, indicate that the exploration into sameness and difference is a "tedious" argument, pursued through a "mist of words," and, further, that it is baffling that Plato could ever be concerned with such seemingly obvious points (958). Such readings fail to take the search itself seriously enough and, therefore, remain too distant from the stakes of this investigation—that a type of dialectical thought hinged on resemblance must produce different identities that then resemble each other.

7. James Kostman highlights the ambiguity of Plato's use of "partaking" in the dialogue, claiming that Plato was very much aware of this ambiguity: "partaking terms are interchangeable with each other within any one context; but from one context to another they are subject to an ambiguity strictly parallel to that of the statements they are used to analyze" (344). This point reinforces the effects of differential movement, indicating that Plato quite intentionally implicated the very function of "partaking" in the discursive movement of the dialogue, in this case, in the elaboration of nonbeing.