# DELEUZE AND THE SIMULACRUM

## BETWEEN THE PHANTASM AND FANTASY (A GENEALOGICAL READING)

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What is the difference between the phantasm and the simulacrum in Deleuze's famous reversal of Platonism? At the end of "Plato and the Simulacrum," Deleuze argues that philosophy must extract from modernity "something that Nietzsche designated as the untimely."[1] The historicity of the untimely, Deleuze specifies, obtains differently with respect to the past, present, and future: the untimely is attained with respect to the past by the reversal of Platonism and with respect to the present, "by the simulacrum conceived as the edge of critical modernity." In relation to the future, however, it is attained "by the phantasm of the eternal return as belief in the future." At stake, is a certain distinction between the simulacrum, whose power, as Deleuze tells us in this crucial paragraph, defines modernity, and the phantasm, which is

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[1] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1990), 265.

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involved with the future. The importance of this distinction emerges clearly in the final sentence of the text:

> There is a vast difference between destroying in order to conserve and perpetuate the established order of representations, models, and copies, and destroying the models and copies in order to institute the chaos which creates, making the simulacra function and raising a phantasm [*qui fait marcher les simulacres et lever un phantasme*] — the most innocent of all destructions, the destruction of Platonism.[2]

How can this untimely-yet-historical distinction between the simulacrum and the phantasm be clarified? In this paper, I examine Deleuze's treatment of these two terms in a series of texts between 1966 and 1969, that is, between the publication of "Renverser le platonisme (le simulacre)" in the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* and *The Logic of Sense* of 1969.[3] My approach is genealogical, examining in detail Deleuze's engagement with the discussions between the Lacanian and Kleinian schools of psychoanalysis and his reading of Pierre Klossowski. As is well known, the concept of the simulacrum reached Deleuze through Klossowski's novels and his idiosyncratic reading of Nietzsche, as analyzed by Foucault in his 1964 article, "La prose d'Actéon" and Blanchot in his 1965 text, "Le rire des dieux," both published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*.[4] As I show, Deleuze reinterpreted the relation between the simulacrum and the phantasm at various points, eventually linking the problematic with the psychoanalytic concept of fantasy. This genealogical scrutiny aims to disclose a conceptual ambiguity that hides under the "postmodern" patina of the simulacrum. The critical power of this ambiguity can be revived today, when the difference between

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[2] Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 266.

[3] Gilles Deleuze, "Renverser le platonisme (Les simulacres)," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 71 (1966): 426-38; Gilles Deleuze, *Logique du sens* (Paris: Ed. de Minuit, 1969); Gilles Deleuze, *Différence and Repetition* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016). The version published as an appendix to the *Logic of Sense* is a revised version of "Renverser le platonisme (le simulacre)," with a series of alterations that I examine in what follows. I have employed the helpful annotated translation of "Renverser le platonisme (les simulacres)" included in Leonard Lawlor, *Thinking Through French Philosophy: The Being of the Question* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2003).

[4] Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, vol. 2, ed. Paul Rabinow and James D. Faubion (New York: New Press, 1998), 123-45; Maurice Blanchot, *Friendship*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1997), 169-82.

truth and all its variants — the *pseudo* of "fake news" and the *post* of the "post-truth" regime — is everywhere at stake.

## 1. Simulacra, Phantasms and (their) Difference

I begin with the appendix to the *The Logic of Sense*, "Plato and the Simulacrum," where Deleuze traces a strong distinction in Plato's *Sophist* between two sorts of images: those that rely on resemblance, copies and icons (*icônes*), and those without resemblance (*simulacra*).[5] This Platonic distinction is hardly questioned today. However, behind it lurks yet another distinction, between the simulacrum and the phantasm, which Deleuze does not conceptually elaborate in the appendix. "On the one hand," he writes, "there are copies-icons, on the other there are simulacra-phantasms."[6] The notation "simulacra-phantasms" in this quotation (and this is first appearance of the word "phantasm" in the appendix) suggests that, whatever the difference might be between phantasm and simulacrum, it is nevertheless subordinate to the distinction in nature between these entities and those endowed with resemblance, i.e. "copies-icons."[7] Behind this subordination, Deleuze surmises, lies the motivation of Platonism: not so much a metaphysical or epistemological problem of ensuring true knowledge of what is, but instead of "repressing simulacra, keeping them completely submerged, preventing them from climbing to the surface, and 'insinuating themselves' everywhere."[8] If Platonism is motivated by a repressive effort, its reversal consists in releasing simulacra, in making simulacra "rise [and] affirm their rights among icons and copies."[9] Yet, it is unclear what role the phantasm plays within this economy.

[5] For a rigorous presentation of the text, see Daniel W. Smith, *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2012), 3-26. See also Lawlor, *Thinking Through French Philosophy*, 123-141.

[6] Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 262.

[7] By writing 'simulacra-phantasms' Deleuze is likely correcting the misleading translation from the *Sophist*, which he quotes at this point (without reference to a specific translator), or at least acknowledging that 'simulacrum' is a problematic term in this context. The Budé edition uses '*simulacre*' throughout.

[8] Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 257.

[9] Ibid., 262.

In another passage, Deleuze glosses the formula that "only differences can resemble each other" by stating that similitude and identity are the product of difference. This formula "defines the world of simulacra; it posits the world itself as phantasm."[10] Simulacra and phantasm again seem (to some extent) interchangeable, but here their difference is subordinated to the difference in nature between two interpretations of the world: the one affirms that identity is primary, the other difference. Where the world is read as representation, it is an icon; where it is read as simulacrum, it is a phantasm. Or again, representation is to icon as simulacrum is to phantasm.

But these two readings cannot simply sit next to one another, since the second cannot be affirmed without negating the first: "The simulacrum is not a degraded copy. It harbors a positive power which denies *the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction*."[11] The simulacrum denies original and copy because it is both model and copy at the same time or, more precisely, because the simulacrum already contains divergent series of which neither can be said to be the model or the copy. "In order to speak of simulacra," writes Deleuze "it is necessary for the heterogeneous series to be really internalized in the system, comprised or complicated in the chaos. Their differences must be *inclusive*."[12] Since no series is primary, any resemblance that emerges is secondary. The simulacrum demonstrates that similitude or resemblance is always the result of a secondary process, a superficial effect or a "simulation" that emerges from the "resonance" between divergent series. This is the crucial passage:

> Simulation is the phantasm itself, that is, the effect of the functioning of the simulacrum as machinery — a Dionysian machine. It involves the false as power, *Pseudos*, in the sense in which Nietzsche speaks of the highest power of the false. By rising to the surface, the simulacrum makes the Same and the Similar, the model and the copy, fall under the power of the false (phantasm).[13]

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[10]  Ibid.
[11]  Ibid.
[12]  Ibid., 261.
[13]  Ibid., 263.

In this passage, Deleuze suggests that simulation is another name for the phantasm; both are the result of the simulacrum rising to the surface. Instead of copying a model (or failing to do so), the simulacrum produces a phantasm that looks like the Same, but whose power is, in truth, the power of the False. The simulacrum does not only lack a model, but is now revealed to be the "origin" of any model and copy which appear as its simulated effect. Thus, model and copy are phantasms as well; the effects of the simulacrum. Truth is an effect.

What possible interpretations could account for this difference between the simulacrum and the phantasm? *First hypothesis*: the difference is trivial, amounting to alternative translations of Plato's *phantasma*, as when Deleuze treats the two terms as linked and interchangeable, for example when he speaks of the "simulacra-phantasms" and "the simulacrum *or* the phantasm."[14] *Second*: the difference is generic. The phantasm and the simulacrum are two kinds of images without resemblance, which are subordinated to the real difference between these and the true copy. *Third*: the two terms have a causal relation (hence still a secondary difference, for causality is dependent on the dogmatic image of thought): "Simulation is the phantasm itself, that is, the effect of the functioning of the simulacrum as machinery."[15]

All of these interpretations (trivial, generic, causal) are problematic because they make unthinkable (or trivial) the passage from a modernity defined by the power of the simulacrum to a future defined by the phantasm of the eternal return. In order for this passage to have meaning there would have to be a strong difference between the simulacrum and the phantasm, such that neither can be said to be derivate from the other. What is needed is a difference in nature. Deleuze's discussion of the heterogeneous series in *Finnegan's Wake* offers a clue that moves us in this direction:

> Between these basic series, a sort of *internal resonance* is produced; and this resonance induces a *forced movement*, which goes beyond the series themselves. These are the characteristics of the simulacrum, when it breaks its chains and rises to the surface; it then affirms its phantasmatic power, that

14  Ibid., 256.
15  Ibid., 263.

is, its repressed power. Freud has already shown how the phantasm results from at least two series, one infantile and the other post-pubescent. The affective charge associated with the phantasm is explained by the internal resonance whose bearers are the simulacra.[16]

Here, the phantasm is not defined as the effect of the simulacrum, but rather as the simulacrum's power. How can the phantasm be at once power and effect? If the phantasm is an effect of the simulacrum, we have a secondary difference. But if the simulacrum is also characterized by a "phantasmatic power," then a difference in nature between what powers and what is powered begins to come into view. Indeed, we might find an answer in the qualification of the phantasmatic power as a "repressed power." Up to this point, it appeared the simulacrum was "repressed" insofar as Platonism aimed to keep it from "raising to the surface."[17] However, we now find an explicit reference to Freud that clarifies the qualification of the simulacrum as a movement towards the surface. In order to understand this reference to psychoanalysis we need to consider other texts from the same period, beginning with the first published version of the appendix.

## 2. Renverser le platonisme (le simulacre)

The reader of the first version of the appendix will note the conspicuous absence of the psychoanalytic lexicon of repression. In fact, Deleuze's reference to Freud appears in a paragraph entirely reworked in 1969. In place of the simulacrum breaking its chains and raising to the surface, he writes:

> The ability to simultaneously affirm heterogenous and divergent series testifies to a positive power, which is that of language as well as that of the phantasm. Freud showed how the phantasm is established between two series, or rather Freud found the condition of the phantasm in the coexistence of two series, one infantile, the other post-pubescent. It is possible that the phantasm and language have, in this regard, a common structure: that every word and every phantasm would be constructed on such heterogeneous series, and

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[16]  Ibid., 260-1.
[17]  Ibid., 257.

institute a sort of coupling between these series, from whence derives an internal resonance within the system, a forced movement whose amplitude overflows the basic series themselves. Placing disparates in communication, resonance, forced movement would thus be the characteristic of the phantasm-language or the simulacrum.[18]

Even in this longer passage, the relation between the phantasm and Freud's "two series" is not at all clear. This ambiguity is further complicated by the suggestion that the phantasm and language share a common structure. At all other points in "Renverser le platonisme," including the parallel passages from *The Logic of Sense* quoted above, Deleuze treats the distinction between simulacrum and phantasm as a difference of the trivial kind.[19] Moreover, the first version of the powerful conclusion to the appendix — where creative chaos makes simulacra function and raise a phantasm — has a long quotation by Henry Miller about creative destruction, but no reference to either simulacrum or phantasm.

In the 1966 version, Deleuze references an article by the Lacanian Xavier Audouard published in *Cahiers pour l'Analyse* that "marks the necessity of bringing together the Platonic phantasm and the phantasm in the psychoanalytic sense." This sentence, which was excised in 1969, offers another important clue. Yet, besides remarking on the necessity of such a rapprochement, Deleuze only follows Audouard's claim that the "simulacrum includes the differential point of view; and the observer becomes a part of the simulacrum itself, which is transformed and deformed by his point of view."[20] What this reference makes clear

[18] Deleuze, in Lawlor, *Thinking Through French Philosophy*, 170-1.

[19] In *Thinking Through French Philosophy* Lawlor demonstrates that these passages were carefully reworked in 1969. "Yet it seems much more difficult to define the simulacrum or the phantasm" (168); "Through sin we have become simulacra, phantasms" (169); "From a phantasmatic perspective, then organization of series or divergences refers to a technique that is very different in Robbe-Grillet, Klossowski, and Gombrowicz. There is only a commonality sufficient to be able to say: the work itself has become the simulacrum" (170); "The second [formula], contrary to the first, defines the world of simulacra; it posits the world itself as being simulacrum" (171); "Reversing Platonism consequently means affirming the right of simulacra, of phantasms, against icons or copies" (173).

[20] Xavier Audouard, "Le simulacre," *Cahiers pour l'Analyse* 3 (1966): 57-72. As noted by the editors of *Concept and Form*, this paper was delivered in Lacan's Seminar XII, "Crucial Problems for Psychoanalysis" in May 1965. Lacan asked a member of the audience to give a commentary on the "extraordinary similarity" between the sophist and the analyst. See "Synopsis of Xavier Audouard: 'Le simulacra,'" in *Concept and Form: The Cahiers pour l'Analyse and Contemporary French Thought*, ed. Peter Hallward et al., Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, http://cahiers.kingston.ac.uk/synopses/syn3.4.html, 57-72.

however, is that we have been working with a terminological confusion. In French, *le phantasme* (as well as *le fantasme*) refers to both the Platonic *phantasma* as well as psychoanalytic fantasy, *Phantasie*. This ambiguity is rendered opaque in English translations, especially when *le phantasme* (fantasy in the psychoanalytic sense), is translated as "the phantom," as in Mark Lester's translation of *The Logic of Sense*.[21] And yet, as long as the relation between the simulacrum and the phantasm is not clarified, it remains impossible to decide on a single translation for Deleuze's "*le phantasme*." It is possible, then, that in 1966 the distinction between the simulacrum and the phantasm was for Deleuze still of the trivial kind and that he realized, through Audouard, that the terms he had been employing interchangeably involved a more significant distinction that involved fantasy, which he had no space or time to elaborate before the 1966 publication of "Renverser le platonisme," such that the engagement with this distinction — and with psychoanalysis — would have to wait until 1968. What becomes of this difference, which now involves three terms — simulacrum, phantasm, and fantasy — when Deleuze returns to the theme of the simulacrum in *Difference and Repetition*?

## 3.  DIFFERENCE, REPETITION, DELAY (*NACHTRÄGLICHKEIT*)

At first glance, the distinction in this second iteration of the simulacrum still appears trivial. The phantasm only arrives at the very end of the chapter on "Repetition for Itself," as part of the same formulation quoted above from the 1969 and 1966 versions, where "Freud shows that a *phantasy* is constituted on the basis of at least two series, one infantile and pre-genital, the other genital and post-pubescent."[22] It is

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[21]  Rosalind Krauss' 1983 translation of "Plato and the Simulacrum" has "phantasm" throughout, except for the passage explicitly referring to Freud quoted above, where she writes "fantasy." Gilles Deleuze and Rosalind Krauss, "Plato and the Simulacrum," *October* 27 (1983): 45-56, doi: 10.2307/778495.

[22]  Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 124 (emphasis in the original). Patton correctly translates "un phantasme" with "phantasy".

only here that the role of the two series in the constitution of the simulacrum emerges in full clarity:

> It is clear that the series succeed one another in time from the point of view of the solipsistic unconscious of the subject in question. The question then arises how to explain the phenomenon of "delay" [*retard*] which is involved in the time it takes for the supposedly original infantile scene to produce its effect at a distance, in an adult scene which resembles it and which we call "derived."[23]

Deleuze is referring to the phenomenon of delay or *Nachträglichkeit* that Freud developed to explain why some trivial events experienced during childhood (for example, parental coitus) are later reinterpreted as traumatic, especially those cases where the traumatic event turns out to be imagined — a fantasy. Deleuze's observation: the childhood event does not belong to *either* of the two series. The problem does not consist in deciding whether the occurrence is "real" or "imagined." Rather, Deleuze postulates an "intersubjective unconscious" that contains the two series: "that of the adults we knew as a child and that of the adult we are among other adults and other children."[24] The childhood event is the "dark precursor," an invisible, imperceptible agent that relates the two series without resembling either of them.[25] It is not that the childhood event "acts" with a delay to produce the trauma, "it *is* this delay, but this delay itself is the pure form of time in which before and after coexist."[26] Thus, the guarantee that the simulacrum is of an entirely different order than the model and the copy depends on the phenomenon of *Nachträglichkeit*.[27] Because, according to Deleuze (and Freud), there is no time in the unconscious, it cannot be said that one series or

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[23] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 124.

[24] Deleuze first introduces the notion of the intersubjective unconscious, "which reduces neither to an individual unconscious nor to a collective unconscious", in a footnote to his commentary on Lacan's *The Purloined Letter*. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 316n16.

[25] Cf. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 119-20.

[26] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 124.

[27] Jay Lampert discusses the concept of delay (*retard*) in this passage in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of history, but takes no account of the context of the discussion with respect to the simulacrum and the phantasm. Jay Lambert, "Theory of Delay in Balibar, Freud and Deleuze: *Décalage, Nachträglichkeit, Retard*," in *Deleuze and History*, ed. Jeffrey A. Bell and Claire Colebrook (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2009), 85-87.

event is first and the other derived. The repetition that emerges through the delay is ungrounded repetition. The (traumatic) event is constituted in the return and not as repetition of a prior event. The two series coexist as different outside any condition or succession in time and one does not serve as the model for the other. The simulacrum is not a copy, but rather a repetition where "resemblance and identity are only functional effects of that difference which alone is originary within the system."[28] It is this interpretation of *Nachträglichkeit* that provides Deleuze with the real difference that enables the reversal of Platonism:

> These differential systems with their disparate and resonating series, their dark precursor and forced movements, are what we call simulacra or phantasms (*simulacres ou phantasmes*). The eternal return concerns only simulacra, it causes only such phantasms to return (*l'eternal retour ne concerne et ne fait revenir que les simulacres, les phantasmes*.)[29]

Still yet, we find no distinction between phantasm and simulacra.[30] But is Deleuze referring to fantasy or to the phantasm? Should we say instead that "the eternal return concerns only simulacra, it causes only such *fantasies* to return"? Is the attempt to ground the simulacrum in Freudian *Nachträglichkeit* not simply a deferral of the distinction between simulacrum and phantasm onto yet another distinction between the phantasm and the fantasy? In any case, it is by interpreting the phantasm as fantasy that Deleuze arrives at the claim, not developed in "Renverser le platonisme," that the absence of time in the unconscious is what allows for the simulacrum to emerge from the real difference between two series of which neither is first.

Surprisingly, despite Deleuze's reliance on Lacan's seminar on the *Purloined Letter* to define the two series and the intersubjective unconscious that constitutes them, his reference with respect to *Nachträglichkeit* is Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis's "Fantasy and the Origins of

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[28]  Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 125.
[29]  Ibid., 126.
[30]  The two terms are treated as interchangeable throughout these pages, for example: "Platonism as a whole is erected on the basis of this wish to hunt down the phantasms or simulacra [...]. Simulacra or phantasms are not simply copies of copies, degraded *icônes*." Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 127.

Sexuality," a text that marks their first break with Lacan.[31] Now, if Deleuze notes the relevance of Lacan's account of fantasy for the theory of the simulacrum in 1966, but only develops it in 1968, the same situation obtains with Laplanche and Pontalis's discussion of fantasy. While in *Difference and Repetition* their article is only cited in a footnote, in *The Logic of Sense* Deleuze deals at length with their account of fantasy, with unexpected results.

## 4. Objects of depth, events of surface

As it turns out, towards the end of *The Logic of Sense* Deleuze does specify, in precise terms, the difference between the phantasm and the simulacrum. The difference involves an intervention with respect to various psychoanalytic accounts of fantasy developed during the 1960s, in particular, with respect to Laplanche and Pontalis's criticism of the account of fantasy offered by Melanie Klein and Susan Isaacs. For the French authors, it is not simply that there are unconscious fantasies ("phantasies", in Isaacs' spelling) and conscious fantasizing. Rather, Laplanche and Pontalis propose that originary fantasies are located wholly in the unconscious, while secondary fantasies are further divided between those that result from secondary processes of repression and those that are conscious, such as daydreaming.[32] This metapsychological account makes the notion of *Nachträglichkeit* almost irrelevant, since the originary fantasy serves the role of an effective origin when it becomes impossible to account for the origin of trauma in a real event — in fact, there is no mention of *Nachträglichkeit* in *The Logic of Sense*. But since, as argued above, *Nachträglichkeit* is crucial to the definition of the simulacrum, we need a stronger, metapsychological account of the difference between the simulacrum, the phantasm, and the fantasy that distributes them across the unconscious, pre-conscious, and conscious systems.

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[31] Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality," in *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. Victor Burgin and James Donald (London: Methuen, 1986), 19.
[32] Laplanche and Pontalis, "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality," 19.

This is exactly what Deleuze does in *The Logic of Sense*, but from a surprising angle, not in terms of the topological metapsychology, but as part of a dynamic genesis based on Klein's concept of the partial object in her account of early childhood development.[33] Klein distinguishes between "the real object" (i.e. the breast, the mouth) and the "partial object," i.e. the real object as introjected by the infant. Partial objects are further distinguished as either good or bad, depending on their effect on the infant (the bad object attacks, penetrates, and devours the infant, while the good object remains pure and unattainable). In the closing chapters of the *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze signals a difference between the good and the bad objects that is not part of the Kleinian system. In full rigor, he argues, the good object is never truly introjected.[34] Deleuze thus proposes the distinction between depth and surface, which continues the distinction elaborated through *The Logic of Sense* between nonsense and sense. Finally, he maps this distinction onto the Platonic hierarchy of images:

> We have opted for the word "simulacrum" in order to designate the objects of depth (which are already no longer "natural objects"), as well as the becoming which corresponds to them and the reversals by which they are characterized. We choose "idol" in order to designate the object of the heights and its adventures. We choose "image" in order to designate that which pertains to partial, corporeal surfaces, including the initial problem of their phallic coordination (good intention).[35]

The crucial point is that Deleuze calls the simulacrum a "bad object of depth," that is, a partial object that results from the introjection of the real object which, for Klein, is "a phantastically distorted picture of the real objects upon which they are based," in other words, a secondary, degraded copy.[36] The bad objects of depth are in a complex system in the dynamic genesis in which sense arrives on the surface as an event. The bad objects, Deleuze argues, are not simply opposed to the good objects. Rather, they occupy a hollow depth of solid, introjected, and

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[33] Melanie Klein, "A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 16: 145-74.
[34] Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 189.
[35] Ibid., 216.
[36] Klein, "A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States," 145.

projected objects — the simulacra — that are opposed to the liquid, full depth of the body without organs.[37]

In contrast, the good object is whole, but unattainable, and for this reason it cannot be introjected at all. It is an object of the heights — an *idol*. In series twenty-eight and twenty-nine, Deleuze describes castration and offers an early, alternative interpretation of Oedipus as a drama between the bad and the good penis, which is resolved by the projection of the good object from the heights upon the surface as an *image* — that is, through the transformation of a section of the body without organs into a properly sexual (symbolic) organ, the *phallus*. The surface, then, is the symbolic space of sense, of the event. This event is *le phantasme*, which Deleuze defines as representing "neither an action nor a passion, but a result of action and passion, that is, a pure event," and which can no longer be translated as "the phantom." In fact, Deleuze's references in the "*Trentième série, du phantasme*" — from the case of the Wolf Man, through Laplanche and Pontalis's "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality" to the piece by Susan Isaacs discussed in the former — make clear that "the phantasm" has always meant fantasy.[38]

Having finally dispatched the phantasm, we still have to deal with fantasy. Deleuze describes it according to three characteristics. *First*, the fantasy is an event. The relation between the good-bad objects (simulacra and idol) and fantasy is that of a "quasi-cause," where the "event-fantasy" is irreducible to the partial objects that produced it. *Second*, the place of the ego in relation to the fantasy is not simple. Against Laplanche and Pontalis, Deleuze argues that "what appears in the fantasy is the movement by which the ego opens itself to the surface and liberates the a-cosmic, impersonal, and pre-individual singularities which it had imprisoned. It literally releases them like spores and bursts as it gets unburdened."[39] *Third*, the fantasy is the arrival of language, a superficial

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[37] Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 189.

[38] To add to the confusion, Lester retranslates Klein and Isaac's "phantasy" through "*le mot phantasme*" (in the discussion by Laplanche and Pontalis) back to "the phantom." Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 215-16.

[39] Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 213.

and belated event, and hence (unlike the account based on *Nachträg-lichkeit* in *Difference and Repetition*) not originary. With this, Deleuze criticizes Klein and Isaacs for describing partial objects as fantasies, whereas in his account, fantasies arrive only afterwards, that is — and this is the important part — simulacra are emphatically not fantasies.

We reach, finally, a distinction between the simulacrum and the phantasm/fantasy in the difference between nonsense and sense. The objects of depth and height — the bad and the good — differ "in nature" from the fantasy, which arrives as an effect at the surface. The relation between the simulacrum and the fantasy is that of a quasi-cause to a pure event. We understand now the importance of preserving such a distinction: the event depends on an effect that is irreducible to its cause — an actualization (*effectuation*) that is never entirely accomplished, because this point offers itself to counter-actualization. "It is here," Deleuze writes, "that our greatest freedom lies — the freedom by which we develop and lead the event to its completion and transmutation, and finally become masters of actualizations and causes."[40]

That the fantasy is an event of the surface and moreover, that psychoanalysis turns out to be "the science of pure events, [and] also an art of counter-actualizations," which holds "our greatest freedom" might be surprising for the reader of the appendix (or indeed, of any later texts by Deleuze). Yet, this clarifies the claim at the end of "Plato in the Simulacrum" that guides this investigation: the creative destruction of Platonism that emerges from "making the simulacra function and raising a fantasy" is the result of a counter-actualization. The future — our greatest freedom — depends on the possibility of counter-actualizations and new actualizations; it depends on preserving the gap between the quasi-cause and the effect, the excess of the latter over the former. It is this excess that explains how Deleuze understands the eternal return, where what returns is not the Same (i.e. what is causally determined), but rather that which results from a "superior affirmation" only possible because of counter-actualization.[41]

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[40] Ibid., 212.
[41] Ibid., 265.

## 5. The Road not Taken

Deleuze soon lost all interest in the simulacrum. In 1990, he declares the simulacrum "all but worthless," preferring instead the concept of the "rhizome" as "the best term to designate multiplicities."[42] This is motivated, in part, by a shift away from the "surface-depth problem" which, as he explains in 1973, gave way to relations between "a body without organs, and flows that migrate."[43] If the relation between depth and surface ceases to be a problem, simulacra have no reason to reemerge from the depths. Deleuze's problematic shifts from the critique of the metaphysics of the Same to the liberation of "desiring bodies." Once the reversal of Platonism is accomplished, the simulacrum is left behind, like Wittgenstein's ladder.

Perhaps the most astonishing revelation in these passages is that when the simulacrum is reinterpreted as a partial object it becomes derived and secondary or, with Klein, a phantastically distorted picture. Deleuze, as we have seen, objects to Klein's use of the term fantasy, but does not remark on Klein's definition of the partial object as distorted picture — precisely the relation the simulacrum was meant to overturn! Here, the power of the simulacrum disappears entirely in the partial object. Yet, the reinscription of the simulacrum within a Kleinian framework is the result of Deleuze's late attempt to relate the phantasm to the psychoanalytic account of fantasy from Lacan and Audouard through Laplanche and Pontalis: it happened, so to speak, *afterwards.*

Yet another phantom has been watching quietly over this drama: that of Pierre Klossowski. The relation of mutual admiration shared by Deleuze and Klossowski is well-known, as is the fact that Deleuze took the concept of the simulacrum from Klossowski. What is less known is that Deleuze's account amounts to a veritable reversal of Klossowski's concepts, where the phantasm (and never fantasy) is also related to the simulacrum. As Daniel W. Smith explains, Klossowski's phantasm is "an

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[42] Gilles Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews, 1975-1995*, trans. David Lapoujade, Semiotext(e) (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2007), 362.

[43] Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974* (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2004), 261.

obsessional image produced in us by the unconscious forces of our impulsive life."[44] These unconscious forces are not of the Freudian kind, but are instead, part of the Nietzschean economy of the soul, also known as drives, affect, or more technically pathos: incommunicable fluctuations of intensity that produce a *Stimmung*, which Klossowski glosses as a "tonality of the soul."[45] In Klossowski's "semiotics of impulses," the phantasm is the product of a sovereign pathos. The phantasm is the dominant impulse that shapes and organizes the individual's motivations, will, and perspective.[46] Just like the pathos that determines it, the phantasm is mute, incommunicable. This is where the simulacrum comes in:

> The phantasm never tells us why it is willed by our impulses. We interpret it under the constraint of our environment, which is so well installed in us by its own signs that, by means of these signs, we never have done with declaring to ourselves what the impulse can indeed *will*: this is the phantasm. But under its own constraint we simulate what it 'means' for our declaration: this is the simulacrum.[47]

Klossowski's simulacrum is an interpretation of the phantasm, which is itself an expression of the incommunicable tonality of the soul or pathos. In Deleuze, the terms are reversed. For Klossowski, the simulacrum retains the traditional attributes of the reproductive copy as secondary and artificial, which Deleuze rejects. Aside from this terminological difference, there is in both accounts a quasi-causal passage from nonsense to sense, from an unconscious, mute substrate or depth (pathos in Klossowski; partial objects in Deleuze) to a superficial event of sense.[48] But how meaningful is the inversion of terms?

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[44]  Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, 330.

[45]  Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1997), 60; Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, 326.

[46]  Smith argues that Klossowski projects on Nietzsche his own language of phantasms and simulacra. This claim is debatable since Nietzsche wrote extensively about simulacra (*Trugbild*) and the phantasm: "the greatest part of our being is unknown to us [...]. We have a phantom of the 'ego' in our heads, which determines us many times over." Quoted in Nidesh Lawtoo, *The Phantom of the Ego: Modernism and the Mimetic Unconscious* (East Lansing: Michigan Univ. Press, 2013), 1.

[47]  Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, 60.

[48]  In this respect, Klossowski's reading of Nietzsche is important for a reconceptualization of what Nidesh Lawtoo calls the "mimetic unconscious," the series of physio-psychological forces that shape human experience beyond or besides traditional accounts of self-presence and especially Freudian accounts of the unconscious.

Klossowski's choice for the simulacrum as the superficial, visible element is related to the (anti)theological background of his literary *oeuvre*, which Foucault emphasizes in "The Prose of Actaeon" of 1964.[49] The "sim-" in simulacrum, for Foucault, links the term to simulation, similitude, and dissimulation, thus, to the play of masks that Klossowski's literary world delights in.[50] Klossowski's simulacrum is indeed a double concept. In *Diana at Her Bath*, Klossowski links it to Augustin's Platonizing critique of Roman theater, in "which daemons passing themselves off as deities could present themselves in the form of gods desiring to be worshipped as evil deities."[51] For the early Christian mind, Klossowski argues, statues of the gods (called simulacra) are a form of evil incarnation, while prescribing actors to behave as debased gods is a way of debasing the actors themselves, just like Diana became incarnated as a daemon to seduce Actaeon.

In the third appendix to the *Logic of Sense*, "Klossowski and Bodies-Language," Deleuze remarks on this entire problematic, with reference to Foucault's article. He declares Klossowski's mixture of theology and pornography "a superior pornology, [his] own way of transcending metaphysics: mimetic argumentation and syllogistic pantomime."[52] Indeed, in these scarce passages that employ the language of mimicry to which he later declares aversion, Deleuze describes Klossowski's literature as a language that mimics the body and vice-versa: "the most abstract argumentation is a mimicry, but the body's pantomime is a sequence of syllogisms. One no longer knows whether it is the pantomime which reasons, or reasoning which mimics."[53]

Indeed, in the last pages of the *Logic of Sense*, one no longer knows whether the simulacrum precedes the phantasm or not. Regardless,

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[49] Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, 2, 125.

[50] "Originally, to simulate meant to come together." Ibid., 127.

[51] Pierre Klossowski, *Diana at Her Bath*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli (Boston, Mass.: Eridanos Press, 1990), 82.

[52] Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 282.

[53] Ibid., 280; "Mimicry [le mimétisme] is a very bad concept, since it relies on a binary logic to describe phenomena of an entirely different nature. The crocodile does not reproduce the tree trunk, any more than the chameleon reproduces the colors of its surroundings." Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1987), 12.

Deleuze continues to reverse Klossowski (where, as we saw, simulacra double the phantasm that is constituted by the dominant pathos). Deleuze writes about "an entire 'phenomenology,'" where:

> The simulacrum becomes phantasm, intensity becomes intentionality to the extent that it takes as its object another intensity which it comprehends and is itself comprehended, itself taken as its objects, to the infinity of intensities through which it passes.[54]

Perhaps, and this will serve as our conclusion, it does not matter whether the phantasm or the simulacrum is first. What matters is that they keep returning, that they exert their power of superior affirmation. The real difference in nature, Deleuze argues at the end of his text on Klossowski, should be drawn between that which returns once and for all (God or any foundational concept) and that which "returns for each and every time, or for an infinite number of times."[55] Simulacra-phantasms are of the second kind and thus the order in which they return is of little consequence. If the order does not matter, then it is impossible to decide between secondary or real difference, which does not mean that they amount to the same concept.

In any case, the reversal of Platonism involves an interpretation of Klossowski's phantasm of the eternal return (a phantasm that was Nietzsche's own) and requires its reversal. One of the reasons for this reversal, finally, might be that Deleuze's dominant pathos is also the "pathos of distance" that Nidesh Lawtoo sees in Nietzsche. Nietzsche's passionate opposition to the mimetic behavior he diagnoses in the "herd" is, according to Lawtoo, a symptom that "this force has already taken possession of him, in a mimetic way."[56] Deleuze's ambivalence towards the simulacrum and the phantasm — which involves sacrificing the concepts to psychoanalysis and betraying Klossowski — might be an expression of his calculated efforts to avoid the one crucial word in this discussion: mimesis.

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[54] Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 280.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Lawtoo, *The Phantom of the Ego*, 3.

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Summary:

In "Plato and the Simulacrum," Deleuze distinguishes between two types of mimetic images: the icon, which is based on the model-copy relation, and the simulacrum, which is "a copy without a model." Behind this well-known distinction, however, lies a previously unexplored distinction between the simulacrum and the phantasm. This article examines Deleuze's treatment of this distinction in *The Logic of Sense* (1969), "Renverser le platonism (les simulacres)" (1966), and *Difference and Repetition* (1968). This paper presents a genealogical reading of the traditions that inform Deleuze's account of the simulacrum, from the Freudian, Lacanian, and Kleinian schools of psychoanalysis, to the French rediscovery of Nietzsche by Deleuze and Pierre Klossowski, whose language of phantasms and simulacra directly influenced Deleuze. It is argued that Deleuze makes a strong distinction in *The Logic of Sense* between the simulacrum and the phantasm as a critique of the psychoanalytic concept of fantasy. In so doing, he reverses Klossowski's treatment of the phantasm and the simulacrum. The Platonic concept of the simulacrum is thus linked to Nietzschean pathos and to the broader notion of a "mimetic unconscious."