WAYS OF SEEMING IN PLATO

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to present what I take to be the two main senses of seeming that we can find at play throughout Plato's work. These are what I have called the ontological sense and the genealogical sense.

I begin by introducing Plato's model-image metaphor. The model image relation will provide me with the elements necessary to illustrate the two main ways of seeming. I distinguish two senses in which we can read the image metaphor based on two types of objects the metaphor can refer to. When I want to refer to the particulars and their images, I will use the term "literal relata". When I refer to the Forms and the particulars I will use "metaphorical relata". I will call the models from the literal relata — the particulars — by the name of "relative models", while reserving the unqualified term of "model" to the models of the metaphorical relation, i.e., the Forms. Afterwards, I argue that there are two main types of seeming throughout Plato's work, the ontological seeming and the genealogical seeming.

On the one hand, I define ontological seeming as investing, either tacitly or explicitly, that which is ontologically an image with the role and function proper to the real model. Genealogical seeming, on the other hand, presupposes a difference between model and image, and consists in incorrectly identifying an image as being of a model rather than another.

I will maintain that identifying an image as being of a model is the basis on which Plato understands predication. I will further divide both types of seeming. I will call both ontological and genealogical seeming "perspectival" whenever their objects are particulars and when error is due to perspectival causes. With regards to ontological seeming, I will call it "radical" whenever it invests a relative model with the function of the true model. I shall call genealogical seeming "heuristic" whenever improper images of models are used to instill in someone an improper model.

Radical genealogical seeming, on the other hand, will consist in the application of unsound models in identifying particulars. Finally, I will argue that the radical ontological

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seeming and the genealogic heuristic seeming can be dispelled only by the use of dialectics, and thus constitute the target of Plato's actual philosophical concern.

Keywords: model, image, ontological seeming, genealogical seeming, perspectival seeming, heuristic seeming.

Introduction

In the Cave Allegory, Plato has Socrates depict man's grasp of reality by analogy with prisoners captive in a cave. These prisoners believed reality to be nothing more than the shadow show that they have been watching from birth. What they believed to be true reality, Plato suggests, only seemed to be so. The ascent of the freed prisoner out of the cave is depicted as an ascent from the seemingly real to the really real. On his descent back, the newly minted philosopher, having encountered reality itself, tries to convince his peers of the merely seeming nature of their world.

If we read this allegory as pointing directly toward what Socrates undertakes throughout the Platonic dialogues, as I believe we should, we can get a sense of the diversity of appearances the philosopher must fight against when he returns to the cave: sensible particulars seem to be the ultimate reality, there seems to be no difference between knowledge and opinion, virtuous acts could seem to be foolish, whereas vicious acts could appear beneficial, bodily pleasure could seem to be real pleasure, or the philosopher might seem to be a sophist, and *vice versa*. Yet, even though seeming occupies such a central place in Plato's thought, it is not at all clear how we should understand it.[2] As I will maintain, there is no single notion of seeming that can fully account for all the types of appearances that Socrates deals with.

Plato discloses in *The Sophist* through the words of the Eleatic Stranger the necessary condition for the possibility of falsehood. It is the

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[2]   The secondary literature usually treats seeming as if were a unitary phenomenon. I take this to be a mistake. If we rely on only the most general sense of seeming to account for all the diverse contexts in which it is used by Plato, we will surely fall prey to misunderstanding. For articles that deal in one way or another with the notion of seeming, see Nehamas (1982), Deleuze (1983), Silverman (1991), and Moss (2006, 2007, 2008, 2014).

double nature of any image, consisting of a weaving together of "that which is not […] with that which is" (*Sophist*, 240c) that carries with itself the possibility of falsehood. Seeing and falsehood are deeply connected: when we say that "Y only seems to be X" without being so, we mean that the judgement "Y is X" is false. Yet, we mean more than that. That is, we also mean that there is something within "X" that lures us into believing that it is "Y". We could suggest that seeing is a luring toward a falsehood. Thus, we can divide the problem of seeing into its constituent parts: (i) falsehood, the analysis of what falsehood is, and (ii) the lure, or the luring towards the falsehood, the analysis of what causes falsehood.

Thus, an analysis of the notion of seeming in Plato could focus either on the arguments for the possibility of falsehood that he developed in *The Sophist*, or on the way that he conceives the luring aspect of seeming, in other words, on its causes.[3] Both have received more or less explicit treatment from Plato himself, and benefited from wide attention in the secondary literature. Finally, an analysis of the notion of seeming in Plato could focus on the different species of seeming, if indeed there are any types of seeming. In this paper, I will take the latter road and argue that throughout Plato's work we can consistently identify two main species of seeming, what I call *ontological seeming* and *genealogical seeming*. The first, I will argue, consists in investing a generated being, i.e. a particular, or what Plato metaphorically calls an image, with the ontological status of its generative formal cause, i.e. the platonic Forms, or models. The second consists in wrongly identifying the character of a particular, thus essentially linking it to a different model than it is of. In order to get an intuitive grasp of what I am aiming at, think of the following situation. Let's say Cebes sees Socrates in a reflection and says "That's Socrates!". If what Cebes meant was that what he saw was Socrates himself – and not a reflection of Socrates – then he would have fallen prey to an ontological seeming. If, on the other hand, Cebes assumed that what he saw was only a reflection, and he meant to identify whose reflection it was, but would have said "Theaetetus" instead of "Socrates",

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3   See Moss (2014) for the argument that both perceptual and value-based seeming are caused by the irrational appetitive soul described in the *Republic*. For the argument that a base part of the rational soul is the cause for perceptual judgement see Nehamas (1982).

then he would have fallen into a genealogical seeming. As we can see, both types of seeming can be understood in terms of the relation between a model and its image. Plato draws on this distinction when he has Socrates describe the knowledge proper to a philosopher: "And because you've seen the truth about fine, just, and good things, you'll know each image for what it is and also that of which it is the image" (*Republic*, 520c-d). Thus, ontological seeming will amount to not acknowledging the image status of an image, while the genealogical type implies an error when connecting the image with its model.

Shifting our attention now strictly to the register of Form and particulars, we can in correlation to the two distinct senses of seeming presented above, determine two different ways in which the model, or the Form, is a standard of truth. First, in relation to genealogical seeming, i) it acts as a genealogical guide, or as a standard for true predication. This means that only by knowing the model can one identify which particulars possess the character of that model. To put it in a more Platonic formulation, only by knowing Virtue itself can one identify a virtuous act and a vicious one. Second, with regard to ontological seeming, ii) it acts as a standard of what is really real and truly true, i.e., of what it means to be "*F"* in the most proper sense. To illustrate, take the following propositions:[4] a) "Socrates' decision not to avoid punishment is just" and b) "Socrates' decision not to avoid punishment is not really/truly just." From the point of view of my analysis, both a) and b) can be true. While proposition a) refers to applying the predicate "just" to Socrates' act in the genealogical sense, proposition b) is ontological in that it does not deny the justness of the act, but that his act, or more generally that justice-in-an-act is what Justice truly and really is in and of itself.[5]

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[4] It should count as no surprise that we can analyze propositions as expressing one type or another of seeming. Propositions express judgements, and some judgements may be the product of either ontological or genealogical seeming.

[5] It is thus not a problem with Socrates' act, but with the fact that justice is *in* an act as opposed to being in and of itself. By analogy, the same reasoning would apply whenever we want to separate between a certain configuration of black chess pieces that happen to instantiate the checkmate position, being as it is dependent on the white pieces' configuration, and the rule of checkmate itself.

I will make a further distinction between two types of ontological and genealogical seeming. The first is a) *perspectival*, in the sense that the appearance is caused by perspective, taken in the widest possible sense, and deception follows from an imperfect access to the phenomenon. According to this first type, when "X" seems to be "Y", it only does so from a specific point of view. Changing the point of view, be it in a literal sense, or by uncovering new information about the phenomenon, will uncover it as a simple appearance. Thus, essential to this type of seeming is that we have at our disposal an explicit or implicit criterion of verification, i.e., a model by which we can expose something as an appearance.[6] The second type is b) *radical*, in the sense that the appearance is not caused by perspective and our imperfect access to the phenomenon, but by the implicit or explicit usage of a model that is bad, or of a bad definition.[7] As such, one can use bad definitions in a correct way in identifying particulars, yet still be subjected to appearances. The act by which someone instills in another such bad models I will call *heuristic-genealogical seeming.[8]* As we will see, while experience or measurement can dispel perspectival seeming, the latter radical type requires an altogether different type of measuring that can only be done through dialectic. In a nutshell, a) the perspectival type of seeming refers to bad or incomplete access to a phenomenon as a cause for error, while b) the radical type refers to the usage of a bad model for accessing phenomena as a cause for error.

I am aware that all this new terminology and plethora of distinctions can probably make the text hard to follow. Consequently, I propose to the reader the following schema of my paper:

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[6]   Some examples of this include believing the painting of the cobbler seen from afar to be a real cobbler (*Republic*, 598b-c), taking the submerged stick to be really bent (602c) or being charmed by meter, rhythm and harmony into believing the contents of a poem are true or wise (413, 601a). In all the cases above, the cause of seeming is not essentially related to our understanding of what it means to be *F*, but by our access to *F*. This is why even a child could realize that he is dealing with a painting and not the real thing just by moving closer to it.

[7]   Some examples include believing gold to be what it means to be beautiful (*Hippias Major*, 289e), taking bodily pleasure as real pleasure (*Republic*, 586b), or believing that the principles of returning what is owed represents the nature of Justice (331c-d).

[8]   A good example of such heuristic-seeming is the poets' description of the gods as changing and deceitful (*Republic*, 380d).

The main distinction: 1) Ontological seeming and 2) Genealogical seeming. The secondary distinction: a) Perspectival and b) Radical. Both elements of the main distinction will be separated in terms of the secondary distinction, giving the paper the following structure: 1a, 1b and 2a, 2b.[9]

At least to my knowledge, no clear articulation of these distinct senses of seeming has been made so far with regards to Plato's epistemology. Most of the times, authors use one sense or the other when interpreting some passage from Plato, but never in any consistent, methodical or explicit way. In order for that to be possible, one would require an analysis of the difference between these two main senses. I propose to offer such an analysis in this article. My account could benefit from a more in-depth look at the details of how the ontological is connected to the genealogical seeming, and also from an enlargement of the analysis to account for some possible objection not covered here.[10] It could also be assisted by a more direct confrontation with Plato's text, and especially with his own account of falsehood from the *Cratylus*, *Theaetetus*, and *The Sophist*. As it stands, this article intends to provide only a general theoretical framework that can be later supplanted and refined.

The model-image metaphor

Before delving in the analysis of the different types of seeming, we need to take a quick look at Plato's image metaphor. By way of this metaphor, we will be able to refer to the ontological structure that grounds the epistemological issues we are dealing with here. The language of model and image, and the relevant relation of model to image (i.e., the imaging relation) is used by Plato to convey the relation of the sensible to the intelligible: in the same way in which an image is said to be of its

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[9] If the reader wishes for a more concrete taste of these distinctions, he is invited to read the conclusion of this paper first, where he will find a side-by-side application of these notions on a case study.

[10] One such objection, for example, would state that the perspectival ontological seeming can be reduced to the perspectival genealogical type.

model, a particular is said to be *of* its Form. This is one of Plato's most prevalent metaphors.

From an epistemological perspective, the image was used in the *Sophist* to enable the possibility of falsehood in general. The image's ambivalence between truth and falsehood presupposes in turn a relation to the model taken as standard of truth. In other words, only images can be false, and their falsity can be acknowledged only in relation to the model. Model and images are thus related not only in the domain of ontology, but also in that of knowledge. If we are to understand how the model relates to the image with regard to seeing, we must first take a look at what the metaphor has to say with regard to ontology.

Taking the literal[11] sense of the model-image relation first, we can think of examples such as the relation between a tree and its shadow or its reflection in water, Socrates and a painting of Socrates, or an event and the verbal reproduction of that event. In the above cases, the latter element of the relation is the image,[12] while the former is the model.

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[11] For the sake of clarity, I will call the commonplace relata of the model-image relation the *literal* sense of the relation, because it refers to what we commonly take as being models and images. It is on the basis of this literal sense that we are to understand the metaphorical use which Plato will employ. The philosophical use by which the Forms are introduced as the real models, I will call the *metaphorical sense*.

[12] As Patterson (1985) points out, besides εἴδωλον, we also find μίμησις, φάντασμ, ὁμοίωμα, or εἰκών as alternative words for image. Depending on whether Plato wants to underline the common ground between image and original we will usually find εἰκών / ὁμοίωμα / μίμησις, or in case he wants to highlight the difference, φάντασμα / εἴδωλον. We must bear in mind that sometimes Plato uses "image" in a technical way, as identifying a proper particular, and sometimes in a purely pejorative sense, as pointing out a fraud. The way I see it, based on the discussion in *Republic* X, the image as fraud is nothing but an image of the image in the technical sense, as proper particular. The meaning of "fraud" or "fake" is used whenever Plato wants to highlight that it has taken the place of that of which it is an image of, the same way a painting of a tree could be taken as a real tree. If I correctly understand Notomi (1999, 153-154), he uses a similar type of reasoning when he interprets φάντασμα in the *Sophist* as an imitation of εἰκών. If this is the case, I must disagree, for there can be no real analogy between the way the painting of a tree passes as a real tree, and the way a false account passes as a true account. Truthfulness is not something that can be imitated, the same way a tree is imitated. In this article, I will not provide an alternative reading, but only the concepts from which an alternative reading can be constructed.

Plato uses examples such as these to lend force to his metaphorical and philosophical use of the relation when he describes the world as an image of the Forms (*Timaeus*, 29b), drawn geometrical shapes as images of those shapes in themselves (*Republic*, 510-511), facts and words as images of the things they are about, in this case φύσις (*Phaedo*, 100a-b), the written word as an image of the living and ensouled (*Phaedrus*, 276), time as a moving image of eternity (*Timaeus*, 37d), or the material bed as an image of the Form of the bed (*Republic*, 596-597).

It is vital to note that the elements from the two model-image relations, the literal and metaphorical ones, are part of the same metaphysical picture. That which most often is a model for images in the literal sense – trees, beds, actions, and the like – are at the same time images when understood under the metaphorical relation. The concrete bed is a model for the painted one, yet, at the same time, it is itself an image of the Form of bed (510-511). The same relation holds between the drawn geometrical figures and their reflections in water, and those geometrical figures and their Forms (510d-e). Thus, for Plato, the phenomena that are models in the literal sense are models only relatively so: they are models only with respect to their own images. What makes them relative models is the fact that they themselves share with their own images the characteristics of an image, they are generated, derivative, and dependent in both nature (how they are) and identity (what they are), to that which generated them, to which they are dependent in regard to nature and identity, and whose identity is autonomous. These ontological characteristics should be had in mind as essential to Plato's usage of the term "image" and not the accidental ones that come to mind when one thinks of ordinary images. The latter, in an ironic twist, provides a paradigm case for these ontological characteristics which constitute the essential meaning of "image."

As we can see, the concrete particulars, the phenomena we encounter in our everyday lives, play a double role for Plato: from the standpoint of the sensible world, and for the non-philosopher they are the ultimate reality – autonomous models for derivative things such as paintings, shadows or reflections, written or spoken accounts. The latter, being images, are said to be *of* their model. Their identity and sometimes their

existence[13] are dependent on it: it is by being *of something* that they are what they are, a shadow of a tree, a painting of a bed, an account of Socrates' just acts. The model thus constitutes the identity of the image. Yet from the standpoint of the metaphorical use of the relation, i.e., from the metaphysical standpoint, these relative models are themselves mere images, they are *of* their Forms in an analogous[14] way to how their images were said to be *of* them.

If we take the model-image relation as constituting the structure of the real, we can see how my two main senses of seeming can be applied. The first, which I have called *ontological seeming* would amount to taking what is only an image, be it in the metaphorical or the literal way, as playing the role of that of which it is, or purports to be, an image of. The second, or *genealogical seeming*, would consist of taking an image as being of a different model then the one it actually is of.[15] Both types of seeming, I will maintain, can be further divided along the lines of their objects: if the object of seeming is sensible, then the cause of seeming will be in some sense perspectival. I will call this species of seeming *perspectival seeming*, be it ontological or genealogical. If, on the other

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[13] This is true especially in the case of shadows or reflections. If the models cease to exists, so do the images. Paintings or sculptures, on the other hand, only depend on their model for their identity and not for their existence. For the argument that Plato has in mind in the first type of relation, see Allen (1960) and Lee (1964). For an argument for the second case, see Patterson (1985, 46-47, 171-180).

[14] As crucial as it is to understand the genitive sense of the *being of* relation that binds an image to its model for understanding how Plato saw the relation of Form to particular, such an analysis cannot be accomplished here. It would require a research project of its own, one that as far as I am aware of has yet to be undertaken.

[15] This would also account for seeming with regard to accidental properties, such as dimension, color, temperature and the like. The sentence "The stick is bent" could be taken to mean either that the particular stick is in part an image of Bentness itself or that the bentness in the stick is an image of Bentness. For the first analysis see Patterson (1985, 197-198), for the second see McPherran (1988, 533). With regard to the treatment of attributive statements as relational model to image statements: "What appear to be attributive statements are in fact relational or identifying statements, depending on the designation of their predicates. In derivative designation, to say of something that it is F is to say that it is causally dependent upon the F. Notice that "*F*" is here not strictly a univocal term, but a common name, applied in virtue of a relationship to an individual, the Form" (Allen 1960, 150).

hand, the seeming consists in investing an image with the role of a model I will call it radical ontological seeming. Radical genealogical seeming amounts to using unsound models in identifying particulars. When someone uses these models to teach others, I will call it heuristic seeming, which consist in describing a model[16] in a false way. This latter sense is the most general in scope, as it can imply, but is not restricted to, radical ontological seeming. One could describe Justice by using examples of actually unjust acts, or one could take what is actually a just act, but say that that act itself is what it means to be Just. In the following sections we will take a closer look at each of these types of seeming.

1. Ontological seeming

Taking into account the ontological distinction between model and image, we can understand ontological seeming in terms of the following error: investing what is only an image with the identity, the role or the function of the model of which it is an image. Alternatively, we can formulate this in terms of an improper unqualified application of a name:[17] if the name F belongs in a proper sense only to the Form F, an ontological radical seeming would consist in applying it unqualifiedly to a particular that poses it only relatively so, or through participation.

The Form of Bed, the concrete bed, and the painting of a bed, are all called by the name "Bed". Yet, the difference between them is of another kind as that between two particular beds, two different paintings of a bed, or between a bed and a chair, for instance. One, albeit partial, way of understanding this difference is through the notion of ontological dependence. While the Form of Bed is what it is without

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16   One way to make this clearer is by imagining that the genealogical seeming implies a "downward" movement of identification, from a model to an image, while the heuristic seeming suggests an upward movement of description, from the image as example to the model as what is exemplified.

17   Only the Form is called "F" in an unqualified manner, while the particulars are called "F" only qualifiedly so, or in relation to the Form, the proper bearer of the name. For a detailed development of this approach see Allen (1960, 149-151) and Patterson (1985, 69-70).

reference to anything else, the concrete bed is recognized as being "Bed" only in the light of the Form of Bed, the same way the painting of the bed is labelled "bed" with reference to the concrete bed. Thus, we can speak, at least in this case, of a hierarchy between three different ontological levels in which we can talk about the bed. The way we differentiate between them is by taking away or adding to their reality or truth,[18] which in turn is reflected in the way they deserve the *name* "Bed", either in relation to something else, thus qualifiedly, or in and of themselves, or unqualifiedly. By contrast, two different concrete beds deserve the name "bed" in the same way with regard to reality and truth, and should probably be differentiated with regards only to their matter, shape, and other accidental qualities. On the other hand, a bed and a chair, for example, would differ concerning the Form they instantiate, or, in the terminology I employ here, they would differ as to the model thy are images of.

Ontological seeming thus holds "vertically" in respect to ontological dependence, between that which can be understood as the generative formal cause and the generated particular. This type of seeming does not need to be an explicit assertion that "X" is what it means to be "Y", but, as is most often the case, just an implicit behavior that naturally assumes the sensible reality or the particulars to constitute the ultimate real. The reason I call this type of seeming ontological lies in the fact that it invests that which is generated, derivative and dependent, with the function of that which generated it, and to which it is dependent in regard to nature and identity.[19] To use a simile, this type of seeming would amount to taking the royal messenger as the king himself. By contrast, the genealogical seeming would amount to wrongly identifying who is the king's messenger. If the latter type consists in a wrong attribution of the predicate "messenger" to a subject, the former amounts to investing the messenger with real, true and ultimate authority. This distinction, I

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[18] For an interpretation of what constitutes for Plato the criterion by which something is considered more real and consequently more true, cf. Heidegger's analysis of being as presence (1997, 23) and (2002, 38).

[19] This implies that the function of the model, even if not understood thematically, is always at play. If we understand the function of this model as what makes intelligibility possible, we can already get a sense of why there is a problem in investing that which is made intelligible with the function of making intelligible.

believe, is reflected in Plato's emphatic usage of terms like "really real", "truly true" or "truer". These terms are used to differentiate between the proper bearer of a name, the Form, and that by which, through participation, a particular also receives its nature and name. As I shall discuss in the final chapter, this use should not be taken to mean that it is not true to predicate "*F*" about some subject, because it is only apparently so, as would be the case of the submerged stick that only appeared bent! The latter case is a type of genealogical or predicative use of seeming that should be carefully separated from the ontological one, which only governs the right use of the unqualified name.

The two readings of the model-image relation thus offer us two ways of understanding the ontological seeming. Under the literal reading, the model will be a particular such as a tree, a house or an action, while their images would be things like paintings, reflections or written or spoken accounts of these models. In this case we can think of situations as when one takes what is only a reflection for the thing reflected, or when one mistakes the painting of the tree seen from afar with a real tree. These cases fall under the category of *perspectival* ontological seeming. These, as we shall see, are due mainly to an imperfect or partial access to the object, which I will try to understand through the notion of perspective.

On the metaphorical reading we have seen that the worldly phenomena are models only relatively so: their identity is autonomous and they are generative causes *only* in relation to their images. In and of themselves though, they share with their images the same relation to the Forms that their images have with regard to them. What I have called radical ontological seeming comes about whenever one believes that the relative models of our worldly experience are the ultimately real and autonomous being, and thus invests them with the role proper only to the Forms. Thus, if the perspectival mode of seeming was caused by an incomplete or improper access to some phenomenon, the radical type consists in having a corrupted tacit or explicit understanding of what it means to be a certain phenomenon.[20]

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[20] In other words, while the former refers to deception stemming from our improper access to the phenomena of our experience, the latter points to deception coming from bad "concepts" with which we access this experience.

1.a   *Perspectival ontological seeming*

The perspectival type of ontological seeming holds only between what I have called the literal relata of the model-image relation, the phenomena of our everyday experience, and what we usually call images.[21] As the name implies, this type of seeming is dependent on perspective and because of this the mistaking of the model for its image is only temporary, or accidental. The examples Plato furnishes for this type of seeming are usually based on illusionistic painting. The painting of a cobbler – when seen from the right distance – can seem to children or to foolish people to be a real cobbler (*Republic*, 598b-c). In the *Sophist* (234c-b) the Stranger offers a similar example in the case of a drawing that seen from afar can seem real to some people. Both examples serve Plato in illustrating how the poet in the first case, and the sophist in the latter could seem for the ignorant to be able to produce everything there is, and thus to have universal knowledge. One of the tricks by which the deception of the poet and that of the sophist operates can be seen through the benign example of painting: like the painter, they create only the images of phenomena. These in turn make the audience, who "judge by color and shape" (*Republic*, 601) believe that they are in contact with the phenomenon itself.[22] Putting it in another way, the same way that for some children the visual aspect of a tree is enough to make them believe that what they are seeing is a real tree, so for the ignorant and young some aspect of virtue that shines through a discourse would immediately make them believe that they are witnessing true virtue. Yet, there is an important disanalogy here that we must be aware of. For

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[21]   It is vital that we understand the product of imitation on the lines of the image and not on that of the copy. Briefly put, the copy and the model are the same type of things, e.g., a key and the copy of a key are both keys, while the image must necessarily not be the same kind of thing as its model in order to be an image. For Plato's remarks on this subject, see *Cratylus* (432). For a development of the distinction between the model-copy relation and model-image relation, see Patterson (1985, 25-63).

[22]   This is far from the full picture of what happens in such cases. In my view, a proper analysis of the way the sophistic deception operates would require the careful deployment of the conceptual net I am trying to develop here. For this reason, in this article sophistic deception will not be itself rigorously analyzed so much as it will serve as an illustrative case for the concepts I am trying to present.

even children have a solid enough grasp of what it means to be a tree that they would be able to easily dispel the appearance were they to get closer to the painting. On the other hand, the audience of the poet or the sophist are so inexperienced in what virtue or wisdom are, that they will mold their understanding of these phenomena on the discourses they hear. What could be perceived as inadequacies in the discourse by someone who has real knowledge of virtue, for the ignorant would simply amount to another aspect of what virtue is. This is exactly the point the Stranger makes when he says that there is another type of expertise next to that of the illusionistic painter that "someone can use to trick young people when they stand even farther away from the truth about things" (*Sophist*, 234c-d). In this case, the trickery comes about not from the distance to the image, as was the case of painting, but from the distance to the "truth about things," or in my terminology, from their model.[23] This point should be kept in mind, for the perspectival ontological seeming fits neatly only for the painter, but it is not enough to account for the deception of the sophist or the poet.

Before moving on, we should take a quick look at some of the characteristics that make up the perspectival type of seeming, in order to better distinguish it from the radical type. These characteristics apply both to the ontological and the genealogical type that I will discuss later, but for now I will illustrate it using an example of ontological perspectival seeming.

1) It is dependent on perspective, i.e., it holds sway only as long as the right perspective is in place. The optimal perspective for an illusion makes only the identity between the image and the model visible, while hiding their difference. We can think here of how a painted tree seen from the right angle can seem to be three dimensional, or how a scarecrow seen from a certain distance could seem to be a real man. In both cases the aim of the former was to look exactly like the latter in

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[23]   Notomi (1999, 139) gives a similar reading to this passage, while Benardete (1984, 106) while giving the same interpretation to the structure of the argument, interprets the "truth about things" as indicating deceptive life-experience as opposed to discourse. I see no reason for such an interpretation, for I, like Notomi, believe that the contrast intended in this passage is between ignorance and knowledge, and not, as Benardete seems to imply, between ignorance from words and ignorance from life-experience.

some respect, and there is a perspective that allows exactly that. To put it more concisely, what enables the possibility of confusion between a thing and its image is perspective. The right perspective,[24] or point of view, is what enables the possibility to hide the obvious difference between the image and its model, and lets only what they have in common be seen.

From this point we can infer the second characteristic of the ontological perspectival seeming:

2) It rests upon an implicit or explicit distinction between model and image. Changing the optimal perspective can instantly uncover the image character of the phenomenon, e.g., looking at the painted tree from the side rather than the front can make it obvious that we are dealing with a painting and not a real tree. This tells us that we are consciously or unconsciously in possession of a regulative idea with regards to what it means to be a tree, and that the painting of the tree, upon further verification, does not pass the test. This is why someone who deceives in this manner always takes perspective into account.

The model, be it relative or absolute, or the criterion of what it means to be "X," is thus developed enough to allow for differentiations not only between trees and rocks, but also between trees and images of trees. It is essential to this type of seeing that there be a model in regard to which the image's character can be brought to light as a simple image, following an investigation. The model needs to be formally distinct from what shows itself, and to function as an evaluative criterion for the manifestation's claim to be this or that thing. The model is that which enables us both to doubt a manifestation's claim to being,[25]

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[24] Perspective is what makes this type of seeing possible, but it is not a sufficient condition for it. In order for someone to fall prey to an appearance, he must give his assent to it. Yet he can withhold his assent, or otherwise correct the appearance by means of his knowledge of the world. For a full discussion of the relation between belief and assent in Plato, see Moss (2014). For an account of how background knowledge can alter the beliefs formed about the same perceptual phenomena, and thus how the educated and non-educated can have completely different beliefs about the same phenomenon, see Silverman (1991).

[25] I am thinking here of situations when something appears to be the case, but we withhold our assent. In this sense I am saying that some manifestation "claims to be" something. A cardboard apple might appear to be a real apple, and thus "claim to be" an apple. The model, i.e., our implicit or explicit understanding of what an apple

while also providing the criterion on which to test it. There are some characteristics that we find necessary for a thing to be what it is. For example, if we were to get a closer look at what we thought was a tree, and find out that it was a two-dimensional painting, we would not say that we found a different species of tree, but rather an image of a tree. Because this type of seeming refers to the literal model-image relation, one need not be a philosopher in order to realize that what he is seeing is not the real thing. The model he uses in distinguishing the image from the original is constituted by the phenomena of his everyday experience. The fact that we are able to correct ourselves and be aware of the possibility of false appearances indicates that we rely more or less tacitly on a separation between model and image.[26]

The last characteristic of the perspectival ontological seeming is that:

3) It is possible only inside a medium. As Plato shows in the *Timaeus*, the notion of image presupposes that of a medium in which it can come about:

> Then we distinguished two kinds, but now we must specify a third, one of a different sort. The earlier two sufficed for our previous account: one was proposed as a model, intelligible and always changeless, a second as an imitation of the model, something that possesses becoming and is visible. We did not distinguish a third kind at the time, because we thought that we could make do with the two of them. Now, however, it appears that our account compels us to attempt to illuminate in words a kind that is difficult and vague. What must we suppose it to do and to be? This above all: it is a *receptacle* of all becoming – its wet-nurse, as it were. (*Timaeus*, 48e-49b).

Plato then adds, in Timaeus' words, that the image should not be taken as something in its own right, being as it is split between its debt for what it is to the model, and for the possibility of instantiating that identity to the medium:

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is, will operate as a criterion of verifying whether or not the cardboard apple's claim to be a real apple is justified or not.

[26] The lack of a distinction between model and image, as I will argue later, would amount to a Protagorean world, where images, and thus falsehood would be principally impossible.

> That for which an image has come to be is not at all intrinsic to the image, which is invariably borne along to picture something else, it stands to reason that the image should therefore come to be *in* something else (*Timaeus*, 52c).

In other words, when something manifests itself to us through a medium, we are in contact with an image of the thing,[27] and not with the thing itself. I believe that for Plato all but the soul's contemplation of the intelligible realities constitutes fundamentally mediated contacts with phenomena.[28] The concrete bed of our everyday experience is for Plato only an image of the Form of Bed, or, seen from the other way around, the concrete bed is the Form of Bed as mediated by the Receptacle. Yet, the concrete bed can also itself be subject to mediation: we can come into contact with it through its images, such as through painting, reflections or shadows.[29]

It must also have been – the image represents the model. The mirror might be straight and thus afford accurate representations, or it might be crooked and create inaccurate images. The example of the giant statue that is made disproportionate to compensate for perspective, and thus appear proportionate to the viewer (*Sophist*, 235-236d), proves that Plato was not only aware of the effects that a medium can have on how the image represents its model, but also that this effect can be predicted and used consciously. A second way in which the medium plays a determining role is by the fact

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[27] This is true only for one type of medium, for example the Receptacle, but not for the light in *Republic* (508), which is a medium in a different sense.

[28] The language used in the *Republic* when describing the philosopher's grasping of the Forms as "whenever someone tries through argument and apart from all sense perceptions to find the being itself of each thing and doesn't give up until he grasps the good itself with understanding itself" (532a-b), seems to me to support interpreting only the soul's contact with the Forms in terms of un-mediation.

[29] It could be argued, based on (*Republic*, 598a-b) that the visual image one has of the bed is precisely what the painter copies when he tries to impart it on a different matter, e.g., on canvas and paint (see Nehamas 1982, 263). The fact that one perceives images of things does not imply that Plato was a representationalist, because the image is not a mental entity, but an objective thing that can be perceived or copied. To put it differently, we perceive something which in turn is called an image as a metaphor to highlight its ontological status. This should not suggest that we perceive the world as mediated by something like mental images.

that it determines how, and in what respect the image represents the model. Different mediums offer different possibilities of representation;[30] think of how depicting a human being in sculpture, in painting or in speech will affect what the respective image will be able to say about their model.[31]

We can thus define the perspectival ontological seeming as the putting in place of a perspective or point of view inside a medium, where the difference between the model and the image is hidden in favor of their identity. As we have seen, a mere change in perspective could deal the killing blow for any such seeming. Yet, in order for that to happen, I argued that there must be in place either a tacit or an explicit separation between model and image,[32] where the model acts as a criterion for verifying the manifestation's claim to be the thing that it initially suggests to us that it is. The fact that Socrates says that "only children and foolish people" (*Republic*, 598c) could be deceived by the painter's illusionist painting, shows that for Plato this type of seeming was of no great concern. Rather, I believe the main reason he talks about it is the fact that, in this way, he can furnish an analogy for the type of seeming that befalls the prisoners in the cave, the radical ontological seeming.

1.b   Radical ontological seeming

This type of seeming occurs whenever one takes the phenomenal reality as being ultimately real, and not itself dependent on and determined by the Forms. It is thus a seeming that takes place between what I have called the metaphorical relata of the model-image relation. I believe that

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[30]   Cf. *Statesman* (286) where Socrates says that *logos* is the only proper medium for images of abstract notions.

[31]   For a more detailed account see my 2017 article *The Platonic Receptacle: Between Pure Mediality and Determining Cause.*

[32]   A change in perspective can prove the deficiency of phenomenon only if we have at our disposal a model, i.e., a criterion, in the light of which something could appear as a deficiency in the first place. Otherwise, we would have to take the would-be deficiency as just another property of the phenomenon, e.g., if we lack any prior substantial knowledge of trees, seeing that a tree was made of plastic would in no way prove that we are dealing with a fake tree. Rather we would probably be tempted to think that this is what trees are made of.

for Plato all but the true philosophers are experiencing this type of seeming and remain entangled in it.

The reason I have called it *radical* lies in the fact that it takes the relative models of the phenomenal world, which ontologically are just images, as – or in some way as – absolute models. This in turn leads to investing the image, i.e., the concrete particulars, with the evaluative and prescriptive roles that are proper only to the absolute model. The radical aspect of this seeming comes from the fact that that which is taken as a standard for what is real, and by extension that by which the real is judged, is itself, in Plato's terms, not really real, just an image. This opens up an important question: if the model by which we judge what is real is itself an image, that is, it is itself in a sense unreal, how is it possible for anyone to uncover its relative unreality? It is this apparent circularity that affords it its radical character.

One of the more poignant and explicit formulation the Plato has to offer regarding this type of seeming is the following:

> What about someone who believes in beautiful things, but doesn't believe in the beautiful itself and isn't able to follow anyone who could lead him to the knowledge of it? Don't you think he is living in a dream rather than a wakened state? *Isn't this dreaming: whether asleep or awake, to think that a likeness is not a likeness but rather the thing itself that it is like?*
> I certainly think that someone who does that is dreaming. But someone who, to take the opposite case, believes in the beautiful itself, can see both it and the things that participate in it and doesn't believe that the participants are it or that it itself is the participants – is he living in a dream or is he awake? (*Republic*, 476c-d).

In the case of the perspectival ontological seeming, it was the irrational soul that fell prey to optical illusions and that had to be corrected by the measurements (*logismos*) of the rational soul.[33] It was the rational soul's job to decide whether the two-dimensional painting of a tree, even

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[33] For a full analysis of the role the rational soul plays in dispelling appearances, see Moss (2008).

though it certainly looked like a tree from one side, has what it takes to be called a real tree rather than just an image tree. This procedure implies verifying the painted tree's claim to be a real tree upon the independent criterion of what it means to be a tree. The radical seeming on the other hand comes about when one ends up believing that the phenomena used as standards in the case of perspectival seeming are absolute models. It would be as if someone believed that the painting of a lyre is grounded and dependent for its identity upon a concrete lyre, but would not believe that the concrete lyre would need any further analogous grounding. In other words, he would accept that we recognize the meaning of the painting by reference to the concrete object, but would not extend the same relation of dependence to the concrete object and an intelligible Form.

Thus, it can be stated that the radical ontological seeming consists in applying the role of absolute models to phenomena which are only relative models. The perspectival ontological seeming was empirical, dependent on a point of view, and could be easily dispelled by a simple change in perspective. The radical ontological seeming, on the other hand, consists in taking as a criterion for what is real something that is actually an image. From this we can delineate two essential ways in which the radical seeming is different from the perspectival one.

First, in the case of the radical ontological seeming there is no independent criterion immediately at hand by which to dispel the seeming. If the model itself is imbued with the characteristics of the image, how are we to step outside of what it claims to be real, and judge it as unreal? This situation would at first hand seem as a case of one trying to jump over his own shadow. The second difference follows from the first: there is no possible change in perspective, no change within the properties of the pseudo-model which could show its inadequacy and as such expose it as an image, as long as we don't have any independent criteria of evaluation.[34] We can state this more

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[34] Alternatively, this can be understood as a case of not separating between intension and extension. In this case, all changes within the extension would reflect in the intension, and *vice versa*. If one were to take the meaning of "hot" to be a particular hot object and use it as a criterion to identify other hot things, then if the original object cooled down, then it would accordingly change the criterion by which hot

forcefully in terms of the cave allegory's notions, in the following way: *no event from within the shadow world could ever show us that it is a shadow world.*[35]

The paradigm case of this type of seeming can be found in the condition that befalls the prisoners in the cave allegory. Their reality, and consequently what they take as models for what is real, is made of mere images.

More concrete examples of radical seeming include Hippias' answer to the question of "what is Beauty?" with "gold" (*Hippias Major*, 289e), or believing the "friend of a friend" to be the friend itself – alternatively, confusing the means for the goal (*Lysis*, 219d). Socrates also warns in the *Republic* (597) that whoever were to take the bed produced by the carpenter as "completely that which is," instead of the Form of Bed, "would risk saying what isn't true". Also, the identification of true pleasure with bodily pleasures, which are described as "mere images and shadow paintings of true pleasures" (*Republic*, 586b) would constitute a common deception. Even the geometers can fall into the same kind of trap if they take, as Socrates indicates they often do, their hypothesis as real principles (533b). In the same vein, we can understand Diotimas' description of the journey of the soul from images of beauty, e.g., the beautiful body, or the beautiful soul, towards Beauty itself (*Symposium*, 210-211d), as a journey from the image towards the model. We can safely assume that if one were to voluntarily stop in his upward journey to one of these images of Beauty, he would do so only if he would

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things are selected. This, of course, would be highly implausible with something like hotness, but not so much with non-sensible concepts like virtue, or justice.

[35] An account of the platonic solution to this problem would require a work on its own. For now, I can only suggest that for Plato the relative-model is laden with tension. By this I mean that at closer inspection the nature of the image taken to be a model and the meaning of the model it is taken as, will come to light as different and inconsistent. Socrates usually exploits this inner tension when criticizing his interlocutors' choice for models, or for what a thing truly is. One of the most common ways of refuting his interlocutors, especially in the early dialogues, was for Socrates to prove that you can have the supposed model (the image), without the properties or effects of the model that it is supposed to be, i.e., gold without beauty (*Hippias Major*, 289e), or you could respect the principle of always returning what was borrowed without bringing about justice (*Republic*, 331c-d) etc.

wrongly believe that there is nothing better to be found, in other words, that he has found Beauty itself.

What we must be clear about is that the seeming in these cases consists not in saying that gold is beautiful, or that bodily pleasure is pleasant, but in thinking that gold is *the* Beautiful and not just an image of Beauty, that bodily pleasure is *the* Pleasure and not just an image of Pleasure. This is analogous to the way it would be correct to say that a painting of Athens is of Athens,[36] but not that it *is* Athens, or that a checkmate position is an instantiation of checkmate, but not the checkmate itself.

Why is radical ontological seeming bad?

In order to understand the negative consequences that radical seeming brings about, it is necessary that we take into consideration two things: the function that the model plays, and the nature of the relative models. With regard to the first aspect, probably the most obvious role that knowledge of the Forms plays in the practical life of human beings for Plato is that of standard for true predication, or true genealogy. This can be rendered as the Socratic assumption[37] that in order to know which mode of life is virtuous one must first know what Virtue itself is. In this light we can understand more clearly Plato's dismay towards the unreflective confidence in one's knowledge that Socrates' interlocutors so often exhibit. For if one either tacitly or explicitly takes as the criterion for being just some just act, or type of act, i.e., an image of justice, then whatever is true of that image will creep into the meaning of Justice itself. This, as we will see, constitutes a problem because the structure of the particulars precludes them from acting as absolute models.[38]

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[36] The analogy is not perfect, though. A picture of Athens will always be a picture of Athens, while gold, or a fair maiden could cease to be an image of Beauty. Socrates makes Hippias concede both that the wooden spoon can be more beautiful than the golden one, and thus make the latter appear ugly, or that comparing the goddess with the fair maiden would make the latter appear no prettier than a monkey.

[37] Geach (1966) goes so far as to call it the "Socratic Fallacy".

[38] For an account of how radical ontological seeming comes about in the first place that takes into consideration the epistemology of Book V of the *Republic,* see Smith (2012).

To the lover of sights who "doesn't believe in the beautiful itself or any form of the beautiful itself that remains always the same in all respects but who does believe in the many beautiful things", Socrates presses the question:

> […] of all the many beautiful things, is there one that will not also appear ugly? Or is there one of those just things that will not also appear unjust? Or one of those pious things that will not also appear impious?[39] (*Republic*, 479a-b).

It is one of the defining characteristics of the particulars that we cannot say of "any one of them any more what we say it is than its opposite" (479b-c). The contrast between the changing nature of particulars[40] as opposed to the unchanging nature of the Forms is also emphasized in the *Phaedo*, when Socrates asks whether they "in total contrast to those other realities, one might say, never in any way remain the same as themselves or in relation to each other?" (78e).

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[39] Against the approximation view that would suggest that a beautiful particular can appear ugly because it is imperfectly beautiful, see Nehamas (1975). I agree here with Nehamas that what makes the sensible world roll about between extremes is the fact that their being "X" is dependent both on relation to other things and on context. This interpretation allows that in a determinate context we can say with confidence that something is just rather than unjust. Yet even if some action is just in a given circumstance, that does not guarantee that it will be so in all circumstances. See Patterson (1985, 95-100) for a critique of what I too believe to be wrong with Nehamas' position.

[40] I believe we can understand the ever-changing nature of the particulars in a twofold fashion. Taking first the relative possession of properties, one thing's being small or large, hot or cold, beautiful or ugly, depends entirely on how it relates to the thing compared to. Thus, one and the same particular can have the same height and the same temperature, and still be dubbed large or small, hot or cold, depending entirely on what it is compared to. The other sense of changing relates to the determinate properties that something has, e.g., someone might be six-foot-tall and have a body temperature of thirty-six degrees Celsius. These properties are also liable to constant change. Thus, particulars not only possess their properties relatively, but the relative relations between particulars are themselves liable to constant change. This in no way precludes the possibility that there can be true predication about particulars as long as the statement is qualified. For a more detailed account of the changing nature of particulars see Fine (2004, 54-57).

The case of the misologues from the *Phaedo* makes an emphatic case for the consequences of demanding of that which is inherently unstable and always changing, i.e., the image, to act as a model, and consequently to act as criterion for what is real and for the nature of things:

> Those who spend their time studying contradiction in the end believe themselves to have become very wise and that they alone have understood that there is no soundness or reliability in any object or in any argument, but that all that exists simply fluctuates up and down as if it were in the Euripus and does not remain in the same place for any time at all. (*Phaedo*, 90b-d).

This is a good example of how the lack of a clear distinction between the argument[41] and the thing the argument is about ends up transferring the properties of the argument upon the thing the argument is of. This in turn bestows upon the practitioners of eristic a false type of wisdom. By analogy, it would be as if someone who saw different paintings of Athens at different times would end up believing that Athens itself was changing. An even more radical situation, and, I believe, the final stage of the eristic false wisdom, would have someone believe that there is no difference at all between the paintings and Athens.

Because for Plato the aim of politics is so intimately connected with justice, we can see why the ability to clearly separate model from image, an ability which distinguishes the philosopher from the common folk, also translates in the logic of the Republic as the criterion which separates the should-be ruler from the ruled:

> Since those who are able to grasp what is always the same in all respects are philosophers, while those who are not able to do so and who wander among the many things that vary in every sort of way are not philosophers, which of the two should be the leaders in a city? (*Republic*, 484b-c).

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[41] The argument and the thing the argument is of constitute a case of the image-model relation. In the *Phaedo* Socrates later compares arguments with images: "I certainly do not admit that one who investigates things by means of words is dealing with images any more than one who looks at facts" (100a1-2).

One way,[42] then, of understanding the negative impact of the radical ontological seeming, is that by investing an image with the role of the model, we end up doing and asking of it things that should be asked and done only with something that has the characteristics of a true model. Radical seeming weighs heavily especially upon practical questions as "What is virtue?" or "How should one live?" Thus, for example, someone, by seeing how actions that he at one time took not only *as* just, but as a model for justice, at another time appear unjust, could start believing that there is no stable nature to justice at all, that it is always changing and shifting. The Platonic insight against such tempting relativism comes, I believe, by way of an analogy: the same way you won't judge a lighthouse to be unstable and ever-changing just because it appears to change in size as you move closer or further away from it, i.e., the same way in which you separate between images of the lighthouse and the lighthouse itself, the same should be done with Justice and just acts.

In order to get a more revealing look at the character of the radical ontological seeming, we must revert back to the relation of dependence that the image has to its medium. As the *Timaeus* (48e-52d) showed, the Forms needed a medium in which to imprint their character in order to give rise to the images. Accordingly, the image has a twofold origin. One the one side it is indebted to the Form for its character. On the other side, it is also indebted to the Receptacle for its existence.[43]

If the image-nature of a phenomenon is hidden, i.e., if it is believed to be an unmediated showing of the true reality, then it follows that so is the presence and consequently the effect that the medium[44] has

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[42] If this argument relies on the practical consequences of radical seeming, another, probably more fundamental way for Plato of understanding the problem with radical seeming would appeal to the proper function and place of the soul. As we see most poignantly in the *Phaedo*, the soul's contemplation and nearness to the Forms is good in itself.

[43] And, arguably, for all the characteristics that particulars have and which do not originate from the Forms, such as spatiality, visibility, composability, decomposability, being in flux and being perceptible.

[44] Hiding the image status of a phenomenon equates with hiding the medium, and *vice versa*. In the absence of a medium, we do not have the logical resources to talk about seeming as opposed to being. In other words, in the absence of a medium, of that

on the way it appears. If one were to believe that what he sees is not mediated in any way, he would not be able to use the word "appear" to indicate change, for instance, but rather only "is." Looking at a stick that appears bent when submerged and then taking it out of the water, he would not be able to account for the change in aspect by saying that the stick merely appeared bent, while being straight all along, but rather that it was bent and then it straightened out. This is due to the fact that we usually distinguish between the actual properties that a thing has, and the apparent properties that are due solely to the influence of the medium in which we perceive the object. If we cannot find the medium accountable for the property "bent" that the stick took on when submerged, and thus construe it as an apparent property of the stick, then we are forced to take it as a real property. If one presupposes that he has an unmediated contact with some object, then he does not have the tools required to construe any of the changes the object suffers as apparent changes. Rather, whatever aspect the object takes will have to be construed as a real change in the object itself.[45]

The relevant point here is that if one takes what is ontologically an image as a model then, because images are ever-shifting between opposites, he would be compelled to believe that the model itself suffers these changes, and consequently end up entertaining the same type of beliefs[46] towards Justice for example, as do the misologues with regard to the objects of argument: namely, that all "simply fluctuates up and

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which mediates the model through images, we do not have the possibility of doubt: whatever presents itself to one cannot be separated from what is. If for example, we are not aware that we are watching a video projection of a locomotive coming towards us, we would have no resources to doubt that a locomotive is indeed heading our way. The fact that Plato was aware of this logical implication can be supported by the fact that in *The Sophist* only the image can carry falsehood, and so only the image can support the possibility of doubt.

[45] Consider the case of an object that constantly shifted colors. Think of how one would proceed in deciding whether the object actually changes color or if instead the colors are due to some source of light that is projected on it.

[46] This type of relativism must follow at least an active reflection on the subject matter, so it would not be a danger for the usual Athenian who, if we are to take the Socratic dialogues as reference, has difficulty in even understanding what Socrates means when he asks of them to give an account of the unitary aspect of a thing. Rather, I believe, this position is more closely related to the sophists.

down as if it were in the Euripus and does not remain in the same place for any time at all" (*Phaedo*, 90b-d).

One of the main functions of the model is that of stating how things ought to be in order to be recognized as images or instances of that model. If the model we use is not authentic, then all the genealogies that we will use it for run the risk of being wrong. If, for example, we take bodily pleasure as being what Good is, then by this one radical ontological seeming countless genealogical ones will follow. A crooked model of the Good will be used to wrongly identify what is pleasurable as what is good in any given situation, at the expense of what is truly good. Now we shall turn to one of the main consequences of the radical ontological seeming: genealogical seeming.

2. *Genealogical seeming*

One plausible interpretation of how Plato conceived of the way we identify the character of particulars is that it goes along the same lines that one would proceed when connecting an image to the model it is of.[47] Following this interpretative direction, whenever we get something wrong about a particular, either if we identify it wrongly or we predicate something false about it, we are committing what I called a genealogical error. If the identity of particulars is provided by the Forms through participation, then whenever we determine a particular in some way, either as being this or that, or as being in this or that fashion, we do so by identifying it as an image of some Form. When we say something like "That statue is proportionate," we take something *as* a statue, and also *as* being proportionate. Yet, in both moments of judgements we can err:[48] what we took as a statue could prove to be a painting, and what looked proportionate from a distance might seem disproportionate from a better point of view. Thus, this type of seeming occurs when what is

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[47] See Allen (1960), Lee (1964), Patterson (1985), for authors that take the model-image metaphor as crucial for understanding the relation of Form to particular, and of predication.

[48] For an analysis of the relation between the structure inherent to judgement of taking "something as something," see Heidegger (1997, 416-417) and (2002, 220-221, 225).

ontologically an image is incorrectly identified, i.e., whenever it is put in a genealogical relation with, or as participating in the wrong model.

The main difference between this type of seeming and the ontological one can be put as follows: while the ontological referred to the act of collapsing the difference between model and image by placing the generated in the role of the generative, the genealogical on the other hand refers to the act by which we connect them in a wrong way.[49]

In this section I shall talk about two types of genealogical seeming. The first is perspectival. It regards wrongly connecting an image to its model because of the cosmetic effects that the medium can have on the image, thus making it appear as of some other model then its true one. The second type I have called radical. This concerns wrongly connecting an image to its model due to the model having been defined in an improper way. Even though one can use a bad definition correctly, this will still not get him any closer to the truth.

We can think of situations like wrongly identifying a person when he is far away, misidentifying the subject of a painting, taking an object's reflection as being that of another, or, through some ingenious trickery on Theaetetus's part, taking him to be flying when he is actually just

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[49] We should resist the temptation of reducing the radical ontological seeming to the genealogical one as still another case of predication. While the genealogical is concerned with identifying the character of something following a pre-established criterion of identification, the ontological concerns these criteria of identification themselves. While the former refers to rule following, the latter is a matter of rule setting. By analogy, in the case of chess a genealogical seeming would consist of wrongly identifying a position as checkmate, while an ontological seeming would be more akin to taking a certain checkmate pattern as being what checkmate is. Yet, if in this case the distinction is more poignant, it may seem a lot fuzzier between the two types of perspectival seeming. In this case it could seem that we lose nothing if we reduce the perspectival ontological seeming to a sub-species of the genealogical type. Mistaking a painting of a man as a real man seems to be structurally identical to mistaking a man for a tree. More so, depending on how we understand the elements that make up deception, we could turn the tables, and construe all genealogical seeming as following the fundamental structure of the ontological one. An argument of why I believe this distinction should be maintained would require a research into the causes and elements that make up seeming which is beyond the scope of this article. As it stands for now, perspectival ontological seeming can do for us what it did for Plato, that is, offer us an analogy by which to understand the radical type.

sitting. Closer to Plato's concerns, we can think of taking an unjust act as being just (as an image of Justice), an impious act as being pious, a virtuous way of life as being vicious. These errors can be caused either by our mediated and imperfect access to phenomena, in which case they are merely perspectival, or by using corrupted models, in which case they are radical. By contrast to the radical ontological seeming that takes a just or an unjust particular to stand for Justice itself, genealogical seeming amounts to identifying the act *as* just, as an image of Justice, when it is not so.

The ability to make a correct genealogy, i.e., to say to what model an image belongs to, is dependent on a prior knowledge of the model itself. The assumption that you cannot correctly identify the instances or images of a something if you do not know that thing in itself (an assumption specific to the Socratic dialogues) comes into play in the *Republic*, when Socrates expresses the condition of the philosopher who returns to the cave: "And because you've seen the truth about fine, just, and good things, you'll know each image for what it is and also that of which it is the image." (*Republic*, 520c-d).

In the same vein, when talking about the true meaning of musical and poetical education, Socrates asks "isn't it also true that if there are images of letters reflected in mirrors or water, we won't know them until we know the letters themselves?" (402b-c). He then goes on to say that no one can claim to be educated in these arts unless he has knowledge of the virtues and vices that manifest through them "and see them in the things in which they are, both themselves and their images [...]" (402c5-6).

The analogy between the blind and the ignorant is brought up in relation to the Guardians for the same reasons. They are to look, in the manner of painters, to the true models and to establish and preserve the conventions, that, as their images, reflect them the best:

> Do you think, then, that there's any difference between the blind and those who are really deprived of the knowledge of each thing that is? The latter have no clear model in their souls, and so they cannot – in the manner of painters – look to what is most true, make constant reference to it, and study it as exactly as possible. Hence, they cannot establish here on earth conventions about what

is fine or just or good, when they need to be established, or guard and preserve them, once they have been established. (484c6-d3)

We can see instances of this applied philosophical knowledge both when Socrates distinguishes between "true falsehood" that resides in the soul, and falsehood in words, which he describes as "an image of it that comes into being after it and is not a pure falsehood" (*Republic*, 382b-c), and also when true justice, as the proper organization of the souls' parts, is distinguished from "the principle that it is right for someone who is by nature a cobbler to practice cobblery and nothing else, for the carpenter to practice carpentry, and the same for the others", of which he states that it "is a sort of image of justice" (443c).

Thus, we can see how the knowledge of Forms guarantees not only the bringing to light of the images' character as mere images, that is, ontological knowledge, but also the unveiling of their identity, or, in other words, genealogical knowledge. Coming back to *Republic* (520c-d), the double knowledge that the philosopher possess regards the ability to know each "image for what it is", i.e., merely an image, a generated and derivative being, but also "that of which it is the image of,"[50] thus genealogical or practical knowledge.

2.a   *Perspectival genealogical seeming*

This type of genealogical seeming is due to the distortions that the medium in which the image manifests effects upon the image. We can think of optical illusions, like those that make the straight stick appear bent (*Republic*, 602c), or of great distances that can make the disproportionate statue appear proportionate (*Sophist*, 236). Language itself is a medium, and as a medium it can effect changes to the way the phenomena that are manifested through it come out on the other side; we can think here of rhetorical devices of all sorts, that make the weak

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[50]   One interesting thing is that not all images are equally hard to identify. In the *Phaedrus* (250b-c), Socrates says that while Beauty shines through its image, it makes a sensible appearance. On the other hand, the images of Forms like Virtue or Justice, which are more abstract and non-sensible, are very hard to identify.

argument appear strong (*Apology*, 18c), eristic tricks that create mere verbal contradictions (*Republic*, 454a), or poetical devices such as meter, rhythm, and harmony who charm the soul (*Republic*, 413, 601a). All these can be seen as analogous means by which to create illusions in the medium of *logos*, comparable to the perspectival tricks in the medium of sight. Socrates highlights the persuasive effects that poetical devices have on our judgment:

> So great is the natural charm of these things — that he speaks with meter, rhythm, and harmony, for if you strip a poet's works of their musical colorings and take them by themselves, I think you know what be they look like. You've surely seen them. […] Don't they resemble the faces of young boys who are neither fine nor beautiful after the bloom of youth has left them? (*Republic*, 601a-b).

In short, in all this cases the medium effects cosmetic modifications, so that the phenomenon reflected in it resembles another model than the genealogically proper one: the stick appears bent (an image of Bentness) when it is not so, the act appears virtuous (an image of Virtue) when in fact it is not.

2.b   *Radical genealogical seeming*

If the perspectival genealogical seeming was caused by a distortion of the image by the medium, in this case the seeming is caused by the fact that one uses an improper model or criterion for identifying images. We can, nonetheless, in a formally correct way, connect an image to its model, but if the model is badly constructed, then we are going to make only a seemingly true genealogy. This would be the case whenever one would correctly identify an act as being pious according to a certain understanding of what is pious, but would get the definition all wrong.

Before moving on, I should clarify the difference between the ontological and genealogical type of radical seeming. One way of putting it is that the ontological seeming describes the state of one's soul in terms of *hexis*, as affected by radical ontological seeming, while the genealogical one is

a description of the same state seen from the actuality of knowing, and refers to the effect that affection or *hexis* has on knowing.[51] The first describes the cave allegory's prisoners' unawareness of the shadow nature of their reality, the second the effect this unawareness has on the way they judge something to be this or that.

In order to keep close to Plato's own concerns, I will present the notion of radical genealogical seeming through its heuristic causes. Heuristic genealogical seeming refers to an act of teaching by which a model is described by way of images not proper to it. This is one way someone ends up with bad definitions of models, and it's the one on which we will focus here. For example, we can think of a situation where one would describe Socrates to another person who does not know him, using characteristics that are not his own, as having long blond hair, and a sharp nose, for example. Or, more in tune with Plato's concerns, we can think of a false teacher of virtue who describes and in effect teaches what virtue is, in ways not proper to its character. It is thus a matter of using a corrupt model to identify particular instances of it, which in turn are used in a pedagogical manner to describe and instill that unsound model in the student.

I believe that it is on heuristic grounds that Plato launches his attack on the poets and the way they represent the Gods as ever-changing and deceitful in the *Republic* (379-386). Socrates compares their accounts of the gods to the works of a bad painter: "When a story gives a bad image of what the gods and heroes are like, the way a painter does whose picture is not at all like the things he's trying to paint" (377e). Following such bad descriptions, a corrupt model will be formed inside people's minds that will lead them to use it for bad genealogical practices: identifying which characteristic or behavior is godly, divine, or not, basing such identification on a wholly corrupted criterion.

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[51]   By analogy, we say of an eye that it has myopia by looking at its inner structure, but we can also call someone's vision myopic. In the latter case we do so either for a) referring to one way of unclear vision – the myopic type –, or b) for the purpose of indicating the structure of the eye as a cause for the unclarity of vision. In this analogy, the ontological stands for the myopia of the eye, while the genealogical refers to a) the unclarity of the vision that derives from it, while at the same time it can be used to point out to b) its structural cause, the configuration of the eye.

Referring to poetical images Socrates states: "All such poetry is likely to distort the thought of anyone who hears it, unless he has the knowledge of what it is really like, as a drug to counteract it" (595b).

In the same way that only the one who knows the truth about some event first hand can have a sure way to identify false accounts about it, so it is in that only an unmediated contact with the Form offers someone the possibility of being uncorrupted by ignorant or deceitful accounts.

Throughout the *Republic*, the art of measurement ought to hold the key for verifying genealogies and dissipating mere seeming. Yet, measurement implies that we take the measure of the model first, going past the image, to the thing itself. Only after this procedure is finalized, i.e., only after we get the measure of the model,[52] are we able to measure each image's claim of being of this or that model, and decide whether it is justified or not.

While there is a true danger that the average Athenian will be misled by perspectival genealogical seeming about vital things, such as through the tricks of rhetoric, there is a limit to sophist or the rhetor's power. As long as the discourses refer to one's line of work, where he has experience with how things really are, perspectival seeming loses its power, and the heuristic one is simply out of the question.[53] But how will one protect himself from heuristic genealogical seeming about more abstract things like virtue, justice and the like? The notions of what virtue or justice is has been instilled in them by the poets from a young age using, in Plato's view, untrue images. In other words, how does one come to find out that the models he uses in identifying what is virtuous and just are themselves false? By proposing an answer to this question, we can get a glimpse at how these types of seeming intertwine.

I propose that for Plato heuristic genealogical seeming about abstract notions has as its fundamental origin radical ontological seeming. Bad models, or bad descriptions of models, are created because they derive from an unreflective total reliance on particular instances of "F" as paradigms for what it means to be "F".

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[52] See Deleuze (1983) for the position that the myth usually plays this role for Plato in the dialogues.

[53] Socrates makes Polus concede the point that the rhetor can only convince the ignorant that he is a better medic than the actual medic, but not the knowledgeable in the art of medicine (*Gorgias*, 459b).

If we accept that heuristic genealogical seeming has as its essential source radical ontological seeming, then there could be only two ways out of it according to Plato. The first one would suppose placing trust in the images produced by the philosopher. This is the attitude expected of the auxiliaries (*Republic*, 414b). Analogously, the producers of Book X must place their trust in the advice of the users (601d-602). Yet how could one really be sure that he is following a truly wise person and not just a fraud, a sophist?[54] The second way is that of the philosopher, and it implies arriving on your own at the model. This is described by Plato as: "whenever someone tries through argument and apart from all sense perceptions to find the being itself of each thing and doesn't give up until he grasps the good itself with understanding itself" (*Republic*, 532a-b), thereby identifying this process as dialectic.

Conclusion

As I hope to have shown, seeming is no straightforward, univocal notion for Plato. The differences I have argued for here are nowhere explicitly distinguished in the dialogues. This, of course, does not mean that they are not at play. I believe that by reading Plato with these distinctions in mind one can benefit from a ground from where to interrogate the text in a more systematic fashion whenever he comes across seeming or its cognates. Many times, the reason we feel a sense of confusion regarding a passage and are unable to tackle it directly lies in the fact that we lack the conceptual ground from where to ask questions that would, if not dispel the confusion, at least articulate it as a problem. As is often the case with philosophical research, my goal here was not primarily to provide answers for any questions or problems, but to provide a ground for asking questions. There are many passages that when read without these distinctions in mind can seem simply baffling. How can there be something "truer" than something else? What are we to make of the fact

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[54] Cf. Notomi's (1999) idea that in order to be able to identify the sophist, one must do so by philosophizing, and consequently by becoming a philosopher in the process.

that just things also appear unjust? Is Plato somehow a relativist all of the sudden? Or what sense does it make to talk about "fake pleasure"?

Keeping in mind the distinctions that I have provided here we can ask in a more systematic way what Plato has in mind whenever he talks about seeming:

a) Is he pointing to a radical ontological seeming? Is he trying to say that the deception consists in believing that particulars constitute the ultimate reality, and that they, instead of the Forms, are invested with the function of providing a criterion for what is real, and for what is true?

b) Is he concerned with a perspectival type of seeming, where deception arises from something that interferes with our access to phenomena? Is he referring here to optical effects and illusion, rhetorical devices that charm the soul, and other types of what he calls "magic tricks"?

c) Is he thematizing radical genealogical seeming and deception that arises from being in possession of notions or models that, upon elenctic trial, prove to be unsound and self-contradictory? Or is he concerned with the heuristic side of genealogical seeming, the imparting of crooked models by way of improper images?

In this way, we are provided with a lot more interpretative room when trying to figure out what Plato is aiming at when he makes a statement involving deception. Let's take the proposition "Callicles' act only seems to be just" as a sample case. It can be interpreted along the lines of a), as stating that it is not true of the act that it is true justice, meaning that it is not the Form of Justice. This has no bearing whatsoever on whether the act is actually just or not, in the sense of it being an image of justice. What it denies is the act's being what Justice is, but not whether it is just or not. We can also read it as b), a problem of improper access to the phenomenon. On this reading it is denied that the act is truly an image of justice. The reason we thought it was stems either from the fact that we knew too little of the situation, and "saw" it only from where it appeared just, or that we were charmed by some discourse that made it appear so. Lastly, c) we could read this line as denying that the act is an image of justice, but in this case the accent is placed not on our access to the act, but on our criteria from which we

access something as just, or our criteria of predication. In this case it is a problem of bad models, which need to be tested on their own through dialectic means.

I am in no way trying to suggest that we can find these questions as separated thematical inquiries. Rather, most of the time they are intertwined, either in the way of illustrating each other, or as constituting interconnected moments of each other, where one presupposes and anticipates the other one. As such, we cannot expect to find these senses at work as different autonomous themes of inquiry. Rather, the sole purpose of these distinctions is to highlight the different senses that Plato relies on whenever he makes a case about what is essentially a whole, unitary concern. By asking questions like "What is virtue?" Socrates in effect asks: "By reference to what do you make your genealogies of virtue?". The model is thus brought to light from its unreflective use and tested for cracks. Seeing that the model is full of cracks, though, is just half the journey. Seeing that by virtue of which you can see the cracks brings one's soul to its proper home through *anamnesis*. It is only thus that the most radical seeming is unveiled.

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