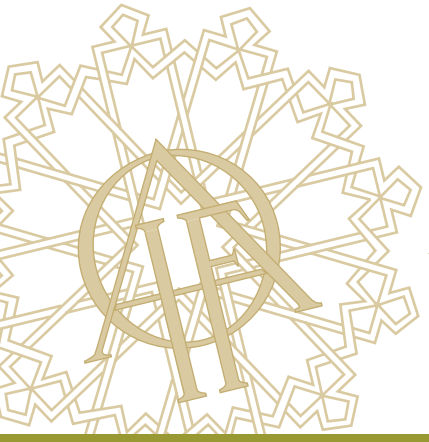
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ANNALES ISLAMOLOGIQUES

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Sufis and Soldiers in Mamluk Cairo. Parading the Aesthetics of Agency

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RICHARD MCGREGOR

Sufis and Soldiers in Mamluk Cairo

Parading the Aesthetics of Agency

More than twenty years ago the historian Carl Petry pointed to an important dimension of the "civilian elite" of medieval Cairo. His extensive analysis of the various groups that made up Egyptian society led him to the conclusion that civilians under Mamluk rule were not without the means to defend themselves against the power that loomed over them from the lofty ramparts of the citadel. More specifically, Petry's data revealed to him a situation in which the civilian elite resisted Mamluk power through their association with "Sufism." Petry followed this observation with the tentative proposal that the Mamluks were intimidated by the unseen power of the Egyptian mystics. We are told, "… the Mamluks, despite their own military and political preoccupations, tended to respect, even to fear individuals exhibiting a special relationship with the divine. *Did such awe provide persons associated with Sufism a buffer, or even a lever, against Mamluk incursion?*" Assuming this lever existed, it would make perfect sense for the Egyptian elite to associate with this power. Answering his own question, Petry continues, "If it did, then such leverage would constitute a powerful incentive for civilians to develop ties with the Sufi establishment—and to guarantee that the [Mamluk] military caste did not." Further on, he asserts that Sufism offered the civilian elite protection. We are told that, "Those elements of the civilian elite seeking to maintain their autonomy from Mamluk influence dominated the Sufi configuration." Later Petry narrows his reading of all this, attributing a strategic intentionality to the learned classes—a strategy that wielded "Sufism" as a defensive weapon. In the context of the common identity of many Sufis and ulama, he writes, "Of all civilian elements, the ʿulamāʾ were the most determined to ensure their autonomy under the Mamluk yoke. *Identification with Sufism may well have provided*

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a means to that end."[1] The suggestion here is that the ulama who were also Muslim mystics, or who revered Sufi saints, or associated with Sufi brotherhoods, were simply positioning themselves strategically in opposition to the governing Mamluk authority.

The picture that emerges is one in which "Sufism" constitutes a battlefield, with victory going to the side that controls the higher ground. In this scenario the Mamluks try to control "Sufism" by patronizing it, while their opponents, the ulama, counter by identifying themselves with the Sufi tradition. Sufism is thus a force to be either appeased or appropriated; it is not an independent social or political actor. Sufis are neither agents nor competitors, and Sufism has become an empty category to be contested and occupied by interests external to it.

I open with these comments to illustrate an elegant yet imperfect treatment of Sufism as a social phenomenon in medieval Egyptian society. The following study will turn to the practices of Mamluk period Sufism with precisely this issue of agency in mind. As a focus, I propose the case of what was likely the most prominent Sufi order of the period, the Sādāt al-Wafā'iyya. This micro study will make two things clear; first it will attend to the problem of agency as a social drama, and second it will characterize the nature of an explicitly Sufi practice of power. This study will allow us to correct the misconception of an agent-less category of Sufism by making clear the mechanism by which space was made available for Sufi practices of power. Following the insights of Michel Foucault, which view power as a system that at once empowers and subjugates, and in conversation with Judith Butler's observations on agency and regimes of power, our Mamluk period practices will be better situated in their performative and strategic settings. We will situate our micro study against Saba Mahmood's recent treatment of religious authority in the public sphere, and argue that Sufi practices are neither imitative nor normative, but rather parallel non-rivalrous assertions of power. This last point will be further articulated through a discussion of Gilles Deleuze's conception of the simulacra, or the image without an original—a discussion that makes room for similarity in form and gesture, but which fundamentally preserves the agency of this Sufi practice of power.

The historical material I will survey is drawn from accounts of the public life and rituals associated with the Wafā'iyya Sufis. A series of anecdotes preserved in the hagiographic literature will illustrate the overlap and points of contact with the Mamluk military and political authorities. Most of this material is anecdotal, and thus not verifiable by other sources, but its value here is to provide us with a typical Sufi perspective on relations with the Mamluk ruling class.

The Sādāt al-Wafā'iyya family, with Maghrebi roots in the city of Sfax, was established in Cairo by Muḥammad Wafā' (702/1302-765/1363). He was known for his Sufi poetry, and for his daring mystical speculations. His son ʿAlī Wafā' (759/1357-807/1405) followed him in his mystical concerns, and was key in securing the Sufi legacy of the family. Both Muḥammad and ʿAlī were prolific writers; at least twelve works from the father and eight from the son have survived. The efforts of this father and son pair met with much success, and as Sufi shaykhs their sanctity (*walāya*) allowed them to establish their own branch of the Šāḏiliyya

1. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo*, p. 270.

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Sufi order. The leadership of this order was to stay in the family until the beginning of the twentieth century. The Sādāt al-Wafā'iyya controlled significant wealth, and would be counted among the most important civilian families of Cairo for five centuries. This family and Sufi order maintained a high profile across the city: the first family home was on al-Ruda island, a substantial funerary complex was established in the Qarafa cemetery (approximately 1200m east of al-Šāfiʿī), a Sufi lodge was built about 300m west of al-Aqmar mosque, and large family home was built on Birkat al-Fīl in the eighteenth century.[2]

From the outset the shaykhs of the Wafā'iyya asserted their authority in very tangible ways; public acts of veneration by their followers were common. Ibn Ḥağar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) praised ʿAlī Wafā's intellectual attributes, but objected to his followers and companions gesturing in prostration towards him.[3] Further displays abound in both public rituals and in the hagiographical literature: our Sufis mount regal parades of their own, and relate stories of miraculous checks on oppressive excesses of Mamluk princes. We will return to the nature of these displays below. The ritual and material overlap between Sufi rites and kingly practices has always been significant. The Wafā' shaykhs initiated their adepts by conferring upon them a "crown" (*tāğ*), a common practice in Sufism across the Muslim world.[4] Another symbolic bestowing of authority was the transmission of a special belt (*šadd*) to followers, recognizing them as accomplished initiates. In Mamluk courtly ceremonies, various robes of honor were conferred upon favorites by the sultan, although he himself never wore a crown. In an ironic reversal, the Sufi tradition of conferring a patched frock (*ḫirqa*) provides another well-known dimension to this parallel.[5] Yet we shall see that these practices of crowning followers and ritually bestowing belts, while mirroring rituals of military and political power, are just the beginning of this material relationship between Sufis and Mamluks.

One might wonder if historically these activities were peculiar to the shaykhs of the Wafā'iyya. In fact both within Egypt and the wider Islamic world one finds Sufi shaykhs appearing to challenge political authority and wielding their own symbols of agency. For the Mamluk period the observation has been made that Sufi terminology appropriated much from the political vocabulary of its time. Jean-Claude Garcin points out several key terms, e.g. *al-qawm* (group, community), *ḫidma* (service), *dīwān* (parliament), *dawla* (empire), which are found in both domains.[6] Further semantic and literary analysis would be welcome in elaborating these parallel uses of vocabulary. While such analysis is not the concern of the present study, our conclusions below relating to simulation and Sufi agency would remain relevant.

2. McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism in Medieval Egypt*, p. 58-59. More on these sites below.
3. Ibn Ḥağar, *Inbāʾ*, 2:308.
4. Al-Bakrī, *Kitāb bayt al-Sādāt al-Wafā'iyya*, p. 57. Very likely this was simply a colored piece of cloth wrapped in ones turban. See also W. Bjorkman, "Tādj."
5. For a recent study of this in its Egyptian context see Gril's "De la *khirqa* à la ṭarīqa," p. 58-81.
6. Garcin, "Les soufis," p. 29. For an anthropological analysis of Egyptian Sufism stressing the *dawla bāṭiniyya* see Reeves, *The Hidden Government*. For more on internal Sufi vocabulary relating to the recognition of authority and power, see Chih, "Sainteté, maîtrise spirituelle et patronage".

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Let us turn to some specific historical examples of contestation and conflict. In several instances the Wafā'iyya literature illustrates an authority that stood in tension with that of the Mamluks. In the hagiography *al-Minah al-ilāhiyya* we read of Muḥammad Wafā' saving one of his followers from being hanged by an unnamed Mamluk amir.[7] In another story the same Wafā' shaykh suffers the confiscation of part of his property on Ruda Island, at the *"qaws,"* by an amir, but in a pun the hagiographer resolves the crisis telling us that "… the arrow of this plot hit him (the amir), having been shot from the bow (*qaws*) [of God's wrath]." The divine anger took the form of the Sultan's punishment—a beating that led to the amir's death.[8] The unnamed Sultan again serves the shaykh's end perfectly when one follower is pressed in to manual labor at the Sultan Ḥasan *madrasa*. The *murīd*, one Ibn Raimūn, objects to this obligation saying he can only serve the great Muḥammad Wafā'. For his devotion to the shaykh, Ibn Raimūn is miraculously delivered from his bondage by an official edict *"marsūm al-Sulṭān"* delivered by a soldier on horseback, forbidding his further humiliation and ordering his release from service.[9]

In an even stronger vein, accounts of the career of the third Wafā' leader, Muḥammad Abū al-Fatḥ (d. 852/1448) present the Mamluk princes as virtual subordinates to the Sufi masters. Attendees at the Sufi gatherings under Abū al-Fatḥ included not only the leading ulama of the city, but also amir al-Ẓāhir Ǧaqmaq, who would eventually rise to rule Egypt as Sultan from 842/1438 to 857/1453.[10] The Wafā'iyya held their *mawlid*, a saint-day celebration honoring Muḥammad Wafā', in the middle of the month of Šaʿbān. As with other *mawlid*-s the occasion attracted many visitors, both wealthy and common. The travel writer Evliya Chelebi (d. 1091/1682) describes the celebrations at the Sādāt *ḫānqāh* in the Qarafa cemetery, attended by admiring princes (*baʿd al-umarā' al-muḥibbīn*) and "hundreds of thousands" of men, women and children.[11] The following story, showing that Ǧaqmaq was more than just a visitor, is clearly speaking to agency and authority:

> Among Abū al-Fatḥ's miracles was the occasion upon which Sultan Ǧaqmaq was serving him during the great *mawlid*, and (Ǧaqmaq's) turban was knocked off due to the surging crowd. Something profound happened to him at that point. The teacher (Abū al-Fatḥ) then declared: "To the Sultanate, O Ǧaqmaq!" At which point he composed himself. It would not be long until he would claim the Sultanate, with the help of his teacher (Abū al-Fatḥ).[12]

7. Abū al-Laṭā'if, *al-Minah al-ilāhiyya*, fol. 4a.
8. *Ibid* 7b. This "*qaws*" or arcade was the western remnant of the Rawda Island Fortress established in the Ayyubid period. Most of the Fortress was disassembled and taken to the Citadel by Sultan Qalawun in the Bahri period, but the arcade stood at least until 820/1417. Maqrīzī, *al-Ḫiṭaṭ* 3:587. The Wafā' home was near al-Muštahā, a pavilion area dating back to the Fatimid era, that during the lifetime of Muḥammad Wafā' became identified with a *ribāt-masjid-zāwiya* belonging to shaykh Muḥammad al-Kāzirūnī (d. 774/1370). Maqrīzī, *al-Ḫiṭaṭ* 4:800, 3:475, and al-Suyūṭī, *Kawkab al-Rawda* , p. 108-111.
9. Abū al-Laṭā'if, *al-Minah al-ilāhiyya*, fol. 4b.
10. Al-Šawbarī, *al-Tarǧama al-Wafā'iyya* , fol. 5b, and al-Bakrī, *Bayt al-Sādāt*, p. 42.
11. Chelebi, *Siyahatname*, p. 591.
12. Al-Šawbarī, *al-Tarǧama al-Wafā'iyya*, fol. 6b. This is not the only narrative preserved of Ǧaqmaq's deference of Sufi shaykhs, see the episode with Muḥammad Farghal described in Gril's "Saint des villes", p. 75. However,

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In this passage, Ǧaqmaq is presented essentially as a *murīd*, taking his spiritual direction from the Wafā' shaykh. He loses his turban in service to the shaykh and is rewarded with the sultan's crown.

Beyond these miraculous episodes preserved in the hagiography, the most dramatic public presence of the Wafā' shaykhs was their tradition of parading. The Fatimid rulers had set the precedent, and various public rituals relating to the New Year and the Nile flood were regular occasions for the practice.[13] Mamluk Sultans were also avid paraders, appearing at public festivals and organizing processions to mark momentous developments in their rule such as triumphant returns to the city. The itinerary appears to have varied little, beginning at the northern gates of Bāb al-Naṣr, moving along the main artery, Bayn al-Qaṣrayn, and either ending at Bāb Zuwayla or continuing on to the Citadel. The monumental gates, the decorated streets, and the ramparts of the Citadel together formed a backdrop rich with symbols of power.[14] The historian al-Maqrīzī tells us that Sufi shaykhs also paraded through much the same public spaces. Just as a powerful aura is generated around emperors and kings by restricting access to them, only to play off of this tension with carefully orchestrated public appearances, so too our Sufi leaders held to a well-rehearsed performance. ʿAlī Wafā' and his brother shaykh Šihāb al-Dīn Abū al-ʿAbbās (d. 814/1412) would normally remain concealed from the public, only to appear in full display on special occasions. These events would include processions to visit their father's tomb in the *zāwiya kubrā* in the southern Qarafa, at the foot of the Muqattam mountain.[15] This parade from their *zāwiya-ribāṭ* in the Ḫurunfuš quarter to the Qarafa would almost certainly have taken the Wafā' shaykhs and their substantial retinue through the main artery of Darb al-Aḥmar, the monumental gate of Bāb Zuwayla, and past the Citadel. These processions were described as lavish, "*mawkab ḥāfil*."[16] It was established tradition (*ʿāda qadīma*)[17] that upon his ascension to the head of the Wafā'iyya Sufi order, each new shaykh would seclude himself in the *zāwiya-ribāt-mašhad* at Ḫurunfuš, and emerge in mounted procession. The hagiographer al-Šawbarī writes of this practice, reporting on the parading that marked the accession of Shaykh Abū al-Taḫsīs (d. 1098/1687) as follows:

> When he succeeded Abū al-Luṭf, Abū al-Taḫsīs proceeded to the Ḫuruštuf (Ḫurnfuš) shrine accompanied by princes and religious scholars. There he recited the prayers (of the Wafā'iyya) according to custom. He then set out to visit the graves of his ancestors in the Qarafa cemetery.

Ǧaqmaq could also deal harshly with his Sufi enemies; see Darrāǧ (ed.), *L'acte de waqf de Barsbay*, p. 21.

13. Canard, "La procession," p. 365 ff, and Sanders, *Ritual*, p. 83 ff, and Lutfi, "Coptic Festivals of the Nile," p. 255, and Maqrīzī, *al-Ḫiṭaṭ*, 3:356.

14. Maqrīzī, *al-Ḫiṭaṭ*, 3:357-8, 4:1016.

15. Al-Maqrīzī as quoted in al-Bakrī, *Kitāb bayt al-Sādāt al-Wafā'iyya*, p. 43. E. Chelebi, *Siyahatname Misr*, p. 405, later attests to the Wafā' practice of secluding its leaders. Chelebi calls the Wafā' *zāwiya kubrā* both a *ḫānqāh* (p. 591) and a *tekke* (p. 320).

16. Al-Bakrī, *Kitāb bayt al-Sādāt al-Wafā'iyya*, p. 59.

17. *Ibid.*

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> This procession consisted of an initial group of scholars and jurists on foot, followed by the shaykh on horseback surrounded by princes and a second group of religious scholars. They proceeded in great pageantry and solemnity, as was the custom.[18]

We are not told the precise route this procession took, but it is very likely that it passed along the Darb al-Aḥmar, through Bāb Zuwayla, past the Citadel, and continued southward to the family shrine in the Qarafa.

While these episodes clearly demonstrate Sufi agency, the last one is of particular interest. It is illustrative of an agency and practice of power manifested through a public display that is not a copy of military parading, but instead a simulation. A copy or a true rival to Mamluk authority would have brought the wrath of the Sultan and his amirs down quickly on any civilian or soldier who would dare mount such a ritual challenge. Asserting agency was a delicate negotiation, but one that was successfully managed thanks to the nature and context of these Sufi parades. In essence, although these processions resembled a military model, they were in fact simulacra or simulations, conceptually distinct and thus non-rivalrous, going unchallenged by the military authorities of the citadel. I will elaborate further on the simulacrum below, but first the point needs to be made that these Sufi parades were the vehicle for an agency that simultaneously asserted itself and yet recognized its other.

This insight has been advanced in another context by Theodor Adorno, but it applies equally well to our Cairene performances. Adorno's conception of an artwork's relationship to itself and its immediate context partially captures the dynamic tension between the Wafā' shaykhs and the Mamluks highlighted in our study above. Briefly, Adorno insists on holding an artwork's autonomy together with its wider social and historical context. He goes further, claming that this individual or internal autonomy in fact depends on context: "Art is autonomous and it is not; without what is heterogeneous to it, its autonomy eludes it."[19] In other words, an artwork needs to distinguish itself from its surroundings, but it is these very surroundings that provide the context against which that artwork defines itself. With both of these elements fully in play, the nature of this differentiation comes into focus. This illuminates an important dimension in our understanding of the tension between the Wafā' shaykhs' practices and those of their Mamluk rulers, a dimension that rests not on the formal similarities between the two parading traditions, but rather the need of each for the other in determining its own autonomy. In other words, these are not competing claims to a single contested authority, but rather independent gestures that depend on each other. To push our point further, this is not only a power that is coherent, that reflects an active agency, but also the reality that this gesture is in relation to something outside of it, beyond it, but not utterly foreign. Again, Adorno's insights on an artwork's relationship to the world around it are helpful. He makes clear the link between an object's success as an artwork, and the wider context that is simultaneously at play in such an experience.

18. Al-Šawbarī, *al-Tarǧama al-Wafā'iyya*, fol. 11a.
19. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 6.

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> What is required is experience of works rather than thoughts simply applied to the matter, yet no artwork adequately presents itself as immediately given; nor is it to be understood strictly on its own terms. All works are formed in themselves according to their own logic and consistency as much as they are elements in the context of spirit and society… True consciousness of the external world participates in the work's immanent coherence.[20]

We might imagine a bystander's perspective on the Sufi parades, with all the alternative expressions of public performance constituting the "external world." Adorno's point for our purposes is to anchor the imposing "immanent coherence" of our Sufi parades—the ways that it makes sense, at both the abstract and sensual levels—fully within the experience and consciousness of the context. While Mamluk parades certainly do not represent the entirety of the "external world" of a Sufi parade, they were clearly an obvious and central component. Our brief historical survey above, noting overlap of material form, along with the fact that various princes participated in both sorts of processions, make this clear.

My argument on Sufi agency is not one that simply opposes Sufi shaykhs to Mamluks, bestowing an abstract power upon the former at the expense of the latter; rather it is to reconsider the function and circulation of power in a way that illuminates the phenomenon of Sufi parades. We must move away from conceiving of power as a finite quantity to be disputed by competing interests. Foucault's thinking sheds light on some of this when it widens out our common one-way or top-down models of power. He says that, "power exercised on the body is conceived not as a property, but as a strategy… One could decipher it in a network of relations, constantly in tension, in activity, rather than a privilege that one might possess."[21] The key insight here is that power is relational in nature, against the common view that sees power as something that can be held exclusively by a dominant actor. As a network or a process, power, "… is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the 'privilege,' acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions…"[22] Power exercised on the body, then, is more than the control of a subordinate, it is the system itself in which these procedures and outcomes are realized. The so-called subordinates are thus more than passive objects of control, rather they have become indispensable components of the entire project, since, "… this power is not exercised simply as an obligation or a prohibition on those who 'do not have it'; it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them…"[23] Thus recognizing the agency of our Sufi paraders does not take away from Mamluk power or agency, rather together they constitute the single regime of power in which they are both anchored.

Building on Foucault's insight into the diffuse nature of power, Judith Butler has proposed the concept of 'performativity'. Butler wants to recover the agency of actors we would normally

20. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 349.
21. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 26.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 27.

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see as subordinate within the prevailing paradigm of power.[24] She does this by first pointing out that any system or regime of power includes the means to its own destabilization. That is, in asserting norms, a dominant agent not only actively engenders its power, but also puts those same norms into play, thereby opening up a ground for contestation.[25] It is this potential contestation, delivered by the regime of power supporting the dominant agent, which threatens that same regime. Ironically, the agency of the subordinate players is thus dependant upon the assertion of the same norms that confirm the agency of the dominant.[26]

Butler takes her observations further by pointing to a secondary dimension of performativity. This is an account of agency that includes the possibility of challenging dominant norms, and reversing positions of privilege. This is not simply resistance of the subaltern within a regime of power, but a real occasion to resignify dominant norms. From this vantage point Butler is offering us a choice of two perspectives on the agency of the non-dominant actor. Within a regime of power such an actor performs on the existing stage—one that stands thanks to the expression of power itself—but this actor may also move to appropriate or redefine this stage.

In a recent study of a women's religious revival movement in Egypt, Saba Mahmood has made the case for yet another position within the regime of power. This movement presents Mahmood with a puzzle: how to account for a version of subaltern agency (here women within a highly patriarchal society) that seems to actively confirm the existing dominant norms and power structures. Rather than carving out its own space for resistance, this movement seemed to deny its own members' agency. In response, Mahmood proposes a reconsideration of the notions of 'subversion' and 'change.' Within the performativity of contemporary Egypt, she agues that this movement, while subverting gender norms and changing the daily lives of women, does not disrupt but rather confirms the dominant normativity.[27]

While Mahmood's take on agency and performativity give her tools to open new explanatory perspectives on Islamic practice, they shed little light on our examples of parading. Our processions rely on the 'performativity' that encompasses both Sufis and the Mamluk ruling class, and in this sense confirm our readings of Foucault and Butler above. However, the Sufi parades do not constitute an agency that seeks to 'resignify dominant norms,' and thus are not fully explainable under Butler's system. Against this dimension of Butler's conception of agency, and Mahmood's norm-confirming activists working within the dominant paradigm, I want to argue that our Sufi processions constitute a third case; not a confirmation of normativity, not a disruptive imitation threatening its original, but a counter performance or oblique simulation of the Mamluk exercise of power. I believe this characterization offers us a satisfying solution to the dilemma embodied by our Sufi parades: on the one hand these processions share a formal similarity with military parades, yet they are never taken as true rivals for Mamluk authority.

24. Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 234.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 122ff.
26. Butler, "Further Reflections", p. 14
27. Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety*, p. 164.

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We may here enlist Baudrillard's treatment of the simulacra. Key to this concept is the distinction between pretending, which simply masks reality, and simulation, which "threatens the difference between the 'true' and the 'false', the 'real' and the 'imaginary."[28] Sufi procession is such a simulation threatening the difference between a true and a false exercise of power. It is empowered by assuming a disruptive ability, which in its potentiality is a practice of power. The reality then is that our Sufi processions are not "false" Mamluk processions, but are their own gestures of agency, and stand as unopposed practices of power thanks to their escape from the true/false criteria. They are simulations that do not depend on an original, and are thus fully agents. By contrast, examples of rival military displays could not pass unopposed since they would be defined by their orientation and origin in existing parades. They would constitute what Baudrillard calls a simple *distribution of the real*.[29] Another example of a "pretending" procession would be the parades of reversal, associated with the Egyptian or Coptic Nawruz festival marking the beginning of the agricultural new year. Here a local man of low standing was appointed Prince of Nawruz by the crowds, and was paraded with a false beard and outlandish clothing. In his procession he was accompanied by false scribes and jailors, all of whom joined this "Prince" in extorting small bribes from merchants and the upper class, through the levying of mock fines. Typically, this comic Princely imposter met a violent end, his dress being symbolically burned at a concluding bonfire.[30] In our analysis, this absurd Prince is a pretended rival to the ruling powers; he wields power, albeit in a safe theatrical context, contesting that of the sovereign. Although the procession occurs in a predictable and humorous context, the false Prince remains a disguised imposter, and thus the entire display is infused with tension that can only be resolved by his execution, and the reassertion of social order. In contrast, our Sufi parade is never interrupted, or even challenged. It thus cannot be seen as an imitation or appropriation of the power and agency of Mamluk processions. Understood as a simulacrum our parade is not a rival to an original; no original is fully present—as part of the equation of representation—to ever be brought into conflict with the Sufi parade.

This distinction between copies and simulation goes back to Plato, where it was originally taken as a dichotomous pairing of true and false representation. Simulacra were taken to be false pretenders, relying on "an essential perversion or a deviation,"[31] while copies confirmed resemblance to the Idea of an original thing. So conceived, simulacra were an aggression, a subversion that avoided passing through the Idea.[32] The nature of the copy does capture something central to our examples of rivalrous military or mocking reversal parades. Here we may point to the return to the Idea of the original as the site of conflict between our examples of non-Sufi parading and the Mamluk authorities. In as much as they contest and trespass

28. Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, p. 3.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
30. Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, p. 43, 51. Shoshan provides material on *amīr al-nāwrūz* from the 14th century up into the 20th. One 19th century tourist to Cairo records the mockery of a "grotesque" judge in rediculous dress, being paraded in the city to mark the Hajj season. See Lane Poole, *The Englishwoman in Egypt*, p. 57.
31. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 256.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

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upon an original authority, they are threats, and the Mamluk regime will thus intervene to preserve itself.

Yet the alternate side of the dichotomy does not apply; that is, the Sufi parades were not taken to be deviations or perversions. We have seen Baudrillard's recovery of the simulacrum beyond the true/false dichotomy, but Gilles Deleuze takes up the simulacrum and asserts the empowering and positive character of its distance from an original. In order to do this, he turns away from the model/reproduction or the essence/appearance distinction, and concludes that the simulacrum is not a reduced or degraded version of its original. Resemblance persists, but now only as a formal parallel between disparate components. It is this denial of the original that generates a positive power.[33] It is through its otherness, "a becoming always other… able to evade the equal, the limit, the Same or the Similar…"[34] that the simulacrum asserts its "repressed power"—a power that is generated by the simulacrum's harnessing of heterogeneous perspectives. By encompassing the truly disparate within itself, drawing them together in an "internal resonance," the simulacra steps beyond its subordination to any origin or model.[35] Its resemblance to other objects persists, but this resemblance is not essential, since it relies on only one perspective within the complex of heterogeneous and irreconcilable points of view, all of which are incorporated within the simulacrum.[36] So the Wafā' Sufis paraded their power, asserted their agency, in a familiar yet dissonant form; their challenge is thus oblique, and difficult if not impossible for the Mamluk authority to respond to. As Baudrillard would put it, the simulation of an offence can never be punished "*as simulation* since it is precisely as such that no equivalence with the real is possible, and hence no repression either. The challenge of simulation is never admitted by power…[37]

33. *Ibid.*, p. 262.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 261.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 262.
37. Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, p. 21.

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