Critical Terms for Art History
Second Edition

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Contents

Alex Potts

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Three **Simulacrum**

Michael Camille

At least since Plato the theory and practice of the visual arts have been founded, almost exclusively, upon the relationship between the real and its copy. This duality has shaped the writing of art history as a story of the "conquest of the real" from Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* to E. H. Gombrich's *Art and Illusion* and has helped define modern art movements, like abstraction, that consciously rejected iconic resemblance. The simulacrum has been repressed in this history of representation because it threatens the very notion of representation itself. This is because it subverts the cherished dichotomy of model and copy, original and reproduction, image and likeness. For while the mimetic image has been celebrated as an affirmation of the real, the simulacrum has been denigrated as its negation. An image without a model, lacking that crucial dependence upon resemblance or similitude, the simulacrum is a false claimant to being which calls into question the ability to distinguish between what is real and what is represented. The simulacrum also disturbs the order of priority: that the image must be secondary to, or come after, its model. For these reasons, in ancient and medieval discourse on the visual arts, the term was almost always used negatively, to define things that were deemed false or untrue, the idols of the "other" as against the proper icons and images of "our" churches and institutions. Then for half a millennium the term went underground, hidden under the surfaces of "lifelike" statues and "naturalistic" paintings produced by a Platonically driven "high art" culture that prioritized the "idea" over its object and focused upon the role of the artist as secondary copier of nature rather than the status of the copy itself. Only since the 1960s—in response to a breakdown in the solidity of the "real," its massive mediation by new technologies of the visible, the increasing numbers of images permeating everyday life and concomitant transformations in what is considered "art"—have philosophers, critics, and, most crucially, artists themselves returned to the repressed term "simulacrum" and revived it as a crucial concept for interrogating postmodern artistic practices and theories of representation.

The Latin term "simulacrum" has its crucial beginnings in Plato's Greek dialogues, where it appears as the term we would translate as "phantasm" or "semblance." Plato sought to distinguish essence from appearance, intelligible from sensible, and idea from image. His famous banishment of painters from his republic was founded upon the embodiment of truth in the *Eidos* or Idea and his deep mistrust of "the imitator," who, "being the creator of the phantom, knows nothing of reality" (*Republic* X, 601 c). The simulacrum is more than just a useless image, it is a deviation and perversion of imitation itself—a false likeness. Plato describes this in a famous passage of the *Sophist* (236 a–d) where Theaetetus and the Stranger discuss image making and a distinction is made between the making of likenesses ("eikons") and the making of semblances ("phantasms"). Likeness making involves creating a copy that conforms to the proportions of the original in all three dimensions, "whereas sculptors and painters who make works of colossal size" often alter the proportions to accommodate the perspective of the viewer. So that the upper parts do not look too small and the lower parts too large "they put into the images they make, not the real proportions, but those that will *appear beautiful.*" Whereas the icon is "other but like," the phantasm only appears to look like the thing it copies because of the "place" from which we view it. Plato's dialogue goes on to call into question the status of this image of an original, for if it is not the original we see, it must be something else—a simulacrum, a false claimant to being. The Platonic task is therefore to distinguish, in Gilles Deleuze's terms, "between good and bad copies, or rather copies (always well founded) and simulacra (always engulfed in dissimilarity)." The complex associations of language making (sophistry) and image making (mimesis) in Platonic philosophy (Rosen 1983) go beyond the subject under discussion here, but it is crucial to understand that what disturbs Plato is not just that the plastic realm of "fiction" is something dead that only seems to be alive but what we would call today the "subject position" of the beholder. It is the particular perspective of human subjectivity that allows the statue that is "unlike" and misproportioned in reality to *seem* "like" and, moreover, beautifully proportioned from a certain vantage point. From the beginning, then, the simulacrum involved not just image makers but also their viewers.

The Mosaic prohibition against idols in the Old Testament restated the Platonic position far more crudely. In Christianity, however, there was an ambiguity surrounding the image. At the same time that it was a Platonic "false claimant" it was also the means by which God created man "in his own image" and Christ was incarnated. The Latin term *simulacrum,* used as a negative term throughout the early Middle Ages, has a second period of discursive intensity during the thirteenth century when it appears in theological discussion and in the writings of writers on optics like Roger Bacon and John Pecham. In this pe-

riod, during which vision and observation took priority in the human sensorium and Platonism was eclipsed by a more materialistic Aristotelian view of the world, the emanations of visual *species* in the anatomy of the eye and fascination with optical devices like mirrors encouraged artists and poets to think about images not as simple copies of the world but as phantasmic alternatives to it.

In an essay first published in 1967, "The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy," the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze attempted to "reverse Platonism" and in so doing refounded the simulacrum as a crucial critical and art-historical term for our own times (Deleuze 1990). The term was already renascent in French postwar writings and had been used by the surrealists, especially in essays by Georges Bataille and the painter Pierre Klossowski (1963, 195–96) in their attempts to describe the noncommunicable dimensions of the pictorial sign. Deleuze's more distinctive manipulation of the idea was far more powerful and influential in that it replaced the Platonic priority of model over copy with an inverted system in which the simulacrum does not have the claim of the copy. "The copy is an image endowed with resemblance, the simulacrum is an image without resemblance. The catechism, so much inspired by Platonism, has familiarized us with this notion. God made man in his image and resemblance. Through sin, however, man lost his resemblance while maintaining the image. We have become simulacra. We have forsaken moral existence in order to enter into aesthetic existence" (Deleuze 1990, 257).

Deleuze goes on to claim that "to reverse Platonism" means to make the simulacra rise and to affirm their rights among icons and copies. The problem no longer has to do with the distinction between essence and appearance or model and copy but rather with erasing these distinctions entirely.

> The simulacrum is not a degraded copy. It harbors a positive power which denies *the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction.* At least two divergent series are internalized in the simulacrum—neither can be assigned as the original, neither as the copy. . . . There is no longer any privileged point of view except that of the object common to all points of view. There is no possible hierarchy, no second, no third. . . . The same and the similar no longer have an essence except as *simulated,* that is as expressing the functioning of the simulacrum. (262)

The "point of view," which was at the very fulcrum of Plato's construction of the phantasmic simulacra—the colossal statue as viewed from the ground—is here displaced. Precisely because there is no point of view the difference between icons and simulacra disappears. It is difficult to assess the impact of these pronouncements upon artists of the sixties and seventies, but Deleuze was certainly conscious of their critical relevance, arguing that

modernity is defined by the power of the simulacrum. . . . The artificial and the simulacrum are not the same thing. They are even opposed to each other. The artificial is always a copy of a copy, which should be pushed *to the point where it changes its nature and is reversed into the simulacrum* (the moment of Pop Art). (265)

Rather than locate simulacral strategies in contemporary art, as Deleuze did with individual artists like Andy Warhol and Francis Bacon, Michel Foucault looked earlier to surrealism for the simulacrum in modernity. In his famous essay on the work of the Belgian surrealist artist Magritte, Foucault provides a searching analysis of the problem of the real, focusing on the paintings that call into question the ontology of the object itself—"Ceci n'est pas une pipe." Foucault also unpacks an alternative story of modernism, which incorporates the notion of the simulacrum to define what Magritte is trying to do. Foucault was one of the earliest to see the radical aspect of Deleuze's reversal of Platonism; in his essay "Theatrum Philosophicum," Foucault showed how the "philosophy of representation—of the original, the first time, resemblance, imitation, faithfulness—is dissolving; and the arrow of the simulacrum released by the Epicurians is headed in our direction" (Foucault 1977, 172). The threat posed to traditional art-historical methods by the simulacrum is here made explicit. What art-history monograph does not place heavy emphasis upon the "original" works that are ascribed to an artist, the "first time" in the sense of origins and sources for styles, and "faithfulness" in terms of the social world that whatever painter is recording in paint? Significantly, this interest in the simulacrum arose in the French philosophical context of the sixties (Deleuze, Foucault, and Klossowski) and not in art production and criticism itself, although pop art and other movements in Britain and the United States seem to have discovered the lure of the "false" in painting and sculpture at exactly the same moment. France's long philosophical anxiety around the visual recently explored by Martin Jay (1993) and its Catholic fascination with idolatry and iconoclasm still present in the writings of the phenomenologists and Sartre had fascinating repercussions in French discourse, but not in images. This was the period when art criticism in the United States was at its most "high modernist" and antitheatrical, obsessed with the quest for authenticity and feeling, the Platonic "Idea" displayed in the romantic "last gasp" of minimalism. If postwar France had lost the lead in twentieth-century art making and New York "stolen the idea of Modern Art," the French made up for it in the simulacrum of the word. Their writings, not about art, but about theories of language and poststructuralist philosophy, could then be exported to New York and applied to the art object. By the eighties journals of contemporary art like *Artforum* and *October* presented Baudrillard, Derrida, and Deleuze as constituting a radically new inter-

national discourse of art, far more influential, in fact, than anything merely made or painted.

Another crucial medium of twentieth-century image making which would ultimately help undermine modernist paradigms and for which the simulacrum came as a useful, though complicated, term of reference was photography. This played upon the identity of the image as simulacrum in a special way for a number of artists working in the seventies, who emphasized photography's nature as a multiple, reproducible challenge to "auratic" art and to the related humanist assumptions of authorship, subjectivity, originality, and uniqueness. The impact of photography in culture is only just beginning to be understood, influenced by what is, perhaps, the single most discussed and influential cultural essay of the century, Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," first published in 1936 but endlessly reprinted and quoted over the past two decades. If the simulacrum is not a key term in Benjamin's analysis, his celebration of photography and cinema and discussion of the decline of the aura are part of a similar renegotiation of modernity in terms of image production that does not prioritize the relations between the copy and its model (Benjamin 1968).

A 1984 photograph by *New York Times* photographer Paul Hosefros in which President Ronald Reagan addresses the Republican National Convention via closed-circuit TV while Nancy waves from the podium to the TV screen was well chosen to illustrate the reprinting of an essay by Jean Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra," when it was reprinted in an anthology of postmodern art criticism (Wallis 1984, 260). This image shows the simulacral president par excellence blown up to gargantuan size as a ghostly idol adored by his worshippers, as nothing more than an image (Plate 3.1). But an earlier, subtler instance of presidential representation that reveals the same problems of distinguishing between image and purported reality, and one contemporary with the sixties' resurrection of the simulacrum in Deleuze and not its later Baudrillardian precession, is an "art" photograph by Gary Winogrand, taken at the Democratic National Convention in 1960 (Plate 3.2). As an image of speech making it takes us all the way back to the relation between artifice and rhetoric in Plato's *Sophist*. Here speech and sophistical persuasion are mediated by purely specular simulation. The speaker's words are being delivered over to the spectacle, to a host of cameramen and lights. The great icon of John F. Kennedy reversed by representation, his face and gesturing arm appear to us captured in the small TV monitor behind him, his eloquent body viewed only from behind but shining with splendor like a saint with a halo. The "aura" that his body radiates is not there, however, but is visible only on the phantasmic screen below. It is this blurred image on the TV that presents itself to us as the "real" body of the future president. The camera itself is implicated in this cross-wired gaze of pub-

licity, available to us as voyeurs standing behind the spectacle. Winogrand and photographers all over the world in this period were highly attuned to issues of authority and authenticity and made numerous representations like this, which resonate with anxieties about the relation between real and camera reportage, especially in the killing fields of war, exploring the duplicitous rather than divine nature inherent in all image making. A quarter of a century later, however, the philosophical photograph, telling of the real and the image, has been replaced by the swelling smile of the simulacrum alone (Plate 3.1).

Whereas the simulacrum had given Deleuze the opportunity to invert the Platonic hierarchies and provide a new model for artistic production that did not privilege the unique, the ideal, and the numinous, it still did so within the realm of aesthetics. The writings of Jean Baudrillard, most notably his famous/infamous work of 1981, *Simulacres et simulation*, by contrast, placed the issue at the center not of philosophical but of social debate. The apocalyptic tones and millennial ferver of Baudrillard's theories of simulation derive from wider philosophical and political currents that were affecting art criticism in these years as never before. These are his readings of Marxism (the economy of images), Maussian anthropology (the symbolic exchange of images), and the writings of American cultural critic Marshall McLuhan (the medium and message of images). "The Precession of Simulacra," the first essay in the book and the one translated and reprinted many times in art journals and anthologies, has had a far-reaching effect upon contemporary artists and critics and its most shocking statements return to the Platonic dichotomy, only to reverse it. "It is no longer a question of imitation, nor even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real itself. . . . Illusion is no longer possible because the real is no longer possible" (Baudrillard 1994, 19).

Baudrillard's examples are neither philosophical texts nor works of art but the strange spaces of postmodernity like Disneyland ("the perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulation" in which America comes to revel in its own cozy gadget-ridden infantilism) and strange events like the Watergate affair. In Baudrillard's work America is the land of simulation, and in a kind of reversed "orientalism" it becomes the mysterious site of the West's projected fantasy and desire. If imitation is rooted in the Old World, simulation is Uncle Sam's new one. Images take on a terrifying aspect of danger, which again reminds one of Platonic and Biblical prohibitions:

> Thus perhaps at stake has always been the murderous capacity of images: murderers of the real; murderers of their own model as the Byzantine icons could murder the divine identity. To this murderous capacity is opposed the dialectical capacity of representations as a visible and intelligible mediation of the real. All of Western Faith and good faith was engaged in
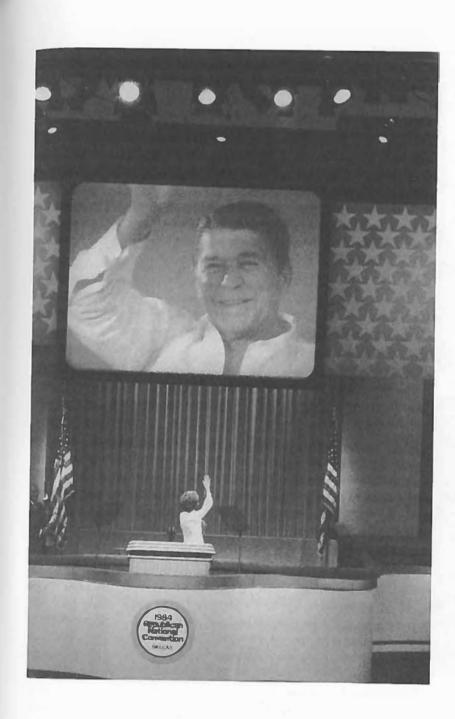

Plate 3.1

Paul Hosefros, photograph from the *New York Times* of President Ronald Reagan addressing the Republican National Convention, 22 August 1984, via closed-circuit television.

this wager on representation: that a sign could refer to the depth of meaning, that a sign could *exchange* for meaning and that something could guarantee this exchange—God, of course. But what if God himself can be simulated, that is to say, reduced to the signs which attest his existence? Then the whole system becomes weightless; it is no longer anything but a gigantic simulacrum: not unreal, but a simulacrum, never again exchanging for what is real, but exchanging in itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference. (5–6)

Baudrillard's pessimistic visions arrived at the moment of highest anxiety and nostalgia, stimulated not only by the shock of events like Watergate but also by new technologies that had totally transformed traditional ways of communication, not least in the field of vision. Artists like Sherrie Levine, who rephotograph classic images by Edward Weston and sign them as their own, play exactly Baudrillard's game. The impact of popular media upon art in the past decade, blurring all distinctions between the art museum and its spaces and the shopping mall, similarly both respond to and stimulate the strategies for undermining the real that Baudrillard chronicles (see Institute of Contemporary Arts 1986). TV and video images served a simulacral function from their inception, taking the uncanny associations between photography and death to their fetishistic limits. It is a crucial fact for art history of the second half of the twentieth century that the majority of people spend much of their spare time staring entranced by myriads of multiple registers of representations that flicker before them on small screens in their homes and which increasingly blur the distinctions between what is real and what is staged, what takes place and what is only simulated.

Baudrillard's argument, that mass media have neutralized reality in stages, at first reflecting, then masking and finally substituting themselves for reality, is in many ways a reactionary lament, truth and reference remaining unproblematized by these claims as things lost. Unlike Deleuze, who sought to provide an alternative to Platonism, Baudrillard seems still to work within it. His nightmarish vision of art offers no constructive alternatives to our image culture, and many have criticized the French theorist for not taking into account the positive effects of new mass-media images and their ability to provide alternative viewpoints and teach difference, not just unitary "Big Brother" ideology. While Baudrillard has pointed out some important ways in which strategies of simulation now control our everyday lives, he overlooks how many artists of the past decade have sought to dissect or criticize the media and ironically displace it in their work. Without claiming the total nihilism of Baudrillard's use of the term "simulacrum," how can it be fruitfully used to negotiate the contested realms of image making both in a future artistic practice and in art history?

Fredric Jameson's more focused, Marxist-inspired political analysis of post-

modernism, just to describe one alternative model to Baudrillard's, depends upon a different trajectory through the simulacral, which he traces from the *situationistes*, another important French postwar group. Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*, first published in 1967, is the key text in this history of a world transformed into "pseudo-events" and "spectacles." "It is for such objects" Jameson claims, "that we may reserve Plato's conception of the 'simulacrum,' the identical copy for which no original has ever existed. Appropriately enough the culture of the simulacrum comes to life in a society where exchange value has been generalized to the point at which the very memory of use value is effaced, a society of which Guy Debord has observed, in an extraordinary phrase, that in it 'the image has become the final form of commodity reification'" (Jameson 1991, 18). Jameson goes on to argue that the "new spatial logic of the simulacrum" will have its greatest effect on "what used to be historical time," undermining the capacity of images to interface with history at any point. His examples are recent films in which the past is presented as a nostalgic referent rather than a focus of action, an arena in which history itself is forever only simulated rather than engaged with. This "crisis of historicity" (25) is having a profound effect, not only upon the production of art but upon the writing of art history.

How then might one write a history, not of art but of simulacra, an *Art and Delusion* instead of an *Art and Illusion*? Based upon the premise that images do not so much replicate the real or substitute for it but rather are encounters with another order of reality entirely, it would be a history of art that could not claim to be about objects at all but about strategies of their simulation. It would take seriously Deleuze and Guattari's startling statement that "no art and no sensation have ever been representational" (1994, 193). Fakes and copies would, in this system, be as important and crucial to the understanding of past art as the authenticated "old masters" themselves. But more problematically, where would this history of art begin and what would happen to the painted animals of Lascaux, those ur-images that we always interpret as the first instinctual instances of attempting to copy and thus control the external world through its representation? Since there can be no "first image" or founding moment of representation in the real, can the cave paintings be said to be already representations of representations? To a certain extent yes, since many of them are layered upon earlier images and experts have had enormous difficulties in describing the priority of one animal form over another. Did the cave artist consider the image on the wall a representation at all, as a sign that was based upon the living things that roamed outside or rather something that came before and pointed toward them?

If a simulacral history of art has to begin from a different place, it would look throughout very different from our traditional textbook story. It would lack the great progressive "moments" in the history of representation, most of which are based on the notion of the factor of technical mastery in mimesis. The

"Greek revolution," by which the human body during the fifth century B.C. was assimilated to the carved form of life-size sculptures, would become a more complex game of idol making in which fetish, ritual, and magic played a more important role than imitation and Deleuze's analysis of Platonic and Lucretian theories of the "phantasm" and surfaces, epiderms, and atoms would be more useful than our modern measures of "lifelikeness." The Renaissance "discovery" of linear perspective, rather than allowing the artist to deposit the real directly upon the panel complete with a supposedly "unique" point of view, would become instead a tyrannous moment when simulacra take over in the sphere of the imaginary, trapping subjectivities in the thrall of corridors and cityscapes and holding them in place and making it even more difficult to distinguish between the model and its copy. From a Platonic viewpoint, the simulacra take over at the moment of perspectival accommodation, as in Plato's example of the colossal statue that is altered to fit the standpoint of the observer. Baroque art, which does so much to implicate the observer within the image, becomes a marvelous theater of sensations. Likewise, the impressionists' ocular desire to approximate light in paint might be measured not in terms of their efforts to close the gap between the world and the picture but by their fear of the disappearance of reality under the microscope and telescope of modern science. What they produce are evanescent simulacral emanations of matter, light, and atmospheric effects, their fetishized focus free of industrial smoke. Instead of a conquest of the real, a simulacral history of art would be the story of escape from the real in the realms of imagination and fantasy, a story of introjection as well as projection, of desire as well as fear, liberating the object from any dependence upon the regimes of the eye or text. Whether or not it would still be a history constructed out of a string of "great masters" is a more difficult question. Deleuze's writings on painters such as Cézanne and Francis Bacon show his adherence to a romantic model of the artist as the maker of new perceptions and destroyer of clichés. A properly simulacral history would, by contrast, surely have to renegotiate any claims to an individual authorship of a work of art.

It is the history of modern art that stands to change most from this rewriting not in terms of resemblance but dissemblance encouraged by the displacements of the simulacrum. As Hal Foster has observed, a simulacral reading of abstract painting, such as that practiced by Kandinsky, would see it not as a freeing of the pictorial to go beyond resemblance to the realm of the spiritual and Platonic but as yet another way of underlining the thrall of the real. Precisely because it rejects resemblance, abstract painting is "far less subversive to both traditional mimesis and transcendental asthetics than is usually thought" (Foster 1993, 96). In this narrative it is surrealism, rather than abstraction or constructivism, that emerges as the most radical and innovative movement of Western art in our century, maintaining resemblance, as in the uncanny city-

scapes of de Chirico or the composite collage fantasies of Max Ernst, but at the same time undermining its hold over the real. Our aesthetic tradition imprisoned simulation in the realm of fantasy, which has always had an equivocal, if not negative, resonance in the visual arts. But after Freud and the surrealists and more recently Lacan's repositioning or rather dethronement of the "Real" and emphasis rather upon the "Imaginary" as a powerful, preverbal, and essentially visual register, fantasy has returned to haunt our fin de siècle and become a key issue in psychoanalytically driven art criticism.

Contemporary artists, with their increasingly visible debt to the surrealist marvelous and to the tradition of the fantasmagoric uncanny in photography, are constantly revealing that the concept of the simulacrum is capable of reacting to and shaping ideas and not just repeating them in a self-indulgent play of Baudrillardian mirrors. Gary Winogrand's photographs (e.g., Plate 3.2), like those used by the contemporary artist Hans Haacke in his installations, are pictorial plots, using simulation to emphasize the relations between viewers and objects. The ubiquity of installations rather than paintings, environments rather than sculptures, and performances rather than pictures in artistic productions of the past decade is related to this turn away from external representation towards the realm of felt experience, simulating not an illusion of the real but affirming the whole realm of "sensation," to use another crucial term of Deleuze's. The impact of this reformulation of reference also has larger repercussions. The phantasmic criticism of art, viewing images as incarnations rather than representations, affects and materialities rather than reflections and copies, involves rewriting the history not only of art but also of science and philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari 1994).

Rather than end this brief fantasy fragment on the simulacrum with reference to an image like Winogrand's photograph, as though it somehow secured my argument by anchoring it to the real, to some "thing" that is a photograph, or is depicted in that chemical deposit, I want to close with a narrative that returns us to the problematic status of the object via the greatest and most popular of all simulacral discourses being produced today—science fiction. "Pay for the Printer," a short story by Phillip K. Dick (who published a science-fiction novel in 1964 called *The Simulacra*), describes a future post-nuclear holocaust earth in which the survivors have become totally dependent for their continued existence and all their luxuries and commodities from garages to newspapers not upon things but upon copies of things. These are made for them by a powerful and benign alien being, a vast amorphous blob called a Biltong, who produces for all those who wait in line perfect "prints" from the models of things brought to it. The horror in the story is that these objects—toasters, cars, and clothes—are of course not the "real thing" but simulacra. They gradually begin to fragment and distort in shape and crumble into nothing. The world liter-

ally starts to fall apart. This is because it is a world that has been increasingly removed from the model and made from copies of copies, or "defective duplicates" as Dick calls them. Things start to lose their "reality," newspapers are filled with squiggles that look like print but which are unreadable, cars lack engines, the surface has no depth at all, as the Biltong's "prints" melt and collapse before people's eyes and the creature itself begins to die. Even though "originals" of cigarette lighters and crystal cups from the wreckage of the old original world are placed before it, nothing can be printed any longer and at the end of the story the survivors have to resort once again to making things for themselves from scratch, the first item being a small wooden cup. "It's simple and it's crude," proclaims the hero as he shows this splendid object to others, "but it's the real thing!" This brilliant story, written during the decade when the simulacrum was returning to French philosophical thought stimulated by the very same world of American mass consumption that inspired Dick's fantasy, also takes us back to the very beginnings of the Platonic anxiety about things as real and as mere representations.

Is it a reactionary nostalgia for the "real" that makes Dick, Deleuze, and Baudrillard, in their very different ways, all fearful of a future society based upon the simulacrum? Certainly for Donna J. Haraway, a contemporary feminist commentator coming at these issues from the viewpoint of " science" rather than "art," what she calls the "scary new networks" that replace "Representation" with "Simulation" and the body with the cyborg are, by contrast, to be celebrated as liberating coalitions of technological forces rather than lamented as the loss of some essential ideal of nature (Haraway 1991, 161). Referring to communications systems that are based not upon notions of authenticity but upon the parameters of positioning vision itself (who is looking and from where, rather than what are they looking at, and is it real or imaginary?), she suggests "a way out of the maze of dualisms" like the real and its copy, and provides instead rich possibilities for remapping relations of power, especially of gender, which had previously (for two and a half millennia) placed woman in the realm of simulation. Arguing that "micro-electronics is the technical basis of simulacra, that is, of copies without originals" and also influenced by the discourse of science fiction, Haraway takes the debate beyond ontological categories and onto a political level that is far more challenging and potent than Baudrillard's gloomy gloatings over the loss of reference. What we have is a new real in which the artist's traditional role has to be vastly different, indeed some might say erased altogether. Artists will surely continue to grapple with things as well as ideas, materials and not only recycled images. However, what computer and other imaging technologies will create in the visual matrix of the future will no doubt make Baudrillard's "precession of simulacra" seem as solid and eternal as the Parthenon frieze. Science is already the "real" site of simulacra. The popularity

(Reset)