

Jean baudrillard: simulacra and simulations



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Jean Baudrillard Introducing the idea of the simulation, Baudrillard says that we have come to a place where the false precedes the real. In addition to discovering that the simulation no longer matches the real, Baudrillard says it has gone farther, reducing everything down to miniature and making it hyperreal, something that exists in and of itself, with little to connect it to the original. The real, in this system, has become little more than a series of signs that stand in its place.

Because simulation involves some portion of the real, it has become nearly impossible for the psychologist or the medical doctor to tell the difference. If some of the symptoms are present, is the person ill or are they merely simulating? It is a question that was started in the hands of religion with the battle of icons that were replacing God and going further to suggest God isn't real.

The danger with simulacra as opposed to representation is that representation starts with the idea of the real within the representation while simulation wraps around the representation and calls everything false. Disneyland is used as an example of how the imaginary happy social world contained within its gates as opposed to the isolation of the parking lot masks how the world we believe to be America is just as falsely envisioned. This same concept is traced through the actions of Watergate, where the political angle revealed that there is no difference between facts and denunciation.

In discussing Watergate, Baudrillard indicates both the Right and the Left ended up working for each other as the simulated games went around Washington, and they continue to do so today. This creates a logic of simulation that circulates around all possibilities and no possibilities at once.

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Facts are discovered by the existence of the simulated models, obscuring their real relations. " It is always a question of proving the real by the imaginary; proving truth by scandal; proving the law by transgression; proving work by the strike; proving the system by crisis and capital by revolution" (10).

With simulation so rampant, just as reality has become no longer possible, illusion has become no longer possible. Simulation cannot be tested because of the way in which it mimics the real, there will always be some real element to come in and confuse the issue. Regulation, however, can only occur on the real, so they attempt to reinsert reality on any level they can. Finally, Baudrillard indicates that while capital introduced the concept of the hyperreal, everything, from politics to business, from production and work to strike and opposition, have now been reduced to this state. This functions to break down all distinctions between real and simulated, good and bad, wealth and poverty. Because we have degenerated into a system where power exists for the sake of power, we will eventually arrive at a state of socialism because of the lack of the social, religion thanks to a lack of God.