Simulacra Simulation
Jean Baudrillard

“The simulacrum is never what hides the truth – it is the true that hides the fact that there is none
The simulacrum is true”
-Ecclesiastes

Definitions

The Real
- What exists before simulation and simulacra are constructed.
- The origin

The Hyperreal
- Reality’s substitute based on a simulated world

Simulation
- A display of actions or process meant to deceive

Dissimulation
- A display of actions or processes meant to conceal an existence

Simulacrum
- The image of something that imitates a behavior or simulates
- For Baudrillard, it has the power of murdering its predecessor

The Desert of the Real

“The real persists here and there, in the remote regions of western existence.”

The Eras of Simulacra Simulation

1. Liquidation of all Referential
2. Everything is dead and resurrected in advance
   • The era of murder by simulation
**A Model Based Reality**

- **The real is reproducible**, because there is no direct relationship between simulation and reality.
- **The real has been destroyed**
  - The signs of the real, replace the real
  - The models supplant reality

**The Dichotomy of Simulation**

- **Dissimulate**: pretend not to have what one has (presence)
- **Simulate**: fake what one does have (absence)
- Leaves reality intact
- Preserves reference
- Destroys reality by blurring its boundaries

**Distinguishing the real**

- **Examples**
  - Medicine: Psychiatry admits:
    - Objective cause ceased to exist
  - The Military system
    - Hesitates to distinguish produced and authentic "symptoms."
    - All crazy people simulate, and this lack of distinction is the worse kind of subversion

**Concepts in Art Philosophy Dissimulation**

- **Multitudes**
  - If this stand-off exists in cunning dissimulation, between 'Art as Network' and the top-down enforcement brought about by Metagovernance, can there be any rigorous and affirmative politics of the aesthetic, both fully contemporary, modern and fully democratic?

**Dissimulation in the Everyday**

- **Are these apt examples of dissimulation?**

  **Business**
  - Brand Management: Same contents, very different experience (Cola Wars, water et al.)

  **Medicine**
  - Virtual cures: hide the symptoms and the disease disappears (e.g. cold and flu medications)
Simulation in the Everyday

- **Emergency Drills**: fire, attack, etc
  - Consider Cold War America (1950’s drills)
  - The terrorist threat
- **Interactive Media**
  - Video game “accomplishments”
  - The terrorist threat
- **Business**
  - Corporate securities value derived from perception
  - Brand Management (commercial arts)

Distinguishing the Real: Religion

- The machinery and icons substituted for the pure and intelligible idea

**Iconoclast**
- Predicted the Omnipotence of Simulacra
- God as a reflexive simulacrum
- Knowing of the simulacrum drives destruction of images
- The despair that the image didn’t conceal anything at all

**Iconolaters**
- Recognized a game
- Dissimulate the fact there is nothing behind the images

Murderous Power of Images

- What if God himself can be simulated, reduced to signs of faith – the system becomes a giant simulacrum
- Creates a recursive simulacrum

Phases of Image

- It is the reflection of a profound reality
- It masks and denatures a profound reality
- It masks the absence of a profound reality
- It has no relation to any reality whatsoever
- It is its own pure simulation

Rosy-Colored Resurrection

- Science is murderous
  - “In order for ethnology to live, its objects must die”
  - “Ethnology . . . liberated from its object, [will] be applied to all living things and make itself invisible . . . That of the simulacrum”
  - “We are all Tasaday Indians”
  - “[Ethnology] is here, everywhere . . . In a world completely catalogued and analyzed”

Ethnology of the Contemporary

- Disneyland
  - “Play of illusion and phantasm”
  - An ethnographic display case, social microcosm, and miniaturized pleasure of America
  - Gadgets magnetize the crowd – from the solitude of the concentration camp parking
  - “Setup to rejuvenate the fiction of the real” (neither true nor false)
  - Stations that feed reality (Los Angeles)
  - Places that embalm and pacify
Presented by Lindsay Grace

Ethnology of the Contemporary

Disneyland
- The regeneration of the imaginary, dreams, phantasms, historical
- The hyperreal civilization’s prototype
- The result:
  - “People no longer look at each other, there are institutions for that”
  - “They no longer touch each other but there is contactotherapy”
  - “They no longer walk, but they go jogging”

Ethnology of the West

• Musuemification
  - “We require a visible path, a visible continuum, a visible myth of origin”
  - Musuemification is destructive – history becomes prey to both science and worms
  - We double – taking what existed, destroy it in its discovery and move it into a preservation state

From Jameson, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism

Global Ethnology

Dubai:
Creation of manufactured reefs

Resurrections

• “Americans flatter themselves for having brought the population of [Native Americans] back to pre-Conquest levels”
• “Everywhere we live in a world strangely similar to the origin – things are doubled by their own scenario”
• Even the dream is resurrected
• We simulate everyday life

Watergate

• “Effect of the imaginary concealing that reality no more exists outside than inside the limits of the artificial perimeter”
• “Formerly one worked to dissimulate scandal – today one works to conceal that there is none”
• “Watergate is not a scandal . . . because it is what everyone is busy concealing”

Mobius

• “We are in a logic simulation which no longer has anything to do with a logic of facts and order of reason”
• All is true . . . There is an impossibility of a determined position of power
• Like a mobius strip – too long to traverse
• Proving real through the imaginary, truth through scandal, the law through transgression, ethnology through dispossession
Mobius
• The proof of the theater through antitheater
• The proof of art through anti-art
• The proof of pedagogy through antipedagogy
• Proof of psychiatry through antipsychiatry

The Strategy of the Real
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• “The network of artificial signs will become inextricably mixed up with real elements”
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Questions
• How does the growth of reality TV link to hyperreality and the destruction of the real
• Does YouTube extend these notions?
• What experiences in your everyday illustrate his theory (e.g. Jogging)
• Are there institutions or places that combat these notions – an anti-Disneyland prototype?

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Questions
• Have you seen or know of any art that plays on the notion of dissimulating experience?
• How do these concepts effect authenticity? What about process?
• Have you tried to feign violation – Other than the allowed institutions for feigning (e.g. a gallery space, a theater)?

Questions
• Is Baudrillard a Situationist with a “finer point”?
• Can there be real dissimulation if the simulation is everything? Are dissimulations distracting from the simulations?
• Where are the deserts of the real? What’s still there?
Producers of Simulacra?

- Wikipedia? Networked information fabricated from non-expert experts
- Is Wikipedia Hyperreal?
- Anything not television, managed by its image?

References

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