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In *Simulacra and Simulation*, French social theorist Jean Baudrillard argues that our "postmodern" culture is a world of signs that have made a fundamental break from referring to "reality."

Baudrillard's concept of simulation is the creation of the real through conceptual or "mythological" models which have no connection or origin in reality. The model becomes the determinant of our perception of reality-- the real. Homes, relationships, fashion, art, music, all become dictated by their ideal models presented through the media. Thus the boundary between the image, or simulation, and reality implodes (breaks down). This creates a world of hyperreality where the distinctions between real and unreal are blurred. Robert Tilton becomes a simulation of religion; Ronald Reagan a simulation of politics; and Kurt Kobain a simulation of marginality. The culture industry blurs the lines between facts and information, between information and entertainment, between entertainment and politics. The masses get bombarded by these images (simulations) and signs (simulacra) which encourage them to buy, vote, work, play,... but eventually they become apathetic (i.e. cynical). Because simulations and simulacra ultimately have no referents, the social begins to implode. This process of social entropy leads to the collapse of all boundaries between meaning, the media, and the social- no distinction between classes, political parties, cultural forms, the media, and the real. Simulation and simulacra become the real so there are no stable structures on which to ground theory or politics. Culture and society become a flux of undifferentiated images and signs.

This process is analogous to Herbert Marcuse's notion of one-dimensionality. The multi-perspectival negating potential of art becomes collapsed into one-dimensional thinking promoted by dominant ideology. The potential for resistance is itself negated through a world of hyperreality, leaving the one-dimensional models to replace polyvalent "reality." Popular music provides a good example. The categories and forms of music are forced onto the musicians by music corporation's categorical conventions. They do change their categories to follow the times but the ultimate end is still restriction/conventionality. What begins as projecting a liberating function at the level of individual expression, gets turned into a repressive category.

The actual musicians are turned into simulations on MTV which essentially snuff out their potential resistance to the dominant categories. They no longer have a specific historical context through which they arose. They are merely images on a screen, models to follow for other musicians if they want to get on MTV. The simulations, video images of the musicians and audio "images of the music, no longer refer to a situation which brought on individual resistance/expression. For example- putting gangsta-rap music on the screen completely takes it out of its historical and social context. In this context, the art was created as an expression of resistance to the feeling of domination in urban life. When white suburban kids see the videos, they have no understanding of the actual situational context- the videos are just images on the screen like all the others images on the screen that they see everyday. This takes

away the "reality" of the historical context, and replaces it with hyperreality. By removing the context, MTV removes all resistant meaning. Pop music becomes a place of one-dimensionality. In the world of hyperreality, the lines between dominance and resistance, between high and low are collapsing. There is finally no distinction. There is a unification of opposition. Pop music becomes reified.

Byron Hawk

