

Somewhere beyond hyper-reality

Odul Isitman , Music and Fine Arts Department, Middle East Technical University, 06800 Ankara, Turkey

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Abstract

According to Baudrillard, the reality has changed and turned into a reality simulation, namely a hologram. It is this transformation that made Baudrillard say 'God is not dead, he has become hyper-real' in response to Nietzsche's 'God is dead' discourse. Kevin Robins, who states that the deference of the object by image, the rejection of the object is a postmodern discourse, suggests that this expresses a meaningful disengagement from modernist aesthetics, which corresponds to the age of mechanical production. By the 1990s, with the addition of disengagement between object and image to the changing perception of reality and truth, a new field of play was opened for the artist. Information and image bombardment started to defer postmodernism and the doors of a new period in the art are opened slightly. Currently, we are at a point beyond the reality, into which the one that is reproduced countless times is transformed, in other words, beyond the hyper-reality that makes the image in the hologram exist.

Keywords: Digitalisation, reality, hyper-reality, image, hologram, post-1990s.

1. Introduction

In the historical process, production became mechanised with the First Industrial Revolution, became mass production with the Second and with the Third, there was a shift to atomisation and production became digitalised. And the Fourth Industrial Revolution (2011), Industry 4.0, made the robots to take over manufacturing. With the Industry 4.0, which is the last point in the struggle to transfer the human power from the physical level to the brain level, doors have been opened to the development of artificial intelligence, the transfer of production from factories to homes through 3-D printers, the sorting out and evaluation of an enormous mass of data and too many innovations that we know today or not aware of yet. While historically 100 years were lived between the First (1712), the Second (1860) and the Third Industrial Revolution (1970), the Fourth Industrial Revolution (2011) has been taking place 40 years after the previous one. Now the society works for catching up with the speed of the new reality of which it knows that it will change and transform them all over again. The society is face to face with a new reality but this time it is in a much more advantageous position compared to others. That is because digitalisation and its interface Internet are in power. The Internet, which brings the world, cultures and individuals closer and gathers them in a centre, enables the process to progress much faster. It is inevitable for this change, which is present in every field of production, to be reflected in the field of art too.

While wild capitalism and financial crises, changing conditions of competition, civil wars, famine, unequal distribution of wealth, immigrant floods to rich countries, climate change and many other problems are spreading over the world, digital technologies which we don't know yet how to rule advance rapidly. They make people experience a major change and transformation in industry, agriculture, medicine, schools, homes and everywhere where the reality is redefined. Our life and our culture are digitalised too. Transformation is necessary for the present day residues of what has remained in the past. Otherwise, the new period, the period to be lived beyond hyper-reality is being written now, being shaped now.

2. Isn't this much art too much?

Foucault describes the postmodern form of power in the 1970s by affirming it as a positive power oriented towards supporting life and enhancing the forces which life provides. ^a He says, with the modern era, new power forms and academic disciplines emerge and they answer the lifestyle of individuals within the daily practices as internal ones instead of external and thus create 'identity'. Power does not need violence to encircle the body; instead, it developed fine techniques that spread to the society as a whole. These new techniques succeeded through advertising in the 1950s, through globalisation in the 1980s, through the Internet in the 1990s and through social networks and computer games in the 2000s. The concept of soft power, ^b which entered the international relations literature by the 1990s, social networks that gather societies in a centre, planning (!) theories of generation, opening to non-Western cultures and knowledge productions like exhibitions, fairs and biennialisation have consolidated the power of digitalisation. Now digitalisation needs creative individuals who will reign, shape, use or plan own reality.

^a Foucault, M.. (2005). *Ozne ve Iktidar–Secme Yazilar 2* (p. 16).

^b 'In the international relations literature, it was Joseph Nye who introduced in 1990 the concept of soft power based on 'cooperation'. For him, if it can be provided that the desired thing is also desired by the other country, then hard power, in other words military power, will not be necessary for the realisation of that thing. Besides, it has been seen many times that even though hard power was effective in the short term, it lost its impact in a short period of time. Soft power shows its impact in long time, requires patience but it is permanent. While the impact of the hard power is fear based on threat and brute force, the impact of soft power is admiration based on image and attractiveness. For ensuring this, the primary target of the cooperation to be established is culture. The United States has already applied this after the World War II around the world through its television broadcasts and Hollywood cinema which reflect its own culture and has managed to demolish the Berlin Wall much earlier than 1989' (Isitman, O. (2017) *Everything Started in the 1990s*. in The 60th Anniversary of Korea-Turkey Relations, Art for Peace Exhibition Catalogue).

Today, the research studies on generations show that in almost every culture, generations want to earn money as soon as possible and attribute the leading role to creativity (Isitman, 2016). Isabella Graw, who states that the conditions which being an artist requires confronts us today as a much more^c general ideal, also adds flexibility and the possibility of free movement to creativity. She notes that creativity and flexibility unique to the artist are now the qualities expected from everyone. Considered from this perspective, while the foundational values of artistic capability are preferred among the sought qualities in different areas of production, the profile of the commercially successful artist is becoming the role model of the producer individuals outside the field of art. And in this regard, the artist has become an ideal model as a concrete example of ‘creativity and innovativeness’ and the human whom everyone wants to be.^d According to Graw, creativity is in a position of some sort of ‘saving aspect of the present time’ (Brockling) just as success is today’s ‘modern duty’ (Nickle)^e. This situation is both the reason and the outcome of the narrowing of the distance between art and the artist and the labour markets outside their field. In the digital age that we live, digital technology is exalted with an understanding similar to the exaltation of the machine against the individual in the 18th century and while history is repeating itself, the individual is again put in a position to define herself/himself.

The artist subject is the object of the power relations that shape him/her and she/he follows the path of Foucault, who states that in order to analyse the subject, it is necessary to analyse power. The artist works with an effort to know, by approaching technological developments to redefine the human with digital technology which took over power. The space of art, White Cube is transformed rapidly into the Black Plane, and from there to the optical space and the material is transformed into coding, algorithm and software. Digital technology is the new tool of art, a part of creation and its new playfield. While the language in power is still foreign to artists, the artists who can use this language are in a position of today’s avant-garde. It is not easy at all to learn the language of technology and explore its facilities but it is also important that it is produced in an interactive area in which participation from all around the world is possible. When departed from the language of the digital world, increasing economic success facilitates access to a much broader mass. The spaces of presenting art such as museums and galleries and the art market, as well as the identity of the artist are changing. Being only an artist, a musician or a composer have stayed way behind. Just like one of the pioneers of digital art, Ben Laposky (1950) is defined as a mathematician and an artist; the pioneer of computer art Frieder Nake is defined as a mathematician and a computer scientist or the pioneer of computer animation John Whitney is defined as an animator, composer and an inventor... Perhaps it was the beginning of this change that in the road painter Harol Cohen took in the 1980s to teach his composition rules to the computer the attempt to result with the Artificial Intelligence program called ‘AARON’ with John MacCarthy’s software. Being solely an artist is not enough, your definition in the digital world is also important. Digital world has a permeable structure in art, just like it has in every other field. How much the artist can speak the language of the digital world is as much as the ones who build the digital world can speak the language of art. Technological advances have reached such a point that almost every work ranging from projects oriented towards presenting the production of the engineering fields to which every day new ones are added, to interactive real or virtual medium or the development process and the outcomes of artificial intelligence can be defined under the title of art. Engineers, software developers, light and sound specialists and the like are among the artists of the digital art. Even though tackling engineering with art and art with engineering creates certain permeability, it blurs the concepts. In the digital world where the link between real and virtual is

^c Graw, I. (2013, December 20). *Bir Girisimci Prototipi Olarak Sanatci* (Transl. Nursu Orge) (Vol. 12, p. 46). Retrieved June 8, 2018, from <http://www.e-skop.com/skopbulten/bir-girisimci-prototipi-olarak-sanatci/1707>

^d Graw’s Note. See Brockling, U. (2007). *Das unternehmerische Selbst. Soziologie einer Subjektivierungsform* (p. 124). Frankfurt, Germany: Suhrkamp.

^e Graw, I. (2013, December 20). *Bir Girisimci Prototipi Olarak Sanatci* (Transl. Nursu Orge) (Vol. 12, p. 46). Retrieved June 8, 2018, from <http://www.e-skop.com/skopbulten/bir-girisimci-prototipi-olarak-sanatci/1707>

blurred, art will be redefined, it is early to say what is art and what is not but isn't this much art is too much?

3. Well-done or rare?

Kevin Robins, who states that the postponement of the object by its image and the rejection of the object is a postmodern discourse, argues that this also expresses a meaningful break from the modernist aesthetics coinciding with the age of mechanical production. For him, this break is an outcome of the progress of the image from mechanical production to digital originality and copying. The distance between the image space and the objects is increasing and as gradually surrounded by images the relation with the world of objects breaks. This break, for Terry Eagleton, is not only between the image space and the objects. According to him, even a word said in postmodernism is cited from others' words. The repetitions of what is done, said and seen, what is lived and consumed before, the copies of the existing things are lived. In other words, what is lived is the residues of what has remained in the past. According to Baudrillard who states that the entry of ready-made objects to art which started with Duchamp and continued with Andy Warhol was a finishing point rather than a beginning, the sum of all art is nothing after this point. The reason is that all the accessible scientific, philosophical and socio-economic fields are lived, explored or defined, thanks to modernity. For Baudrillard, the 'truth' has changed and turned into a simulation of truth, namely a hologram (Baudrillard, 2003; 2011, p. 154). And it is this transformation which made Baudrillard say in 1981 that 'God is not dead, he has become hyperreal' against the 'God is dead' discourse of Nietzsche. The digital world where the link between real and virtual is becoming blurred will finally make the individual whose needs, desires and passions are determined by algorithms passive. The industrial revolutions which aim to make the human focus on brain power rather than physical power proved this.

With the addition of the break between the object and the image to the changing perception of reality and truth, a new playfield has been opened for the artist since the 1990s. Information and image bombardment started to postpone postmodernism and the doors of a new period in the art are opened slightly. While power is taken over by the market economy, Disneyland, a mechanical production, is now turned into hologram which is an image production. Now we are somewhere beyond the reality which has been reproduced countless times, in other words, the hyperreality that makes the image in the hologram exist. A digital place where everyone can flex the reality, transform the truth and create fields of power according to herself/himself. A place which Hollywood foresaw in 1997 with *Wag the Dog*, in 1998 with *The Truman Show* and in 1999 with *Matrix* and many other examples. A place where one meets cryptocurrencies having enormous economic volume, like Bitcoin, groups claiming that the world is flat, virtual star Hatsune Miku, hologram singer Maya Kodes, virtual Instagram phenomenon Lil Miquela and many other brand new realities (?) of the world.

The reality of today is what is constantly produced, it does not need to be something existing. Since the reality which has become something digital does not need to be rational, it also no longer needs an origin. Thus, nothing needs to be real, it is even sufficient for the thing to be a rumour. What is important is that you know how you would like the reality, the code of which will be written meticulously for you. Well-done or rare?

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