



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Problem of Reality and Aesthetic Discussions in the Simulation Universe of the Western World

Elif Pınar KILINÇ*

Anadolu University, Open Education Faculty, Non-Formal Education Department, Yunus Emre Campus, Turkey

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: May 27, 2024 Accepted: Aug 22, 2024	While answering the question of what is beautiful, aesthetics tries to reassemble the world shattered by modernity, and for this reason, it is a controversial concept closely related to modern reality. In this article, the controversial status of aesthetics within the reality of the simulation universe is discussed. It seeks to answer the question of whether it is possible for aesthetics to fulfill its function in the reality of such a universe in line with the basic purpose that brought it into being, and aims to reveal the functional place of aesthetics in today's reality, which Baudrillard explains with simulation, by tracing the efforts to overcome the fragmentation caused by modern reality. In this direction, firstly, the relationship between real, reality, modern reality and aesthetics is examined, and then the relationship between aesthetics and the reality that is built on modern reality, its reproduction or its opposite, the reality that has emerged in the universe of simulation, no matter how it is defined, is discussed. This article is a qualitative philosophical research article in which the data were obtained through a literature review.
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*Corresponding Author: epkilicatan@anadolu.edu.tr	

INTRODUCTION

“The activity that knocks on the door of beauty is the joint activity of the head and the heart, of thought and emotion” (Timuçin, 2002) and aesthetics is a search for a method that tries to reveal the rules of this joint activity. In other words, aesthetics, as a concept, emerged as a result of the effort to overcome the fragmentation of Cartesian reality, which separated them in such a way that they could never come together again, and in fact, it is put forward as a way to reconstruct the lost universal. However, it is also a victim of the modernity that gave birth to it. Because aesthetics is the search for the universal that the bourgeois individual, the knowing subject, who constructs modern reality, wants to create from its particularity with the ecstasy of absolute knowing, and which will never be possible. However, this search proves to be futile, because it is not possible for a generally valid standard to emerge from such a reality based on the knowing subject, to which everyone would bow with respect. Even if such a standard emerges, it is doomed to collapse very quickly. This is because the origin of the standard is the modern man, who changes in parallel with social change, whose source of all his knowledge is himself, who knows, who thinks that he knows everything and therefore can control it. Therefore, even from the standpoint of philosophy and art alone, the

standards put forward are nothing but a series of mutually contradictory assumptions. A close look at modern philosophy and art movements will show this. And they do not have the power to transcend the individual motivations that shape themselves in this new reality built in opposition to the past by breaking the existing universal contract. Moreover, it is almost impossible to construct a field of the senses in which generally valid criteria that transcend the relativity of this field operate, and to overcome the existing modern fragmentation in this way. However, modern philosophy has tried to do so, especially through aesthetics. In Germany, where the concept was first articulated, many modern philosophers, from Baumgarten and Kant to Hegel, made aesthetics the central subject of their own philosophies, and proposed ways to overcome the contradictions of this new world through aesthetics.

The subject and problem of this article is the contradictory situation of aesthetics within the reality of the simulation universe and whether it is possible for it to fulfill its function in the reality of such a universe in line with the basic purpose that brought it into being? By tracing the efforts to overcome the fragmentation caused by modern reality, it aims to reveal the functional place of aesthetics in today's reality, which Baudrillard explains with simulation. For this purpose, firstly, the relationship between reality, reality, modern reality and aesthetics is examined, and then the relationship between aesthetics and the reality that has emerged in the universe of simulation, which is built on modern reality, its reproduction or its opposite, no matter how it is defined, is discussed. This article is a qualitative research article in which the data is obtained through literature review method.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION

Modern Reality and Aesthetic Discussions

Afşar Timuçin's Dictionary of Philosophy defines reality as “that which is effectively given or presented, whose existence does not require investigation” (Timuçin, 2019). Based on this definition, one should be able to show the truth as actively given and presented, without the need to investigate it, right there and then, as it is, somewhere outside oneself, perhaps even inside oneself. However, as the French Romantic writer Alfred De Musset, cited in the same dictionary and under the same title, says, “all reality is a fiction...” (Timuçin, 2019) and what can be shown is nothing but reality, which is nothing but a vision. In fact, Musset may have meant reality by the fact that human beings, since the day they came into existence, have determined the reality outside of themselves, as a being that transforms the given from which it is separated by its will, as it is the subject of the master-slave dialectic that Hegel places at the basis of historical transformation. Therefore, at this stage of history, it is not so easy to find and define a reality that is actively given or presented and whose existence does not require research. Whatever we find and try to define in this way is merely a vision, It is fiction, and it is actually a temporally definable reality, free of space, shaped by human beings who strive to turn chaos (disorder) into cosmos (order) by their own will. Perhaps for this reason, questions about the visible on the one hand, and the origin of the visible on the other, that is, the origin of all that exists, and therefore how what is seen or presented, the universe or the cosmos, came into being, the first state of being, and the place and duty of human beings in this world, have been the main topics of Western thought from past to present. These questions about the real and the real have led to many different, intertwined or interchangeable answers, including the origin of being, the first state of being, or what is perceptible to the senses. At first, these questions were tried to be answered by myths, and later, in one way or another, by philosophy.

In the first chapter of his book *Metaphysics*, Aristotle points out that the first mythos about how chaos transforms into cosmos was expressed by Hesiodos in his work *Theogonia*. According to Gökberk, this story is “the first attempt to conceptualize the nothingness that preceded the existent and from which the existent was born” (Gökberk, 2005). This essay is the first attempt to explain what exists, perhaps the first attempt to explain how reality was born from nothingness and how it took its first form. Ancient Greek life is actually a story in itself from which this idea derives. In this story, which

Nietzsche (Gökberk, 2005) says is like the blossoming of a rose from a thorny bush, the Greeks prioritized reason in transforming chaos into cosmos and arranged Dionysus with the Apollonian. It is no coincidence that the foremost of the Gods of Mount Olympus is Apollo, the God of reason. Therefore, it is man who organizes this life. Chaos is the sensible and visible reality itself, which perhaps one side of the philosophical debate sees as opposed to what one side calls God, and reality is transformed into cosmos by the human, that is, reality. And the Apollonian can be defined as the Greek reality of man, who constructs worlds. Hegel says that the task of transforming chaos into cosmos is in a sense given to man by Spirit as a duty. Spirit is the absolute being or God and according to Hegel "Spirit is consciousness in bare reality before it..." (Hegel, 2004). Thus, nothingness is somehow interpreted by one side of the philosophical debate, as it has been done since Plato, as the divine and is determined as reality itself. Reality, on the other hand, is the manifestation of Spirit as being, and in this manifestation, as it is, being is divided into two: Nature and man, but in the first stage there is still the appearance of chaos:

For self-consciousness to exist, there has to be - beforehand - consciousness. In other words, Being must have been revealed in the Word, even if only with the single word *Sein*, that is, Being, and this is the revelation of a being that will later be called 'objective, external, non-human being', 'World', 'Nature', but which for the time being is still neutral, since there is no self-consciousness yet, no opposition between subject and object, I and becoming-I, human and natural (Kojève, 2004).

As a being among other beings, man is distinguished from them by his will, but this distinction is made possible by his 'conscious' will, which puts him into action. In order to be self-conscious, he must act only in accordance with his will. Acting in accordance with his will, the human being transforms the given being, the initial state or chaos, in the direction of the manifestation of Spirit, Absolute Reason or God, and in transforming it, he transforms himself. Therefore, man is defined as a negating act, and every state of reality, the stages of reality, is the history of man's transformation of the world, the slave playing the main role in the master-slave dialectic (Kojève, 2004). At the end of the transformation, Spirit will realize itself; however, at a stage in history when the slave-human, at a stage where it is now in the grip of absolute knowing, perhaps to facilitate Spirit's self-realization, becomes the 'knowing subject', in a sense God, as Freud expresses in *The Restlessness of Civilization* (Freud, 2013). This stage, in which the bourgeois individual, Napoleon as a leader, and Hegel (1770-1831) as a philosopher who grasped the universal history of man in its totality, "the process of historical evolution in which man creates worlds and in creating them transforms himself, the objective as realizable" (Kojève, 2004). The new class that constructed the modern world, the bourgeois individual, ceased to be a slave; thanks to its so-called intellect, it became deified and expelled God from the reality it constructed; hence the past. At this point in history, which he reads with a universal and absolute knowing, Hegel is a German-specific example of the transition from the divine world to the godless world. In this sense, he is even a follower of the Baroque composer Bach (1685-1750), who lived almost a hundred years before him, and is the philosophical version of the romantic lament for the divine world. He tries to reconstruct reality, which he sees as destroyed, in another form: By calling God, whom he does not name directly, Spirit or Absolute Reason.

This new modern world, built first in line with mercantilist accumulation and then with the requirements of the industrial production process, which is a reflection of this accumulation, is a brand new reality in which all intellectual life is organized with an excessive rationalist motive along with the public sphere for the West, albeit at different times, and this reality excludes the human, along with God, from life, work and its organized reflection, the cities. This is a reality where death is relocated to cemeteries on the borders of these cities, the sick to hospitals built on the same borders, and the elderly to nursing homes. For this reason, the French mystic Rene Guénon says that despite everything, the ancient world has many things in the intellectual and spiritual sphere that the modern world does not have an equivalent (Guénon, 2014). This is because the ancient world understood its own helplessness and tried to overcome this helplessness by living together with the divine.

Modernity has created a model of a petrified human being, in Weber's words, who thinks that he has been freed from God by absolute knowing and perhaps for this very reason, he has been 'freed' from his humanity, his past, and his emotions, which he possessed thanks to Spirit (Löwith, 1999). This is in fact a fragmented reality. The most tangible reflection of this reality in the social dimension is again the historical scene of Germany, but it is not unique to Germany, and aesthetics, as a way to overcome the socio-economic and intellectual fragmentation reflected in this scene and as a brand new concept to rebuild the divine contract broken by modernity, was first introduced by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762) with his book 'Aesthetica' written in Latin. In fact, while on the one hand this articulation attempts to bring together this world and the other, physics and metaphysics, old and new, past and present, reason and emotion, with the aim of reconstructing the destroyed old, the old reality, the universal; on the other hand, it is stillborn in terms of its purpose because it seeks what it wants to bring together in the divinity of the particular. Because in the particular represented by the bourgeois subject, it is difficult to find a general universal, a truth that will include everyone and everything, and for this reason, the first step of the relativism of the post-modern is taken in the modern:

This theoretical attempt constitutes the most important link in the movement of subjectivization, which Descartes had made the heart of truth. Because the fiercest battles of the struggle against the traditional world will take place in the arena of Aesthetics, where the subject puts its most subjective aspects (for example, sensibility and taste) on the front line (Hünler, 2011).

Hakkı Hünler explains the process behind the philosophy, which emphasizes aesthetics as a saving intellectual method, with three stops: The first is the break with the 'ancient regime'. Embodied in the 1789 French Revolution, this break is the political result of the empowerment of the 'sinful' merchant class, which, while exploring new geographies to be exploited at the behest of the Catholic Church, grew stronger by the very nature of the business and became defiant against the one who set it in motion. The second stop is the transformation of the merchant class into the knowing subject, which forms the basis of the reform movements that will enable it to overthrow the church it has come to defy and transform religion into an ethical path: The triumph of the Cogito. The third and final stop is the reconstruction of reality, which has become 'tabula rasa', in line with the requirements of the commodity production process. In other words, it is the reconstruction of the modern world as a brand new reality based on the knowing subject (Hünler, 2011). This new reality, where the only source is the knowing subject, the deified individual, is the reality of the modern world. This new God-knowing subject is in fact the bourgeois individual. The 'sinful' merchant has transformed 'capital' into the basic motive for organizing his own sin, the rest of society and the public sphere. It was the Roman-German Empire that historically experienced this process in the bloodiest way. The class transformation within itself had already Catholic France (the French civil war between 1562 and 1598), which had started with the motivation of the merchant class that would undermine it, tied all principalities to the center under the leadership of King Louis XIII and his prime minister Cardinal Richelieu, and at a time when it had achieved its national unity, it supported the Protestant movements within Germany and escalated the fight between the principalities, and the Roman-Germanic empire said goodbye to its past by being divided into some 300 sovereign states with the Peace of Westphalia at the end of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). It was only in the 1860s that Germany, which had gone through the historical process mentioned by Hünler with a great wound, was able to achieve political unity through the Jungers, that is, the urban nobility. This transformation, which took place in different parts of Europe at different times, is historically traumatic and involves a deep fragmentation in every field.

Since the modern world, representing the new against the old, tries to cure this trauma through the new reality it constructs but by sacrificing the human, the poet Schlegel (1772-1829), one of the German Romantics who opposed the term 'dark age' for the Middle Ages, takes refuge in the past, which is called the 'dark age', and likens the transformation to a starry night, just as Goethe (1749-

1832) takes refuge in the manifestation of divine truth, that is, the human (Faust), against the evil of reason (Mephisto):

... but what a starry night it was! It seems to me that we are living in a blurred, temporary twilight. Those stars that lit up the night have dimmed and disappeared in many places, but the sun has not risen yet. So it has often been reported that a sun of universal understanding and happiness is about to rise. But the facts have not confirmed this news. If there is any indication that this news will come true, it is none other than the cold that makes itself felt in the morning before sunrise (Nutku, 2001).

Neither Goethe (Marx & Engels, 2001) nor Schlegel would be able to overcome the aforementioned fragmentation of the new reality built on top of this cold world, which left man alone, without a past, without God, and indeed without human beings. Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854), another thinker of the same period, finds the conditions of existence of aesthetics in this fragmentation. According to him, the main reason for his interest in the philosophy of art was the social and intellectual fragmentation that existed in his own age. This age lacks any standard and criterion that would allow for a holistic evaluation. What exists are various opinions held by thinkers who have no choice but to try to understand each other (Hünler, 2011). Even in vain, as Baumgarten does, the thinkers of this age try to bring the shattered new world together into a meaningful universal reality; but the diversity of the knowing subject will inevitably make the universality of the sentimental impossible, opening the door to the post-modern relativism that will come to haunt us later. Baumgarten's formula is the lower reason, the 'ratio inferior' that works like reason (Hünler, 2011). Aesthetics, which belongs to this sub-rational domain, offers a formula that will transform chaos into cosmos by functioning just like reason. This inferior intellect will uniformize the sensory field with the voice and commanding power of German authoritarianism (Adorno, 2006), the Jungian hegemony that Hegel praised (Adorno, 2006). The bourgeois German aristocracy is able to build a centralized state only if it harmonizes the sensory multiplicity of the individual subject by means of a sub-intelligence that uniformizes the senses, and art fulfills this function. The task of aesthetics is to guide art to function in this way. Aesthetics tries to ensure the construction of the universal by inculcating the uniformization of the senses with a faculty like reason (Hünler, 2011). Likewise, Hegel explains the beautiful with the divine. What is made visible in art is the idea of the beautiful, and the emergence of the idea of the beautiful is realized by human hands through the manifestation of the divine, Spirit or Absolute Reason. Because the beautiful is the divine, and the knowing subject can reach the divine by acting with the consciousness that Spirit reveals in man and by transforming the nature that it negates through action. The self-conscious human being shapes the beautiful, which can never exist in nature on its own, by transforming the natural and shaping it with his own hand: Art. The beauty in art is the beauty born from Spirit, and this beauty is possible with the human. Aesthetics is the science of this (Timuçin, 2002). Therefore, aesthetics functions as the product of the effort to construct a universal reality that extends from Spirit to man, and then from man to Spirit, which were separated from each other in Hegel as a way of transcending fragmentation: As a method that describes a way to overcome fragmentation. Hegel, too, seeks to revive the reality of the past by describing it in the way the modern world wants. Kant makes the same effort before Hegel. According to Kant, there is a great distance between the realm of the senses (phenomenon) and the supersensible realm (numen). With the faculties of the sphere of the senses, that is, intuition, it is not possible to reach or influence the supersensible sphere, which he describes as in itself. This is the realm of 'reason', of freedom, of truth. Kant says that reason, the supersensible sphere, conditions the sphere of the senses in a certain way. He gives it its holistic meaning. Aesthetics, which he positions as the power of judgment, provides the relationship between these two spheres. This power contains apriori principles and these principles are the reflection of the supersensory sphere in the subject. The truth that belongs to the supersensory sphere is reflected in all individual human beings in the form of a common understanding of pleasure and in the form of generally valid principles. In this way, it becomes possible to unite all humanity under the shadow of a single truth (Timuçin,

2002). The universal and the particular come together through the discovery of the functioning of the apriori principle of the beautiful. At least this is Kant's opinion. Just as the symbolists saw the divine connection between the radiant wave, the resonant wind and the human gaze that no one else could see, this conviction is the product of an effort to reconstruct the broken unity of the supersensible and the domain of the senses in a secular language, and it is utopian precisely because of the realities of modern reality on which it is based.

The Universe of Simulation and on the Impossibility of Aesthetics

Baudrillard tries to explain the transition to modernity with simulacra. A simulacrum is defined as an appearance that wants to be perceived as a reality (Baudrillard, 2014). What is meant by the aforementioned appearance is that the emerging reality is a fiction. Because in the first state of the world that evolved from chaos to cosmos, which is almost impossible to see and show, claims can be made about chaos, that is, the reality itself, which are only assumptions. For this reason, simulacrum is a concept used to describe the realities and its social manifestations that emerged during and after the transition to modernity. Since these appearances are quite dramatically different from those of the past, past appearances are for Baudrillard more real. Because all of those realities are natural and at that stage of the historical process, they are the space itself. The modern world, on the other hand, is an artificial reality produced first by imitation and then on its own, as a model unlike anything else, independent of space. A brand new reality created by the knowing subject for itself, whose God is itself.

Baudrillard divides this reality into three periods. There are three periods of simulacrum. Before examining these three processes that complement each other and extend to the present day, it would be appropriate to examine the structural linguistics scheme of Ferdinand de Saussure, which Baudrillard uses to understand and describe the general functioning of the simulation universe based on the sign, which he uses to name the third simulacrum period. This scheme was used by Saussure to explain the causality of the structural formation of language. In this structural analysis based on the relationship between signifier, signified and signified, causality is essential. First of all, the signifier is the auditory image. Saussure gives the example of the word tree. When the word tree is heard, it is considered as a sound combination that carries the concept of tree. The concept is the signifier and refers to any tree. The signifier is the combination of these two and takes shape in the human mind. According to Saussure, the bond that connects the signifier with the signified is causeless. The same is true for their combination. The difference between languages and the fact that a sign with the same referent appears differently in different languages prove this. As a result, the functioning of language is as follows: First, there must be a referent; for a tree, the concrete existence of a tree. Second, there is the emergence of this tree as a conceptual signifier. Then comes the signifier, which is the auditory carrier of the concept. Finally, the combination of signifier and signified, the signified, emerges (Saussure, 1985). This is a sequence that extends from bottom to top. Baudrillard applies the same structural analysis to the composition or order of objects that constitute modern reality. This analogy is essential for understanding the use, exchange and signifying value of an object. For it is essential for explaining the causality of the order of objects of modern reality conditioned by the process of commodity production. That is to say, the commodity production process is a process that conditions the objects it produces in order to make its reality meaningful. In the name of naturalization, he associates them with the needs of the human model he has produced. He explains this as use value. Use value is the value of an object based on its fulfillment of a need. This value evolves into exchange value in the context of the supply-demand balance in market circulation, and eventually the combination of use value and exchange value leads to the formation of a signifier value, an image of the object. As a result, the object itself, as the sender, is the first stage. The second stage is the use value that this object has because it fulfills a need. In the third stage, because an object has use value, it also has exchange value. In the last stage, an object acquires a sign value as a result of its combination of use and exchange value. Baudrillard draws attention to the falsity of this structural

sequence, that is, the order of objects in modern reality, which has been over-rationalized in line with the commodity production process, and builds his entire theoretical approach to first expose this falsity and then to prove that this functioning in the reality of simulation operates from the top down rather than from the bottom up.

"From one perspective, objects are primarily determined by needs, and the economic relationships that humans establish with their environment make them meaningful. However, this empiricist assumption is incorrect. The status that an object initially possesses is entirely different from the pragmatic status that will later grant it a social sign value. What is crucial here is the signified exchange value. The use value is mostly just a measure of its actualization (or even a measure that gives it a purely rational meaning) (Baudrillard, 2009)."

Thus, in the simulation universe, an object primarily has a signifying value. In fact, contrary to what is stated, in today's reality, it is not the use value of an object that meets any needs; rather, it is the use value dependent on the signifying value, and this value is determined after the exchange value. The first stage of this process is the period of the first simulacrum, which is the sacred lie about use value, extending from the Renaissance to the Industrial Revolution, and is classically referred to as the period of the regulation of new reality through copying. It is the essential phase (Baudrillard, 2016). This first phase can also be described as a period where objects were liberated from the aristocratic privileges of the feudal order, but where the illusion of liberation was actually created. In a social order dominated by aristocracy, objects were organized in a way that displayed the privileges of this order. That is, objects have a signifying value. For example, a family portrait hanging on the wall of a lord's estate is not only an indicator of 'mastery' (by virtue of the painter being accessible only to those with sufficient wealth) but also a reflection of a family tradition that has lasted for centuries and traces its roots to God. Thus, it is a signifier of the existing, undifferentiated total reality in art. What is beautiful, true, and good is also that. It has a divine 'aura'; it is unique and singular. However, during the era of copying, paintings in bourgeois hands have seemingly been liberated and made available for everyone's use. But not for everyone; it is only suitable for the walls of the middle class, which vastly outnumbers the few aristocrats. Moreover, since there are no great painters capable of producing high-quality paintings to meet the demands of this numerous class, the paintings are made by craftsmen who technically execute the task by shaping and painting lines projected onto the wall by light, most of which are imitations of the techniques of great painters. The bourgeoisie, attempting to create its own public space, initially copied the aristocracy, and their copies are a second-class imitation of the originals. Molière concretely exemplifies this situation in his works. Just like the main character of *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, his bourgeois characters strive to be like aristocrats. For example, Monsieur Jourdain hopes to change qualitatively by taking lessons in swordsmanship, philosophy, and music in order to become an aristocrat. Thus, in this first simulacrum period, in the new reality being structured with the help of education, law, politics, philosophy, art, and so forth, copying is fundamental for the organization of objects. Although an illusion of liberation from aristocracy is created, objects are shaped and given meaning according to bourgeois reality. The meaning of the use value attributed to objects is closely related to the social motives of the bourgeoisie. However, even so there is a friction between the simulacrum and the reality being copied—which Baudrillard sees as real (Baudrillard, 2016). This friction is twofold: It can be explained by the struggle between the middle class, which, lacking sufficient means to build a new world for itself, copies the preceding reality, and the nobles who work to "reassemble a fragmented world through a homogeneous doctrine" (Baudrillard, 2016) in both the political and cultural arenas. Baudrillard cites Baroque art as an example of the noble side's actions in the cultural struggle. During this period, Baroque remains the dominant aesthetic despite all scientific and technical advances and is a cultural reflection of the Jesuits' political struggle to unite the world under a divine substance to overcome the mentioned fragmentation (Baudrillard, 2016). In the realm of

aesthetics, what was said from Baumgarten to Kant should also be considered in this context: as a defense suitable for the modern language of the Counter-Reformation.

The second simulacrum period encompasses the industrialization era, where production is central: the production of commodities (Baudrillard, 2016). It represents an entirely new reality. During this period, where the bourgeoisie holds complete power and, after a long process of copying, has managed to organize the entire public sphere around its own interests through its ability to handle matters independently, the essence is the process of commodity production. Cities shaped by this process and the masses that arise from the functioning of these cities are new products of this era. The second simulacrum is an artificial reality where the commodity production process is at the center, and all physical and social dynamics are organized according to this process, making it non-organic and entirely fabricated. Objects are products of mass production, produced and organized for this purpose. Their meanings, or use values, are entirely determined by the logic of commodity production and mass consumption. In an artificially organized reality, it is impossible to determine use value based on a natural necessity. Use value, rather than meeting a natural, real, or essential need, is determined by mass consumption. Objects turn into commodities due to the conditioning of the market economy, guided by mass media, as well as the artificial needs of the new reality. Everything is buyable and sellable, and in this sense, yields to the logic of industry built on profit. Therefore, the value of an object is determined by its circulation in the market, its exchange value; that is, the supply-demand balance. In this respect, it is more accurate to describe this period as an excessively rationalized reality defined by the bourgeoisie, driven by the motive of unlimited capital accumulation and wealth accumulation. The bourgeoisie has used all its power to organize the entire public sphere according to this reality, from art to politics and from law to culture. Consequently, art has functioned as a commodity that is both ideological in this context and subjected to the requirements of the market economy, which operates under entirely predictable conditions. This situation is related to one aspect of the role assigned to art during this period. Art serves as a means for the general acceptance of bourgeois reality. In this reality, both ideological motivations and capital accumulation are essential. Art is a rationalized tool for those who invest money in it to make money. The general understanding of art being composed of predictable and unambiguous content and forms is the most concrete example of this. For instance, New York's 42nd Street, famous for its musicals, and Hollywood cinema, which emerged as an extension of it. The Brechtian responses against this trend in both theater and the modern invention of cinema are products of individual motivations in art, shaped by successive movements or quests, and indeed modern fragmentation, each eventually becoming part of the industry. Hegel, at the very beginning of this period, recognized this fragmentation, seeing the ongoing deprivation, which includes art, as the bourgeois individual, feeling compelled to speak about beauty, sought to connect with the universal flow under the guidance of Spirit, Absolute Reason, or God, but using a modern language.

The third simulacrum period is the stage of simulation determined by codes, which is effective in contemporary times (Baudrillard, 2016). According to Baudrillard, "when we move to such an extension that has no relationship with reality or truth, we enter an age of simulation where all systems of signification have been abolished" (Baudrillard, 2014). Simulation is a world formed by the continuous re-coding and derivation of reality, which has no root or signifier, into models through binary oppositions (which is necessary) in accordance with an unchanging social hierarchy. Therefore, there are many models parallel to the hierarchy, and these models are produced in advance, just like any computer program. Before these models are produced, a continuous cybernetic probing is conducted through mass media and new communication technologies directed at people. This cybernetic process, which works to measure desires, wishes, pleasures, happiness, and unhappiness, and thoughts, results in data that is used to continuously re-code the models. Thus, it is ensured that the world appears to operate under the control of a single principle, not through divine essence, but through the power of the code. According to Baudrillard, the emergence of simulation

marks the end of the modern world conditioned by the capitalist system, which has entered “an infinite self-reproducing process” (Baudrillard, 2016). The capitalist system, lacking any motivation for progress, creates the illusion of progress, aiming to make the lives of the masses meaningful while simultaneously delaying its own destruction. This is done through binary models created in opposition to the unchanging rigidity and perpetual hierarchy. This duality is the fundamental logic of the code and is necessary to give the impression that the system still operates around a certain meaning as it did on the first day. These dual models, which appear to compete with each other, are diversified from the lowest to the highest levels of hierarchy. Models are now formed by the arrangement of objects based entirely on their sign value. Coding is the arrangement of objects, which have become entirely signifiers and have no signified, using data obtained from prior probing. Humans, who themselves are also signifying objects, are part of this process people consume signifiers as a means of differentiation. In other words, the model one participates in functions as a hierarchical indicator of distinction from other models, and the consumption of objects occurs according to this sign value:

A signifier is more than something given to or received from an object; it is something that individual subjects adopt, hold, and utilize as a signifier, essentially a coded differentiation. While consumption means consuming sign-objects, the sign-object is a form of social relationship that has been objectified and given a coded appearance, specific to the past (Baudrillard, 2009).

In this way, people are made to feel that they are different from others, that they could be different, and thus that the system is still functioning. Especially, binary oppositions are used to facilitate this process. For example, models shaped parallel to the hierarchy are coded to create oppositions like left-right. Individuals position themselves within the model that aligns with the hierarchy of the political view they identify with, along with its signifiers. They follow media channels or acquire symbols that align with their model. However, this opposition is an illusion. Whether A or B is in which model, the essential reality is to consume sign-objects organized in a way that allows the capitalist system to reproduce itself as it is. Therefore, all models and all oppositions are fundamentally managed and regulated by a single entity. In the universe of abundance created by simulation, where the minimum consumption amount is referred to rather than the minimum subsistence (Baudrillard, 2009), the organization of sign-objects that resonate with and complement each other for the models is essential (Baudrillard, 2018). For example, a kitchen is not just a kitchen. From the refrigerator to other white goods, each item is organized according to the model in which the individual is situated. None of these items is meant to meet any essential need; their primary function lies in their signifier quality, and the reason for their purchase is this sign value. In other words, it is their suitability to a model that will distinguish the owner from others. Here, it is not possible to talk about any intrinsic use value of objects alone. Objects gain meaning through their alignment with the coded model. Therefore, a refrigerator, on its own, has no inherent meaning. It is acquired within a specific context and in relation to others, and its primary function is not to cool but to provide differentiation. Consumption is relevant and meaningful for the way objects are organized according to the model. It is consumed due to the creation of meaning: "The subject's primary goal is not to consume. If there is something that drives people to consume, it is the social life that resembles a meaning-giving system and produces codes and values specific to different statuses, aiming to create differentiation and assign meanings" (Baudrillard, 2009).

Here, the arrangement of sign-value-based objects within models that appear in the form of binary oppositions creates an illusion of transition within the existing hierarchical structure, suggesting that the capitalist system still functions as it did on the first day and that progress is possible. This illusion ties people to the system by making them believe in the possibility of advancement. Baudrillard believes that this can be best explained by examining the relationship between fashion and the operation of simulation's cybernetically constantly re-coded models. This is because coding, that is, the arrangement of sign-value-based objects in models, operates according to the logic of fashion,

and "modernity's entire order, from sexuality to media, from art to politics, is under the dominion of this logic" (Baudrillard, 2016). The operational logic here is related to the free movement of signs while objects are arranged or models are coded. Although not all of these signs can be easily interchanged at the same level, they are still under the control of the logic of interchange-based coding. For example, clothing, body, and objects belong to the universe of insignificant signs; whereas politics, ethics, economics, science, culture, and sexuality belong to the universe of significant signs, and the interchange of these signs is not as easy and swift as that of the former (Baudrillard, 2016). This operation is crucial for creating the illusion of possible change both horizontally, over time, and vertically, hierarchically. In reality, all signs, disconnected from their senders, simultaneously float in the air and are simultaneously operational. For instance, in the hierarchical model, an object within the arrangement of a higher model A sign can move to a lower model over time, and later to a lower one still. This creates an illusion of transition. Alternatively, the model itself can become entirely applicable to a lower level. A higher model may then be replaced by another model produced by the cybernetic system. This new model might even be a copy of the higher model. What is old for one level can become new for a lower level. However, after a while, a sign that originally belonged to a lower model can be integrated into a higher model, making the same object old for the lower level and new for the higher level. Consequently, the concepts of old-new, beautiful-ugly, right-wrong continuously interchange. This ease of interchange is primarily due to the fact that objects are not processed according to any functional value but entirely according to their sign value. Signs have no senders. Their functions are indexed to their sign value. Therefore, in the realm of simulation, we can only speak of numerous realities and their constant reorganization—under the dominance of the code.

Therefore, it is entirely impossible to speak of a dominant single concept of beauty, a corresponding artistic method, and consequently, an aesthetic function aimed at remedying its deficiency. There are models, and each model requires an artistic approach suited to its own reality, even as a potential difference between them. Each model demands its own artistic production, and this production holds no value beyond that. Art is a sign. Thus, the only thing that can be said about it as an aesthetic object is whether it has been coded in accordance with the design of the model's reality. Just like other interchangeable sign-objects, an art object, having no real sender (purpose, ideological or otherwise meaningful social function), can be anything. For instance, a retro bicycle can be displayed on a wall as a sign of difference and treated as a work of art similar to Andy Warhol's "Campbell's Soup Cans" (1962). What makes such an object an artwork is not its originality, uniqueness, craftsmanship, or universal values but rather its alignment with the current model's operation and its sign value. In that moment, the value of an object as an art piece depends on its alignment with the operational logic of the prevailing model and its indicator value thanks to its alignment with. Thus, even an object like a bicycle or a can of soup can become an art object. In such a universe, it is impossible to speak of an aesthetic that builds a universal value that encompasses everyone, integrates emotions with thought, senses with reason, or physicality with metaphysics, or at least overcomes this fragmentation. One might speak of aesthetics, but even these potential aesthetic values will likely disappear, only to possibly be reborn in the near future, within the continuously renewed operation of models under the dominance of the code. In a universe where the code has become the new divine essence, aesthetics is doomed to relativity.

CONCLUSION

Baudrillard states that "there is no theoretical or critical God who can claim ownership of its subjects in a transparent and hyperreal world where simulation explains, defines, and simulates everything under the reign of hyperreality" (Baudrillard, 2014). In a world that has killed its God and made the knowing subject its deity, where the language of that world (modern and secular knowledge) attempts to reunite God with humanity, i.e., to overcome modern fragmentation, the only thing aesthetics can do in the simulation universe is to bow to the divine essence of the code. Simulation is

a universe of countless realities based on models, and these realities are continuously but perpetually re-coded and their associated sign-objects are constantly reorganized through the processing of mass data obtained with the help of mass media and new communication technologies. In this system of sign-objects, it is not possible for any object that is deemed an 'art' product (which can be anything, as it does not require special effort) to possess a divine universality encompassing all existing models. Moreover, the sign value of any artistic product suitable for an existing model will lose its validity in the next phase, and this occurs at a pace faster than one might expect. This change, occurring at a speed far beyond the temporal perception of the modern era, prevents the construction of any universal meaning, and the culprit of this situation is modernity itself, which erases the past completely and renders everything self-referential. Modernity, which lost its ability to construct a universal reality, even artificially, the moment it made the knowing subject the center of all meaning, is the primary cause of the fragmentation experienced today in the simulation universe, which is reflected in almost every field. The theoretical and critical approach of aesthetics, shaped as a divine reproach against modernity, cannot be effective in the simulation universe. Consequently, we now have realities aligned with models and aesthetics aligned with these realities. The reason why terms like retro aesthetics, modern aesthetics, post-modern aesthetics, and contemporary aesthetics are used simultaneously, side by side, and widely in everyday language is this very issue. This article aims to discuss the conceptual use of aesthetics and its functions in practice within today's simulation universe, in the context of the relationship between reality, reality, and aesthetics. Finally, it is worth noting that all these discussions are related to Western history and thought, and it is appropriate to evaluate everything said within this context.

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