

Desert of the 'Real': The Concept of 'Simulation' in e-Games and Baudrillard

'Gerçeklik' Çözü: E-Oyunlarda 'Simülasyon' Kavramı ve Baudrillard

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Abstract: Simulation is a difficult concept to tackle not only for sports philosophy but also for philosophy in general. In this article, the ideas about the discourse of simulation by Jean Baudrillard who questioned the boundaries between reality and simulation as we know it, are analyzed comparatively with the texts of contemporary sports philosophers, the roots in this regard, the ideas within reality and hyper-reality in simulations via eGames and eSports are examined. For this analysis, this paper is made up of four main parts. The first section examines mainstream views held and themes discussed by sports philosophers. The second one brings to bear the issue the point of view of gamers, tries to put a viewpoint of gamers into an argument. The third section as alluded to focuses on Baudrillard's ideas. The final section is based on conclusions driven by the main argument and how Augmented Reality will affect the future of games.

Keywords: E-sports, e-games, philosophy of sports, sociology of sports, Baudrillard.



Introduction

“Simulation” is the first concept that comes to mind when we hear about video games. If we want to deal with simulation we are best served if we go through the ideas of Baudrillard. Jean Baudrillard has been probably the most provocative and controversial social theorist of the last twenty years. His theories of the masses, fatal strategies, symbolic exchange and hyper-reality have courted widespread critical comment across the social sciences. (Giulianotti, 2004, 225) The purpose of this paper is to present Baudrillard’s ideas on hyper-reality and simulation, to discuss his ideas on simulation. In the first section, I will consider the nature of simulation in the context of eGames. This discussion will consider different sports philosophers, such as Hemphill and Hilvoorde, and also engage Chalmers, and try to give insight to a new kind of reality named as augmented reality and its reflection in video games. In the second section I will discuss, Hemphill’s “cypbernetic simulations” and concept of “virtual”. We will focus on hyper-reality of Baudrillard. Baudrillard’s idea ‘the hyperreal is the world as simulacrum’ (1994, 3), and finally examine the notion of ‘war games’; how war turned out to be a video game and video games are like real wars of our times. In the third section we will conduct a more detailed understanding of Baudrillard, and of how AR would change the understanding of our reality. In the fourth section we will present the culture developed by gamers, we will focus on “fairness” aspect of the eSports. We will conclude, the Baudrillardian perspective will lead us to face more augmented reality games in the future.

Simulation and Video Games: Views in Sport Philosophy

This section considers sport philosophers’ attempts at understanding video games through the concept of “simulation”. Before, we will first take a brief look at Baudrillard’s theory of simulation and simulacrum.

For Baudrillard, understanding simulations as representations and trying to find their relation to reality is problematic. For Baudrillard representation of an image is the first step to what he calls the simulacrum. In a simulacrum all the reference to reality is lost. Reality turns into the form of hyper-reality, and then loses its reference in digital media. An example of this is photography. A photograph when you take it with a traditional



camera has a negative entail that there is a solid representation of a reality. When we shift to digital media this reference is lost. So too when you take a photograph with a telephone. The photograph's reference as a negative is reduced to 0's and 1's in the computer world. In short, reality is hyper-real from the very beginning. In this sense, to give a clear differentiation between the real and the simulated is quite impossible in Baudrillard's view. Given its complexity, his theory of simulation will be discussed in detail in the third part of this paper. For now, three of his key notions – simulation, simulacrum, and hyper-reality – are discussed below in order to more meaningfully discuss the views of sports philosophers concerning simulation.

Baudrillardian simulation ranges from simple representation to the ultimate form of the simulacrum. The simulacrum for Baudrillard has no relation to any reality. It is not a question of true or false representation. Finally, hyper-reality is a real without origin or reality. With these three clarifications made, we are ready to engage some salient views in sport philosophy concerning eGames.

Hilvoorde and Pot (2017) focus on embodiment in eSports making a useful distinction. Avatarial embodiment is a key element in many eSports and video games. Basically, embodiment integrates “the virtual body and player's identity into singular being” (Johnson, 2014, 121-122). In order to analyze avatarial embodiment, Hilvoorde and Pot split the virtual games into two categories: “(1) A simulation of the ‘real world’, and (2) A unique manifestation and experience of playful embodiment.” (Hilvoorde & Pot, 2017, 20). This dual categorization reflects how sport philosophers usually view video games and eSports. Presently, the focus is on the “simulation” of the real world—a key term often used by sport philosophers in relation to eGames. Sports philosophers' sense differs from Baudrillard's in that they understand simulation as imitation. With Baudrillard, simulation starts with the imitation of an image, but in the end, in video games, this is not attached to (any) reality. We can give an example of this sort from simulation games.

When considering simulators, we should keep in mind that what it is named a “simulator” is usually a marketing strategy. But, we should consider whether these really count as simulations. So called “simulation



games” such as *Golf Simulator* or *Euro Truck Simulator*, are played by millions worldwide. Now, whether these can be *genuine* simulations of the “real world” is important for us because they can make us feel it to be real. A golf simulator today can be played using a “real” golf club that is wired in the right way and sends signals that correspond to actual golf kinematics. In this sense, in virtual reality players use gross motor skills typical of golf. They can even “walk” from hole to hole. Does this – the fact that there is actual physical movement akin to that displayed in real golf – make it any more real than a simulation? Is such physical movement needed for successful simulation in eSports?

Now, from a Baudrillardian point of view, the notion of simulation that is adopted by some sport philosophers is not a simulation. Instead, it is a hyper-reality. For Baudrillard the hyperreal is the world as simulacrum, in the sense that it is both simulated and, “realer than real” (Baudrillard, 1993, p18). The sorts of games being dealt with here have already been constructed without a reference to phenomena in the ‘real’ world. From a Baudrillardian perspective they have been built without a negative. Because a negative means a reference, a representation. it is impossible□□□□ for *League of Legends (LoL)* to represent something. Its reference is lost. This type of argument is the same for simulation games (such as the golf example given above) as well. It is in the form of the hyper-real or the altered-real.

Another concept like the hyper-real used in relation to this is that of the virtual. Hemphill writes that, “Many descriptions of cybernetic activities suggest that simulated activities are ‘virtual,’ not ‘real.’” (Hemphill, 2005, 195) This is a true statement when you take: a) reality in the sense of “reality” characteristic of classical philosophy, b) the “virtual” in the sense of the first computer games, and then c) you consider both in terms of representations. The roots of this view go back to Descartes’ evil demon who, through images, tries to deceive.

Reality as conceived by post-modern philosophy instead is a ludic reality. The line between reality and simulation has become blurred. Pokémon Go is a good example: with their smartphones players go around the city and hunt the Pokémon in the real spaces of the urban setting. Poké-



mons “are” hidden in some of those spaces. This is where reality and virtuality in their classical sense collapse into a new form called “ludic reality” in Baudrillard’s terminology. Chalmers (2016) calls this Augmented Reality (AR), taking Hemphill’s notion of AR further (Hemphill, 2005).

Hemphill sees AR as a form of reality but, reflecting the state of technology at the time his article was written, his is concerned with head-up displays or virtual reality (VR) glasses. This technology is limiting, since it is crude and cumbersome, and detracts from a fully immersive experience. Chalmers (2016) draws a distinction that better reflects today’s technology: head-up displays are virtual reality, whereas Pokémon Go is augmented reality. For Chalmers AR is “not a pure physical reality,” nor is it purely virtual reality, but rather it is a “mixed” reality (2016, 2:14). In virtual reality you put “the world” in VR glasses, but in augmented reality you put virtual objects in physical reality. For example, when you look through a telephone camera or some glasses, you start to see virtual objects in the reality you observe. Anything you see apart from the virtual objects is the solid reality. Unlike Hemphill, for Chalmers this is the future of gaming. Hence, whereas for Hemphill, “Virtual reality [...] is thought to be more than augmentation” (2005, 200), for Chalmers AR actually involves players in a completely new kind of reality.

If we take Chalmers’ view of AR, when acting “within” virtual reality players are but complex mathematical equations inside a computer. That is, there is what Chalmers calls a “spatial functionalism” at play. In this spatial sense, the context of where events take place determines the nature of the entity and corresponding experience on which space is picked out as whatever plays a certain functional role, “over spatial primitivism, on which we have a more direct and primitive grasp of space. This spatial functionalism leads to an anti-skeptical conclusion regarding many putative Cartesian skeptical scenarios, including brain-in-vat and Matrix scenarios: these scenarios do not involve systematic perceptual illusions” (Chalmers, in press, 1). In VR, they play the role of the pertinent space. It is a digital space but it is a real space (Chalmers, 2016, 9:27). Chalmers’s view is that the pertinent actual-world reference-fixer will refer ‘by an extrinsic characterization’ of the pertinent entities (Chalmers, 1996, 135). For an ‘electron’, for example, actual-world reference is fixed by ‘the entity that plays



the electron role' (Brueckner, 2003, 187) In virtual reality the computers give us a sense that there are entities in the space. Gamers play video games through TV, computer, and smart phone screens, all of which are spaces for the players. It seems that not too far into the future, in this concept of AR, when playing a war game, the attackers will encroach and surround players' houses. Players will 'see' enemies coming for them as they peer through their windows. This may seem farfetched (for now!), but a more simple and perhaps acceptable AR is *Snap Chat*. Basically, the users see themselves in the smart phone's camera, which affects their own self-image. This is a new kind of hyper-reality or altered-reality exceeding the "virtual". To better understand it and how it relates to simulation, it is useful to get inside the gamers' shoes.

Inside the Game: The Players' Perspective

Hemphill's arguments are useful to discuss reality and simulation from the perspective of the gamer. He finds "cybernetic simulations" as different but nonetheless real (Hemphill 2005, page 199). Immersion is a term Hemphill uses for simulation. As he explains, "immersion is the extent to which one forgets about the (human-machine) interface, or incorporates the machine as one would the body in a 'lived body'" experience". (Hemphill, 2005, 200). He thinks that first person point of view (PoV) in games is closer to immersion and simulation. In other words, they are more realistic.

The crucial question for gamers is: does this make a difference? LoL, played as an eSport by millions of players, in a third person PoV format. This is also the case for other games like *StarCraft*, and most Fantasy Role Playing (FRP) games. Does this make the game less real or does it rank low in relation to immersive capability, as Hemphill argues?

For Chalmers, gamers accept the characters as digitally existing. But, this seems to presume the veracity of digital existence. For Baudrillard fantasy role-playing games have their own reality or simulacrum in the sense that how these games bond to reality is in terms of a second stage where truth or falsity do not apply. This suspension of truth conditions better addresses the issue of how PoV is not the make or break element to provide a truly immersive experience even by Hemphill's lights. We cannot



apply truth or falsehood in FRP games any-more, since they are part of a simulacrum in Baudrillardian terms.

Holt (2016) focuses on the concept of the “virtual” as well. He discusses Hemphill’s ideas, emphasizing immersion and alternative reality. Unlike Hemphill, Holt’s main target is “gross motor skills”. Holt also considers movement and/or control of the entire body. His views prove useful to better examine those games where extensive bodily movement prevails, and how this may affect the experience of VR as more realistic for players. In video games as well as eSports activities, full engagement of the body is definitely the case. Because in video games players control the entire body of the characters they play, this has repercussions to how players can experience their own body *as* part of a simulated game that *feels* real.

Body controlled FRP’s are unique video games with a third person PoV. Players can see the bodies they control. These need not necessarily be human: they can be elves, beasts, and even “equipment” that is attached to fantastic creatures. The concept of “phantasm” is important because in a 1st first PoV it is harder to create this fantastic environment. Having an apparatus that accounts for a full-bodied experience is thus useful. It is also useful to see how this plays out in video games that are inspired by or adapt TV and film elements. Particularly because these make for rather immersive experiences, to borrow Hemphill’s term.

In a deep way, video games are like Hollywood films and popular HBO TV shows. Famously Baudrillard says, “you are not watching TV, TV watches you” (Baudrillard, 1994, 29). In this sense, video games are changed and created by watching the habits and needs of what people enjoy watching and playing. When a company reveals a WWI game based on the player’s needs assessment, another company focuses on WWII games. Some video games take place in totally fantastic environments, some take place in the future, and others take place in the past. Game series are a popular format that often settles on warfare. E.g., the *Battlefield* game series take place in World War I, and *Call of Duty* (CoD) takes place in World War II.

One of the most striking scenes in film is the opening scene of “Saving Private Ryan” (1998), the so-called “Omaha Beach scene,” where a group of soldiers disembark on D-day battle in Normandy. In video games, players



do not simply watch it in a realistic environment. They play it. They live it. They go from mere passive observers to active combatants. Moreover, they can change the roles they play, e.g. they may go from being a rifleman to adopting the perspective of a medic or other support personnel. Another important feature of these sort of games is that players can die again and again, yet come back to combat or play once more. This creates a clear hyper-reality of the war experience. In the popular game *Battlefield 1* a warning on the screen states, “You are not expected to survive”. This playing mode of the game, called “campaign” mode, and filled with very realistic cinematic effects, is played against the computer, not other players. But, such mode readies participants for the more complex “multi-player” gaming where they may feel as if they are a “dying” soldier. Then they begin to participate in a war. Most of the famous games start with single-player campaign mode, then shift to multi-player mode. This common marketing strategy started to change, since players are mostly interested in the eSport side. LoL did not include a campaign mode.

This participation is explained as “player-character identification” (Hemphill, 2005). About this, Naubert writes that, “..when the character falls when trying to jump over an in-game crevasse the player exclaims, 'I died!' But as can be clearly seen the person playing the game is not dead at all. What we see here is a transference of identity where the player has, at least for a moment, fused his or her personal identity with that of the character we see on-screen.” (Naubert 2012, 1)

This identification seems to be a necessary condition for the games becoming immersive. Without it, the players will be disengaged, and taking an observer’s passive stance. Yet, the ontological basis of such identification is misleading: it is a category mistake. The entity of the video game as hyper-real, VR, AR – whatever it may be –and the entity of the human are far different. During the last decade, the real victims of wars were children: two million killed, four to five million disabled, 12 million left homeless (Macpherson, 1992, 11). It is somewhat strange that, given the carnage and pain that war causes, humans want to be involved in gaming war. Yet, most game formats involve war and violent conflict. Baudrillard’s ideas are apposite to explain this a priori behavioral dissonance.

The First Gulf War in the Middle East offered the first ever images



of US bombings of targets from the PoV of the bombs and missiles themselves, and thus played on TVs around the world. About this, Poole explains, concerning Baudrillard's writings on the topic, that

...the war was conducted as a media spectacle. Rehearsed as a war game or simulation, it was then enacted for the viewing public as a simulation: as a news event, with its paraphernalia of embedded journalists and missile's-eye-view video cameras, it was a videogame. The real violence was thoroughly overwritten by electronic narrative: by simulation. (2007, 1)

In veritable post-modern and deconstructive fashion, post-modernism turned matters upside down. Adapting this for videogames, actual war becomes a videogame much as it became a hyper-real show on TV. In this manner, from a Baudrillardian point of view the war that players are engaged in while in the game is no different *experientially* from what would be "real" war, which has been validated and "lived" as an on-screen event. Except from the suffering of actual victims, one can no longer tell the difference between war and war-game.

Baudrillard's claim that *that* war "has never happened" may be absurd, but before going that far, we have to keep in mind that the medium that confers it a hyper-reality. The war did not occur is the electronic narrative of the mass media in general and its on-screen projections in particular.. For Baudrillard, the war was fully staged through those camera-mounted missiles. It *was* like a simulation taking place—one which we could not tell apart from a cinematic but false film since both are veridical *as* images on the screen. In *that* sense it is like a video game. (Incidentally, this may be one of the reasons why war games are the most popular games.) In games like *Battlefield 4*, *Call of Duty* or *Modern Warfare*, players can use a laser and video assisted missile against their enemies, and there is no difference between this game and what the media show in the evening news when terrorists are killed by a missile. The reality and simulation are blurred once again. This blurring of boundaries has also ethical ramifications.

Baudrillard: From Simulation to the Desert of the "Real"

For Baudrillard, we begin in simulation and arrive to the simulacrum. The road starts with the representation of reality in the form of a simula-



tion. But the simulation ends up losing its reference, especially in the digital world. The main reason is that “it lacks reference in a literal way” (Baudrillard 1994, page 5). As suggested above in photography that uses traditional pre-digital technology, for instance, clicking on a camera, images are captured and after developing and printing the negatives you reach the photographs. For every photograph there is a negative of that photograph’s image, meaning that there is a reference. The negative acts as the referential bridge. But, in digital media and video games there is no such thing. There is no “physical” entity that refers to something beyond itself and acts as a referential bridge that anchors the meaning and the image to the phenomenon.

Thus, simulation, for Baudrillard, changed the idea of “representation” in a similar way. It is not merely a technological change. Rather, it is the “collapse of the negative,” meaning that it is the collapse of “representation” altogether. There is no re-presentation. As a corollary, it is also the collapse of the “real”. The real has collapsed into images on TV screens and video games. It comes constituted as hyper-real even before we analyze it. For Baudrillard “The very definition of the real is that of which it is possible to provide an equivalent reproduction,” so that, ultimately, “the real is not only that which can be reproduced, but that which is always already reproduced: the hyperreal” (Baudrillard 1994, 143).

This means that it is not a discussion of representation anymore. This idea can best be explained using the analogy between a “map” and a “territory”. It is based on Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges. In his story “Del rigor en la ciencia” (“On Exactitude in Science”), map makers create such a detailed map that it duplicates its subject. As Baudrillard puts it,

Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory that engenders the territory, and if one must return to the fable, today it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours. The desert of the real itself. (1994, 1)



Video games reflect this admirably. Consider *Pokémon Go*: Baudrillard's famous phrase "the map precedes the territory" expresses the idea that our knowledge of the representation of space (the map) is often more familiar and more 'real' to us than the actual space itself. (Stevens, 2016) *Pokémon Go* is certainly a reflected construction of our geographic and ludic reality. We should not dismiss *Pokémon Go* as another socially isolating video game. Like other new online multi-player games *Pokémon Go* also creates its society; and it is not necessarily un-social, "Pokémon-desires link players to others, perhaps not so much through the weekly organized teams. *Pokémon Go* has recreated a map which draws us to a familiar yet new 'territory'"(Stevens, 2016).

Very much like in a Borgesian narrative where 'reality' is a game of mirrors mirroring each other –when we are left with maps it creates a world that is more exciting than banal and boring cycle of modern life. Thorough video games we find excitement. Although we realise they are hyper-real or we are in the "desert of the real". Žižek took the last sentence as a title for a post-9/11 essay: "Welcome to the Desert of the Real.' And it had famously been previously used by Larry Fishburne's character Morpheus in the film *The Matrix*—a film whose premise is precisely the very idea of a simulated reality that is hyper-real in Baudrillard's strongest sense. Žižek himself applies Baudrillard's ideas to the World Trade Center attacks as he "references" *The Matrix*:

When the hero (played by Keanu Reeves) awakens into 'real reality,' he sees a desolate landscape littered with burnt-out ruins -- what remains of Chicago after global war. [...] Was it not something of a similar order that took place in New York on September 11? Its citizens were introduced to 'the desert of the real' -- for us, corrupted by Hollywood, the landscape and the shots of the collapsing towers could not but be reminiscent of the most breathtaking scenes in big catastrophe productions.

Which is to say that the simulation preceded the real. The towers being hit by airplanes and then tumbling into rubble were not so amazing because we couldn't believe it was happening, but because we'd seen it before in movies. (2002, 15)

This is the case for video games as well. When gamers continuously play video games of war, they are confronted with the sounds of rifles, dead



bodies, and the catastrophe and terror of the war envelops them. The sounds in video games are the recordings of the actual sounds of guns, grenades, and rockets. In fact, players can discriminate, within the environment of the game the provenance and distance of sounds such that – much as Žižek diagnoses – they can differentiate in life outside the game different gun sounds by weapon type, as well a approximate distance and direction of the shot, even from miles away. This military skill, they gain through video game playing. At this point we can see how the previous discussion on simulation, AG, VR and all the rest, become validated within the Baudrillardian framework. The hyper-reality of screens, media, and the e-World blurs the “real” around us. We are in that sense left with the “desert of the real”. And yet, on this desert we now begin to face the new map/terrain, that of augmented reality to its “absurd yet logical” conclusion. Augmented reality can bring new unterritorial grounds to gaming ... in the real-world.

Ethical Aspects of E-Games: Competition, Popularity, and Cheating

There is no generally accepted definition of eSports (Wagner, 20016) The main arguments around the definition of eSports have been based on physical and mental duality (Hilvoorde & Pot, 2016, 15). (Another type of definition, Hemphill's, is based on representation, which we have discussed earlier, as opposed to simulacrum.) We have to keep in mind that video games and eSport activities as a hyper-reality and simulacrum, create their own culture. “The sense of self emerges through the simulation, in mass culture, rather than being connected to something real. Identity becomes a simulacrum, tied to the images that the consciousness creates and consumes rather than some truth, something real” (Wright, 2016, 51). The purpose of this part is to show how the eSport community created a culture.

To better understand video games and eSports we should emphasize the difference between two modes of playing: single player campaign and multi-player online games. As stated above, in single player campaign there are a lot of cinematics such that gamers play as if they are in war. In multi-player online games you connect to a server and start fighting sometimes



on-one-on one situations (*Starcraft*), sometimes 64 to 64 (*Battlefield 1*). eSport's potential lies in the multiplayer mode. The reason is that there are actual, real time people like you playing the game. Another important point is that the eSports community does not accept every video game as eSports. *Battlefield 1* is not accepted as an eSports game. As Gilroy helps explain, "The problem is as follows—the vehicles that lead to some of Battlefield's most exhilarating moments are *not balanced* for games where the player count is lower than 10 per side" (Gilroy, 2016, 1). The eSports community does not accept *unbalanced* situations in their games. *Battlefield 1* has a low potential to be an e-sport game from the gamers' point of view on account of "fair competitiveness". Competitiveness is an important aspect in the definition given by Whalen: "an umbrella term used to describe organized, sanctioned video game competitions, most often in the context of video game tournaments" (2013, 23). "Fair competitiveness" for eSports games embraces, in cyber terminology, the power (cpu) of your computer, your screen's refresh rate, even your internet connection. Everything that does not create a balanced environment affects the fairness of the game. The fairness aspect of the game therefore is important feature of it to become e-sports.

A consequence of this is that presently, maybe until technology and access improve, playing from home on your console rules out the game-playing as being eSport. Given the limitations of home-based equipment, players would be killed even before any enemies were in sight if the opponent has better computer, video cards and connection. This results in a situation in which eSports status is dependent on sponsorship. Today eSports take place in the context of large tournaments held under the aegis of corporations. These have become activities with millions of followers: global e-Sports audiences will reach 385 million in 2017; and their number is expected to grow by another 50% by 2020 (Warman 2017). In terms of economics, the sports economy amounts to \$696 million, and is expected to reach \$1.5 billion by 2020 (Warman, 2017).

The intervention of the "human element" is another relevant aspect to consider. For Jonasson (2017) an important aspect of modern sport is "human centeredness". By this he means, that any artificial intervention like doping, and far beyond, robotic or computer intervention, will cause



damage to sports' essence. Accordingly, whereas sport is threatened by “non-human elements” such as doping, prostheses, etc., for Jonasson, in eSports the human element involving centeredness is absurdly amplified. The result is that it is not human anymore. The human elements are removed from sport in the sense that it will lead to a computerized world. There is another side to the story. The human element can introduce “human error” into play—literally. For example, in traditional sports, FIFA is implementing a system of video assisted refereeing (VAR) to reduce human error. Playing multi-player games opens the door to hackers who can cheat. To put it simply: you shoot them and they do not die. Because of such a risk, the human element in the way of a controller of the system is needed. Otherwise, the non-human machine cannot detect the hacker, and thereby the machine has already been overcome by what it is programmed to do. When a human controller is in place, players “report” the hackers who are cheating to them, and cheaters receive a ‘fair play’ that bans them from the server. This also introduces the human element in a different sense. It democratizes matters such that players have the opportunity to play in games that are fairly played and refereed.

LoL is one of the eGames with most eSport potential. Not only does it rely on the multiplayer mode—a necessity, as argued above—but it is also tremendously popular: it was launched just in 2009 and today the monthly number of unique players is a staggering 100 million. The global reach of *LoL* (as other eGames) is unquestionable as it has players in nearly every country. In comparison, other ‘traditional’ sports, such as North American Football, are played in a much smaller scale.

In a deep sense, rather than sport philosophers, it is gaming communities (players, investors, sponsors, audiences) that “decide” the games that can become eSports. eSports have leagues, professional players, millions of spectators, tournaments, and so on. They constitute a community, and as such are a cultural phenomenon. Given the plasticity and porosity of conceptual and experiential “borders” in culture, Baudrillard’s ideas concerning simulation and simulacra become central: these are found as stages that range from from the “reflection of profound reality” to the “simulacrum. Above, we argued that eSports mask “the absence of profound reality” (Baudrillard 1994, 6).



Conclusion

In the first section, we considered the nature of simulation in the context of eGames within the sphere of philosophers – Chalmers and Hemphill among others – reaching the conclusion that a Baudrillardian stance better capture the experience of lived engagement that characterizes gaming today. In the second section we discussed Hemphill’s “cybernetic simulations” and concept of “virtual”. In third section we conducted a more detailed understanding of Baudrillard, and of how AR would change the understanding of our reality. In fourth, we focused on hyper-reality of Baudrillard and give examples from games on hyper-reality and how war turned out to be a video game and video games are like real wars of our times. In final section we presented the culture developed by gamers, summarizing eSports definition we focused on “fairness” aspect of the eSports.

It may be soon, or it may be in the far future – depending on how technology evolve – but eventually we will be facing much more complex AR games. This will raise novel challenges to all, gaming communities and its players, sponsors, and audiences, as well as academics. Whether eGames become ‘veritable’ sports and stand next to traditional ones, perhaps at the Olympics one day, or whether they create their own hyper-real enclave, we all have a stake in the direction that this takes. Even if, as mentioned above, such communities may go their way irrespective of academic pronouncements, it is still the responsibility of sport philosophers to offer whichever guidance they can give. At the very least they can proffer a bemused, “We told you so” should the e-gaming communities’ game not play out as planned. They may even become a game changer in their own right, both literally and symbolically.

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Öz: Simülasyon kavramı sadece spor felsefesi için değil genel olarak felsefe için anlaşılması zor bir kavramdır. Bu makalede, bildiğimiz gibi gerçeklik ve simülasyon arasındaki sınırları sorgulayan Jean Baudrillard'ın simülasyon kuramı üzerine düşünceleri, e-oyunlar ve e-sporlar içerisindeki gerçeklik ve simülasyon kavramları üzerine çalışan çağdaş spor felsefecilerinin düşünceleri ile birlikte incelemeye çalışılacaktır. Bu analiz için bu makale dört bölüme ayrılmıştır. Birinci bölüm spor felsefecilerinin genel düşüncelerini ve tartıştıkları konuları incelemektedir. İkinci bölüm oyuncuların bakış açılarını incelemektedir ve bu bakış açılarını bir argüman haline getirmeye çalışmaktadır. Üçüncü bölüm Baudrillard'ın düşünceleri üzerine kuruludur. Son bölüm ise, genel argümandan elde edilen sonuçlar ve ileride artırılmış gerçeklik kavramının oyunları nasıl etkileyeceği çıkarımlarını içermektedir.



Anahtar Kelimeler: E-sporlar, e-oyunlar, spor felsefesi, spor sosyolojisi, Baudrillard.

