

Jean Baudrillard and Feminism: Sara Ahmed and the Necessity to “Forget Baudrillard”

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Abstract

Jean Baudrillard’s work has had a turbulent relationship with feminist thought. Victoria Grace attributes this turbulence to a general refusal on the part of feminist critics to engage, borrowing from Rex Butler, with Baudrillard “in his own terms” (1). In this essay, I challenge Grace’s faith in Baudrillard’s work to wrest feminist thought from the clutches of hyperreality. Conversely, I argue that Grace’s lionization of Baudrillard’s theories as a panacea to the problems facing contemporary society is itself a replication of the very model of hyperreality that she, and Baudrillard, decries. To argue this, I perform two operations. Firstly, I present Baudrillard’s theory of the simulacrum arguing that its emergence does not mark the dissipation of the real in favor of the virtual but that it signals the emergence of a single world-view, or “integrated circuit,” that is taken as objectively real. Secondly, I turn my attention to Sara Ahmed’s feminist critique of Baudrillard’s work in “his own terms” and how this critique informs a need to push Baudrillard’s theories further than he himself pushed them. I conclude by suggesting that Baudrillard’s theories can be—and have been—used by

feminist thought but that they must not be accepted as inviolable lest we participate in the very simulacrum that he so vehemently opposed.

Keywords

Jean Baudrillard, Victoria Grace, Sara Ahmed, feminism, hyperreality, critique

Jean Baudrillard's work has had a turbulent relationship with feminist thought. In *Baudrillard Challenge: A Feminist Reading*, Victoria Grace attributes this turbulence to a general refusal on the part of feminist critics to engage, borrowing from Rex Butler, with Baudrillard "in his own terms" (Grace 1). For Grace, feminism is marred by either a political and philosophical appreciation of the politics of performativity, the "dominant logic of discourse in an era where the relation of language and world is structured in accordance with sign value" (124) or they are committed to biological determinism, a kind of "anatomy as destiny" (157). In either case, Grace argues that feminism is only successful at replicating the patriarchal system it seeks to challenge and that it would benefit from Baudrillard's "radical" (18) theory that opposes all systems at their cores.

At a time when we are inundated with mediated images and messages, Baudrillard's work seems more relevant than ever. However, it is important to temper the often cynical tone that is extracted from his work, positioning any ideas that flow from these media as *prima facie* suspicious—as complicit with the oppressive logics of hyperreality. Feminists, anti-racist activists, and trans activists—to just name a few—have taken up these media to call attention to the forms of oppression that permeate their daily lives in the hyperreal spaces indicative of social media. As such, our (re)turn to Baudrillard's work should be conducted cautiously, with

an eye to the many anti-oppressive thinkers that have written since Baudrillard's time. It is in dialogue with these approaches that we can develop a Baudrillardian approach today to understand without replicating the same mechanisms of oppression that these media—and our entire hyperreal system—propagate, and which they direct against the most marginalized.

In this essay, I challenge Grace's faith in Baudrillard's work to wrest feminist thought from the clutches of hyperreality. Conversely, I argue that Grace's lionization of Baudrillard's theories as a panacea to the problems facing contemporary society is itself a replication of the very model of hyperreality that she, along with Baudrillard, decries. This is because Baudrillard's theory of the simulacrum is not only a description of the effects of improved virtual technologies on the elusive concept of reality; it is also the moment where "everything operates in an integrated circuit" (*The Intelligence of Evil* 79), a death by recursion. When Baudrillard is proffered up as the apotheosis of radical theory, such an "integrated circuit" is concretized and the possibility for development is foreclosed. As such, I demonstrate the need to "Forget Baudrillard" borrowing from the title of the second half of *Forget Foucault* that solidified Baudrillard's "excommunicate[ion] from French intellectual circles" (Lotringer).

To argue this, I perform two operations. Firstly, I present Baudrillard's theory of the simulacrum arguing that its emergence does not mark the dissipation of the real in favor of the virtual—or the performative—but that it signals the emergence of a single world-view, or "integrated circuit," that is taken as objectively real. I employ this approach to argue that a feminist Baudrillardian reading of the many issues facing gender non-conforming people today have less to do with their merely adopting a hyperreal-veneer, or becoming a model of "sign value" (Grace 157), than it does with the emergence of the simulacrum that naturalizes cis-gender identities and relations.

Secondly, I turn my attention to Sara Ahmed's feminist critique of Baudrillard's work in "his own terms" and how this critique informs a need to push Baudrillard's theories further than he himself pushed them. My focus on Ahmed is motivated by her prominence within both academic and non-academic feminist circles, attesting to the potency of her thought within feminist discourse today. Additionally, her direct engagement with Baudrillard's work welcomes a more thorough interlocution between them. I conclude by suggesting that Baudrillard's theories can be—and have been—used by feminist thought but that they must not be accepted as inviolable lest we participate in the very simulacrum that he so vehemently opposed.

Victoria Grace's Baudrillardian Challenge to Feminist Thought

a. Victoria Grace Reading Baudrillard

Victoria Grace falls victim to this trap of the simulacrum, suggesting that hyperreality is "an era or mode of representation imploding and displacing the real from its location of reference" (33). By succumbing to this trap, she naturalizes so-called "natural real" social formations as opposed to "hyperreal" ones (20), constructing a binary in Baudrillard's work that he himself challenges. Her exposition into Baudrillard's work is incredibly nuanced, however, and demands its own investigation.

For Grace, the crux of Baudrillard's critical project is to diagnose the predicament presented by virtual technologies and the logics of operationality that emerged in the twentieth century. These logics are underwritten by the "code," a "rule that structures the relationship between objects and the relationship of objects to subjects on a scale creating differential points that identify the object" (10). The code delineates the limits of acceptability for the seamless functioning of the system in terms of exchange, power, and identity. It prescribes a

fundamental set of axioms that regulate the possibilities afforded to any person, serving as a simulated reference point from which no one may stray too far. Perhaps counter-intuitively, there is a simultaneous explosion of signification, a move from “equivalence to polyvalence” (9), in tandem with the strengthening of the restrictive code. The code mandates and controls but it also encourages and liberates. The code’s two operations are guided by a common desire to evacuate any action of radical potential in favor of the continued functioning of the system itself. It is with this that she draws the distinction between the “natural real,” the era that precedes the code, and the “hyperreal” (20), the era of the code.

The “natural real” is the model of social organization that gravitates around symbolic exchange, “one of ambivalence and transformation through circulation” (20), whereas the hyperreal is the code-governed phase predicated entirely upon operationality and perfectibility. The “natural real,” as she calls it, is thus an indeterminate, symbolic formation, while hyperreality appears to embody indeterminacy in the free-floating signifiers that inhabit it but is nevertheless bound by a structural commitment to the “code.”

In the symbolic, there is “neither essence nor absolute separation of subject from object” (19) which is to say that there is a perpetual antagonism between the subject and the object without definitively constituting one or the other. They are in continuous flux, in a constant duel that “abolishes the law of exchange” (Baudrillard, *Seduction* 126). The dialectical play between subjects and objects never resolves itself in a synthesis as the Hegelian formulation would anticipate. Instead, “it is sworn to extremes, [...] sworn to radical antagonism” (Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies* 25), and it is through this antagonism that they conjure away all reconciliatory identity markers. They are thus incompatible with the code where “everything is arrested as a coded difference in a universal nexus of relations”

(Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange & Death* 185). Given this, it is all the more difficult to reconcile Grace's bifurcation of the "natural real" from the "hyperreal" given that such a binary (re)constitutes a system of equivalence (the code) that subordinates the hyperreal to the transcendental terrain of the natural real. Indeed, Baudrillard was wary of any clear split between the two, suggesting that even in the age of hyperreality, "at the extreme horizon of technology, something else happens, another game, with other rules. The point is that the constellation of the secret still resists, remains alive" (Baudrillard, *The Vital Illusion* 82). In hyperreality, we see the maintenance of a duel/dual configuration that revitalizes the antagonism endemic to the symbolic. Grace's characterization of the stakes of Baudrillard's work is then only partly complete. It is not that the hyperreal unequivocally puts the symbolic illusion of the world to death; it is instead that there are forces that are trying to perform such operations although they will, as per Baudrillard's optimism, never succeed.

Science is the one of the foremost forces of hyperreality. It is a "legitimizing principle of technical operations on the real and on the world" (Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange & Death* 160). He goes so far as to label it a "terrorist rationalization" (Baudrillard, *For a Critique* 37), that "infiltrates itself into the genome and into the genetic code to transform the [social] body itself" (Baudrillard, *The Intelligence of Evil* 76). For science to operate, it "requires a real, 'objective' reference within the processes of substance in order to justify it" (61) lest it have no claim to truth. It is in this way that it depends upon a cultural appreciation of the "objective" over the superstitious, and of the material world over the metaphysical world. When Grace aligns the "natural real" against "hyperreality," she is participating in this very appreciation, turning the problem into an "arch-classical, Platonic" distinction between

reality and simulation that Baudrillard denounces as a “serious flaw” (Baudrillard, *Conspiracy of Art* 202).

Grace’s reading of Baudrillard’s work is rigorous, but there are moments that participate in the same hyperreal framework she and Baudrillard challenges. I now turn to her claim that feminism’s failure to properly identify the structural edifice of patriarchal society is symptomatic of her understanding of the simulacrum as the antithesis to the “natural real.”

a. Victoria Grace Reading Feminism

In *Baudrillard’s Challenge: A Feminist Reading*, Grace critiques feminist thinkers who have dismissed Baudrillard’s work because of his romanticizing the idea of femininity. Her polemic reaches deep into Baudrillard’s work to demonstrate that his critique of “anatomy as destiny” (*Seduction* 9) is a more radical feminist approach than those of “feminists” who “have argued that (biological) ‘sex’ has provided a naturalised alibi for ‘gender’” (12). Grace turns her critical eye to many different camps of feminist theory to systematically reveal the way their projects mirror the very structures they try to challenge. She suggests that Luce Irigaray’s appreciation of the “ontological specificity of ‘woman’ [that] must be to assume an essence” (51) revitalizes a markedly patriarchal configuration of the man/woman binary; and Judith Butler’s extolment of the performative submits gender to “a veritable sea of floating signifiers” (Grace 125) ultimately guided by the logics of hyperreality and the code. Taking aim at these broad camps of feminist thought, she argues that Baudrillard’s theories are more feminist than these seminal feminist thinkers. To parse out her challenges to these camps, I attend to them one at a time.

Anatomy as Destiny

In *Seduction*, Baudrillard suggests that Luce Irigaray participates in the structure of patriarchal “‘scientific’ determinism” (152) because she believes in “sex’s reality and in the possibility of speaking sex without mediation” (43). In response, Baudrillard proposes supplanting anatomy with seduction, the superficial “play of signs” (115) that opposes the determinative logic of the code. In signs there are no definitive identities, only antagonism and transformation.

Grace reiterates Baudrillard’s criticism that Irigaray’s “assumption of the biological, anatomical nature of ontological difference” (60) strengthens the patriarchal commitment to biological determinism. Grace contends that Irigaray restricts the possibilities afforded to both men and women, by linking them to their biology. All gender is then only derivative from the transcendental marker of biology and is a means by which women’s bodies are subordinated to men’s bodies. Irigaray’s project then steadily proceeds towards an impasse where she both wants to repudiate the restrictive pretensions of anatomy as destiny while also claiming it as an original determining category of all things: “[n]o world is produced or reproduced without sexual difference” (Irigaray 178, qtd. in Grace 197). With this, Grace recognizes Irigaray’s disavowal of the symbolic, the era in which there were no determining categories but only perpetual flux. Without this, according to Grace, Irigaray is condemned to only reproduce the same patriarchal determining system of anatomy that she criticizes.

Performative as Destiny

From Irigaray and the apparent feminist commitment to anatomy, Grace sets her sights against the poststructuralist approaches to sex and gender indicative of the work of Judith Butler.

Butler, Grace argues, differs from Irigaray in her refusal to acknowledge the “political necessity of a project of sexual difference” (60) and instead vies for a politics of the

performative that recognizes gender as the product of “repetitive discursive acts that reiterate and indeed *realise* (in the sense of make real) gender difference” (61). There is no truth of gender related to biological sex in the performative. The performative constitutes the site of biology as itself a product of the repetitive demonstrations of gender that retroactively designate it as a site from which gender is culturally and socially believed to emerge.

According to Grace, Butler’s commitment to the performative belies her radical project because it only commits itself to the logic of presentation and signs endemic to hyperreality. The performative is, for Baudrillard, a consequence of the present belief that “nothing is true unless it is desecrated, objectified, stripped of its aura, or dragged onstage” (*Agony of Power* 67), a rendering “more visible than visible: obscenity” (*Fatal Strategies* 30). This is not to leave identity to a radical indeterminism present in the symbolic but instead to allow identity to float freely all the while being secretly tethered to the demands of self-presentation under the aegis of a simulated emancipatory politics of self-expression.

Grace combines her criticism of these two approaches to question if trans identities are “a transgressive force that destabilizes and challenges the gender binary” (117). Drawing upon the influential work of Sandy Stone, Susan Stryker, and Judith Halberstam (to name just a few), who have made significant contributions to the trans theory, each contributing specifically to the way that trans people are (pre)figured within the dominant matrix of cis-gender and hetero-normative social relations that permeate today, Grace employs Baudrillard’s work to downplay these “transgenderist” beliefs that “reflect uncritically precisely what is happening with the simulation of gender, and accord almost perfectly with the contemporary hegemonic structuration” (121). The violence of Grace’s suggestion is striking for three primary reasons. Firstly, it positions trans identities as simply a means to transgress power

relations when, for many—if not all—trans people, their identity as trans portends any political affiliation. Trans people are not trans people to make a political statement. Secondly, the disavowal of trans people's identities as only participating in the hegemonic configuration of gender (as either anatomy as destiny or performative as destiny) ignores the fact that for many trans people their identities are a way by which they may continue to survive in the world. In other words, by framing their existence as a 'failure' to ostensibly challenge hyperreality, it extends the familiar oppressive discourses that shroud their daily lives. And thirdly, it is incredibly ironic for her to employ Baudrillard, a cis-gender man, as the authority on what constitutes appropriate, or properly political, identities.

Beyond the immediate violence of Grace's treatment of trans folks, this approach betrays the overall Baudrillardian trajectory of her text. She re-inscribes the primacy of the performative (under the moniker of the symbolic) that she had challenged in Butler by framing identity as a site of resistance against hegemonic power relations. Moreover, by locating these hyperreal signs in trans identities, she re-establishes the non-Baudrillardian framing of a clear distinction between the "natural real" and the "hyperreal." In her words, "the game of trans is one of a superficial play of appearances" (146), and so it is articulated as the hyperreal 'other' in relation to the 'naturally real' cis-gender identities against which they are compared. This is not entirely due to a mis-interpretation of Baudrillard's work by Grace, however. In *The Transparency of Evil*, he suggests that "a transsexual, or a transvestite" are "the only people left who live through the signs of an overdrawn, rapacious sexuality" (21). They are the consequence, he continues, "on lack of differentiation between sexual poles" (20). Like Grace, Baudrillard's insistence on a 'real' sexuality specified to these "sexual poles" belies his lionization of the symbolic as a site to trouble all determinacy. Baudrillard—and Grace's—

conservative agenda overshadows the radical project thus far espoused by Grace, ultimately re-constituting the very structuration of hyperreality against a transcendently 'real' reality.

James Sares, in a publication in *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, puts the problem succinctly when he writes that

Baudrillard's reduction of transsexuality to the symbolic realm presumes appearance as domineering the essence of the subject, such that the subject is hollowed of authentic content. Yet Baudrillard produces the very meaninglessness he critiques by hypostatizing the concept of the subject as form of rupture without reflexive critique of its historical and social construction. (160)

Agreed, Baudrillard's work mirrors the very concept of hyperreality and the simulacrum that he tries so desperately to challenge. Does this mean that Baudrillard's work can be of no use to feminist and trans theory? Not necessarily, it just demands a different view of his overall project than the one that Grace provides.

An Alternative Reading of Baudrillard: How Baudrillard can work with feminist thought I have argued elsewhere that Baudrillard's work can be read in conjunction with Butler's theory of performativity to address present forms of scientific discrimination leveled against trans folks (Guignion). To do this demands a departure from the view that the simulacrum is only the moment in which appearance overshadows reality—as Grace seems to suggest. Instead, as I have alluded to thus far, the simulacrum must not be mistaken for an antithesis to reality. As a correlative to Grace's application of Baudrillard's thought, heed the words of Marc Oliver D. Pasco in his plea for the return of Baudrillard's thought today: "The exponential decay and the concurrent metastatic transmutation of the objective, the real and the rational into simulacra is arguably one of the most thought-provoking facts of contemporary

history” (1). Like Grace, Pasco situates the simulacrum as a succeeding organizational framework to reality. They both mistakenly identify the simulacrum, or the hyperreal, as antithetical to reality when reality and the simulacrum are actually one and the same phenomenon. As Baudrillard argues, it “is not then, the real which is the opposite of simulation—the real is merely a particular case of that simulation” (*The Perfect Crime* 16). By contrast, Baudrillard contends that the real conflict is between integral reality and illusion.

Integral reality “operates in an integrated circuit. In the information media - and in our heads too - the image-feedback dominates, the insistent presence of the monitors - this convolution of things that operate in a loop, that connect back round to themselves” (*The Intelligence of Evil* 79). This feedback loop forms a totalizing möbius strip—a perfectly tautological system—that is hermetically sealed. The possibility for objectivity is intensified in this paradigm where the conditions for any given phenomenon can be traced back to a genesis point that has a direct relation to that phenomenon. There is therefore no necessity for the system to be recognized from without—a Hegelian ‘other’ for example—to confirm the existence of the system itself.

The emergence of this objectivity finds its genesis in modernity where “technological, scientific, economic” reality “relentlessly proceeds on its course to the exclusion of any imaginary order” (204). Integral reality is simply a phase of the project of modernity, the moment where reality becomes more real than real, more objective than objective, more simulacral than the simulacrum. The problem that Baudrillard writes against is thus not the threat that objectivity may vanish, as Pascal and Grace frame it; it is that there will be a profusion of objectivity that will foreclose the possibility for change and that will mark the moment where the “possible itself is no longer possible” (204).

In terms of the trans identities that Grace criticizes as complicit with a system of hyperreality, an alternative Baudrillardian reading would take aim at the reactionary radical feminist disavowal of trans bodies as failing to conform to the ‘real’ gender binary. Grace is then complicit in the scientific naturalization of gender when she asks if “transgenderism” is “symptomatic of the simulation of gender/sex difference” (132) as though cis-gender identities are somehow more real than trans identities. As Susan Stryker so astutely observes, “science seeks to contain and colonize the radical threat posed by a particular transgender strategy of resistance to the coerciveness of gender: physical alteration of the genitals” (249). Similarly, Cheryl Chase, in commenting on the surgical interventions often imposed on intersex bodies, argues that “[c]utting intersex genitals becomes yet another hidden mechanism for imposing normalcy upon unruly flesh, a means of containing the potential anarchy of desires and identifications within oppressive heteronormative structures” (204). The scientific intervention against non-normative bodies reflects a general societal repulsion of those people and bodies that do not comply with the naturalized beliefs of sex and gender. It is an example of a force that makes the “possible itself [...] no longer possible” (204) as Baudrillard solemnly proclaimed. It is strange then that Baudrillard, and Grace that follows him, tacitly speak the language of the same scientific objectivity that they admonish. So, if we are going to use Baudrillard’s work, there is a necessity to push it further than he himself did—we must wrest its radical potential from the conservative and reactionary undertones that subtend and limit it.

Sara Ahmed’s Feminist Challenge to Baudrillard

For Sara Ahmed, Baudrillard’s gravitation towards an ultimately conservative theoretical framework is maintained by his commitment to the subject. Writing during the post-Deleuzo-Guattarian “affective turn,” Ahmed’s feminist commitment is to both the interrogation of the

European model of subjectivity, and the post-structuralist critiques of that subjectivity. She contends that in Baudrillard's work, the "subject is determined by indeterminacy (rather than anatomy, class, or gender). As such, Baudrillard's postmodernism can be read as a normative and positive reading of the subject, rather than as a rejection of its limits" (81). Rather than oppose the subject—a decidedly Eurocentric construct—Baudrillard re-positions the subject as always already indeterminate, as though the forces of power and knowledge play no significant part in constituting this free-floating subjectivity. By contrast, Ahmed—among other feminists writing against the same traditions—is not trying to re-constitute a steady subject that portends all social and cultural influences. Instead, she recognizes the various forces that delimit this new subjectivity and carefully limit its scope and potential: "They form part of a generalized discursive economy that stabilizes meanings in the form of the delimitation of subject positions" (82). The determining ground of subjectivity subtends the indeterminacy that Baudrillard lauds as a sign of some symbolic residue in the age of hyperreality. Baudrillard's subject is then doomed to mirror rather than challenge the system at hand.

Ahmed's suspicion of the efficacy of Baudrillard's challenge intensifies when she considers the points of contact between Baudrillard's subject and capital in the 20th century onward: "Baudrillard's postmodern vision of signs as proliferating and neutralizing connects with the very nature of money as a signifier which can only quantify, and as such idealizes the very symbolic power of capital itself to displace the possibilities of value and utility" (83). By way of example, Ahmed considers how women's bodies are sexualized in advertising and how this sexualization grounds these bodies within the discursive matrix of bodies-as-commodities. There is thus not only a proliferation of the overt sexualization of women's bodies in visual media, but also a very structured attempt to ground bodies for the sake of capitalist

accumulation. To grapple with these mechanisms demands an investigation of not only the broad hyperreal shift that Baudrillard writes of, but of the structures of power and knowledge that constitute certain bodies as confineable while allotting some semblance of freedom to others.

In theorizing subaltern voices, Gayatri Spivak's work on the status of European intellectualism contributes to this conversation. In "Can the Subaltern Speak?," Spivak takes aim at Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault whose consideration of the "S/subject" is "curiously sewn together into a transparency by degenerations," and "belongs to the exploiter's side of the international division of labor" (280). Spivak does not mention Baudrillard's work but he could easily be transposed into her critique. In identifying the transgressive potential found in the play of indeterminate signs, he reifies the dominant structure that subjugates some subjects while liberating others. Ahmed develops a critical idiom to identify the operations that make such privileged indeterminacy possible in *Queer Phenomenology* when she articulates that cis-gender white men possess the "ability to move through the world without losing their way" (139), and enjoy the privilege of transparency.

So, when Baudrillard highlights the importance of symbolic indeterminacy against hyperreal indeterminacy, he fails to recognize the way that some people benefit greatly from hyperreal indeterminacy while others are exploited by it. What is more, just because symbolic exchange precedes the hyperreal does not mean that it precedes the forms of oppression immanent to hyperreality. Marcel Mauss illustrates this in his seminal investigation of how some tribal communities across the globe have historically traded women like they were objects: "As soon as two clans existed in a society, they necessarily contracted and exchanged between one another not only their women (exogamy) and their rituals, but also their goods, at

least at certain times of the year and on certain special occasions” (185). In that moment, women are constituted and frozen as objects to be exchanged. Thus, we see a fundamental connection between the symbolic and the hyperreal in the societal use of women as a means of accruing power—be it in the form of hierarchical status or wealth. The symbolic then appears like an illusory foray into a more equitable cultural paradigm. In fact, I would hazard that its reification presents an even more dire alternative precisely because of its promise to end all determinations—a seductive promise given the incessant coding and over-coding that permeates daily life by big-data miners, and global, digital capitalism.

Baudrillard’s work can be used by feminism insofar as it challenges the restrictive notion of “anatomy as destiny”; it is skeptical of the play of signs to mount an effective challenge to the present proliferation of signs under the auspices of the accumulation of capital. His challenge, far from a panacea as Grace describes it, is only useful as a preliminary endeavor. When Ahmed moves from his thought to consider the ways that power writes and determines subjects, she is assuming that the subject is not-determined in the first instance, that they are somewhat of a blank slate upon which power and knowledge can inscribe themselves. Seeing as Baudrillard’s work accentuates this moment—the moment of undecidability prior to the types of coding indicative of these systems (a coding that reaches its apotheosis in hyperreality)—he provides a template for the immediate refusal of anatomy and the play of signs as destiny. What is more, this assumption tacitly troubles the implicit assumptions maintained in some scientific circles pertaining to sexual or racial determinism. Although his project might mirror the same determinative qualities of hyperreality, especially in terms of the place of women in symbolic exchange, it can be used as a theoretical supplement to the

monolithic forces of capitalist and scientific patriarchy exerting themselves in floating signification and biological determinism respectively.

The potency of Ahmed's feminist critique is that she, as Grace states, takes Baudrillard "on his own terms," and these terms present the various contradictions in his work that undermine the efficacy of his radical project. Ultimately, Ahmed finds little use for Baudrillard's work, preferring instead a purely "feminist approach" that conducts "an analysis of how power relations are stabilized in specific historical moments (in the empirical form of male dominance)" (91). However, Ahmed's feminist critique represents a surprising commitment to a key component of Baudrillard's thought: the refusal of allotting primacy to a single voice to explain and remedy the current issues facing society today. This is undoubtedly a stronger commitment to the form of Baudrillard's theories than their content, but it speaks to a consistent current that runs through Baudrillard's work: the challenge against all totally integrated systems. And this demands a death of Baudrillard's thought as per his own prescription: "When we lose the possibility of death, of the end, of playing with the end, then we are very dead. And the whole system has managed to deprive us of this possibility" ("Baudrillard's List" 170). For an approach to be properly Baudrillardian, it must be prepared to leave Baudrillard, or to "Forget Baudrillard," and Ahmed's feminist critique does just that.

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