Into the Rabbit Hole: The Realism of Simulation

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Abstract

In the first half of the 1980s, at the height of the postmodernist theoretical debate, the actual literary production already showed signs of fatigue from the postmodernist dictum. Especially the works of American authors from the 1980s onwards show an increasing tendency to abandon the dead-end loops of postmodernist autoreferentiality, and to focus on various aspects of tangible reality instead. The paper argues that such practice should not be considered or theorised in terms of falling back on the great tradition of realism but rather as a necessary literary response to the mechanisms governing the changing of the epochs. My intention is to show that the allegedly realistic modes of contemporary American writing correspond to the epochal social, cultural and political changes accompanied by the rise of digital media. As such, these works effectively reflect, comment on and contribute to the contemporary reality that can no longer be adequately described or theorised about in terms of Cartesian metaphysics.

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A whimsical and satirical piece, it tells the tale of a young girl who falls into a world of nonsense. As you read, take notes on how Carroll uses point of view to portray a childlike imagination. “Alice meets the White Rabbit” by Margaret Winifred Tarrant is in the public domain.

Chapter 1: “Down the Rabbit Hole”. [1] Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, 1. and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it; ‘and what is the use of a book,’ thought Alice.