

The Postmodern Simulation in Jean Baudrillard's Writings

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Abstract

Simulation is a keyword in postmodernism. The term was first used, in postmodern sense, by the French linguist Michel Pecheux to describe the way language makes it possible to transform abstract. Jean Baudrillard, the French sociologist and critic, is one of the names associated with the postmodern simulation. His theory of simulation stems from his early work on sign systems in the 1970s.

This paper tries an analysis of some of Baudrillard's works that are related to simulation. The importance of this analysis lies in highlighting a concept which is considered an essential aspect of the postmodern literary mode. A clear understanding of this term helps the readers of the literary text to have a better vision and appreciation of it. It can serve as an aid for further researches on postmodernism .

The research tries to answer some questions related to simulation such as. What is meant by simulation ? In what way is it related to signs? How is simulation related to society? How is it related to the media? What is meant by other terms related to simulation such as the hyperreal?

Key words: Simulation, postmodernism, and hyperrealism.

محاكاة ما بعد الحداثة في كتابات جون بودريالارد
الملخص

المحاكاة هي كلمة تشير إلى ما بعد الحداثة. استعمل المصطلح لأول مرة بمعنى ما بعد الحداثة ، من قبل اللغوي الفرنسي ميشيل بيشوكس لوصف الطريقة التي تجعل من الممكن تحويل اللغة إلى مجردة. وتبعه في ذلك عالم الاجتماع والناقد الفرنسي جان بودريالارد وهو أحد الأسماء المرتبطة بمحاكاة ما بعد الحداثة التي تتبع نظريته في المحاكاة من عمله المبكر على أنظمة الإشارات في السبعينيات (1970).

يحاول هذا البحث تحليل بعض أعمال بودريالارد المتعلقة بالمحاكاة، أما أهمية البحث فتكمن في تسليط الضوء على "المفهوم" الذي يعد جانباً أساسياً في الأسلوب الأدبي ما بعد الحداثة، ويساعد الفهم الواضح لهذا المصطلح قارئ النص الأدبي في الحصول على رؤية واضحة وتقدير أفضل له، ويمكن أن تكون بمثابة مساعدة لمزيد من الأبحاث حول ما بعد الحداثة.

يحاول البحث الإجابة عن بعض الأسئلة المتعلقة بالمحاكاة مثل: ما هو المقصود من المحاكاة؟ ما هي الطريقة التي تتعلق بها بالغناء؟ كيف يتم المحاكاة المتعلقة بالمجتمع؟ كيف ترتبط بالإعلام؟ ما المقصود بمصطلحات أخرى ذات صلة بالمحاكاة مثل الواقعية المفرطة؟

الكلمات المفتاحية: المحاكاة ، ما بعد الحداثة و الواقعية المفرطة

The Postmodern Simulation in Jean Baudrillard's Writings

Introduction

Jean Baudrillard's first appearance on the American scene dated from 1975 when his *Le Miroir de la production* of 1973 was published as *The Mirror of Production*. After that first appearance there was a period of silence which ended with the appearance of *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the sign* in 1981. In 1982 two works by Baudrillard were published in the *Shadow of the Silent Majorities* and *Simulations* which collects 'the precession of simulacra' and the earlier 'the Orders of simulacra' which had originally appeared in *L'Echarrgesymboliqueet la mort* of 1976.

Baudrillard has suddenly become a major voice and definitely a theorist of the postmodern and most of his work, both early and late, has been translated. His growing status was confirmed by the translations of recent work and by the appearance of both *Selected Writings* and a *Baudrillard Reader*. He has been described, in some intellectual circles, as the most advanced theorist of the media and society in the postmodern era.

Jean Baudrillard's theory relating to simulation has its roots in his early work on sign systems. To understand what Baudrillard means by simulation we need to highlight his ideas on the sign as they occurred in his first book the system of objects published in 1968, The book attempts to identify the abstract language that underlies our relationships with ordinary objects. This relationship is controlled by the sign. Once of the consequences of the object's entry into the field of the sign is that no object has any meaning in itself but only in its relationship to the other objects. This meaning is determined according to a system of objects, which precedes the possibility of any single objects. This system produces the uniqueness of any particular meaning, like the modem pieces of furniture which cannot be grasped in isolation .

Baudrillard tries to analyze objects in terms of the sign , he divides objects into two categories . The first category is objects in terms of their arrangement or organization in time and space which we might analogize to the syntagmatic order of language. The second is objects in terms of their atmosphere such as to what colour or material an object is made of which we might analogize to the paradigmatic order of language.

In terms of arrangement, Baudrillard looks at the shift from the organization of furniture within the old bourgeois interior, in which domestic space is enclosed



and cut off from the outside, and objects are heavy, immobile to our current open, outward- facing living environments, in which furniture is no longer fixed in space or function but is able to be broken down and re-assembled in various combinations: beds become couches, and sideboards and wardrobes give way to built-in- storage. The isolation and individuality of furniture in the bourgeois society may be considered as a mark of the ethic of self- reliance and independence or of the centrality of the family. Opposed to this furniture in the new environment, which is able to be grasped only in its relationship to its surroundings. No piece of furniture and no space in the house stands alone. The old order is psychological, unconscious and subjective while the new arrangement is functional, conscious and objective.

In terms of atmosphere the some abstraction can be seen, for example, in the colours in which these new domestic interiors are painted. Once ,colour was a reflection of the world outside. Then, colour only symbolically or metaphorically gestured towards this outside. Finally all links to the outside are broken and colour is only understood in terms of its relationship to the other colours. No colour can, then, be conceived on its own but as compared to the other colours. For example, a hot colour is not hot in itself but only because it is different from cold colours and the cold colour is cold because it is not hot. Then, the materials which are used in the domestic interiors are cut from any previous reality, whether natural or symbolic. With the rise of artificial materials such as plastic, real wood becomes a less practical material to make an object of. Still the sign of the natural or wood within the order of signs appeal to people, the is why we can see artificial objects in natural shape such as plastic veneer with a grain of wood.

Not only does the system of the sign control our relationship to objects but the object itself is also consumed as a sign. Baudrillard gives an example saying if we consume the product as product, we consume its meaning through advertising. If we imagine modern cities stripped of all their signs with bare walls and then a word signifying nothing such as GARAP inscribed on all its walls it will be consumed as a sing. In the system of objects, Baudrillard says :

This single expression, GARAP, is inscribed on all the walls: pure signifier, without a signified. Signifying itself. It is read, discussed, and interpreted to no end. Signified despite itself, it is consumed as sign. Then what does it signify, if not a society capable of generating such a sign? And yet despite its lack of significance it has mobilized a complete imaginary collectivity, it has become characteristic of the whole of society. To some extent, people have come to " believe " in GARAP. We have seen in it an indication (indices) of the omnipotence of advertising.(Baudrillard, 2000 b, p. 408).

One might think, says Baudrillard, that it is enough to associate the sign GARAP with a product to impose itself immediately, this is not certain because the trick of the advertisers has been to conceal this because with the explicit signified the individual resistance is possible while, even ironic, consensus is possible with the faith in a pure sign.

In advertising the system of conditioning is used to realize competition and personalization. Competition, which was once the golden rule of production, has now been transferred to the domain of consumption. We can detect the ambiguity of advertising: it provokes us to compete. Advertising tells us: Buy this, for it is like nothing else. Advertising has changed from a commercial practice to a theory of the praxis of consumption. On the other hand, the system of consumption constitutes an authentic language .

The concept of " brand " the principal concept of advertising, summarizes well the possibilities of a " language" of consumption. All products (except perishable foods) are offered today as a specific acronym: each product "worthy of the name" has a brand name (which at times is substituted for the thing itself name is to signify the product, its secondary function is to mobilize connotations of affect. (Baudrillard, 2000 b.pp.413–14) .

Although he did not use the word simulation, yet we see something of what Baudrillard means by it, in the abstraction or derealization of the object, and the passing of the object from material presence to sign." the essential point to make with respect to Baudrillard's work is that it has remained remarkably well focused on the problem of the object, of the cultural object (generally the fusion of sign and object)." (Gane, 1991, p. 7) .

It is vital, then, to consider Baudrillard's construction of his notion of the 'object ' in relation to his social and cultural evolution: obviously his work is inspired by Marxist analysis of the commodity. Yet, the term objects is much broader and this is for a good theoretical reason which lies at the base of Baudrillard's theoretical project. The commodity is one form of the objects, its exchange – value form. The commodity can be used as a model for the analysis of other forms, but in general it is the freeing of the object as such which dominates the configurations of western culture from the Renaissance, and perhaps earlier .

In the Idea of the postmodern : A History . Hans Bertens says

With Le Systeme des objects (1968) Baudrillard made an important contribution to the semilogically inspired analysis of consumer society that was in the air in the late 1960s. More thoroughly than other theorists of the period Baudrillard explores in Mark poster's words "the possibility that consumption has become the chief basis of the social order and of its internal classification" ... (Bertens ,199, p. 146).

Bretons explains that, for Baudrillard, the primary function of consumer objects is their sign function which is promoted by so- called life style advertisements, television commercials and so on. So what we buy is not so much the product as its sign value Baudrillard argues that such a system can, more usefully, be analyzed in terms of the perspective developed by Saussurean linguistics than in terms of political economy. The object / advertising system constitutes a system of signification but not a language for it lacks an active syntax.



It has the simplicity and effectiveness of code. This code establishes a universal system of signification and interpretation the History of simulation.

In the order of soundcard, which he published fates as part of symbols exhaust and breath Baudrillard Deals with the history of simulation in dictionaries of literary terms the word simulacrum is defined as:

An image, representation, or copy associated with the English translations of the work of Jean Baudrillard, who argues that we now live in a world in which such representations precede, and indeed create, that which they represent. (Hawthorn , 2000 , p.325) .

As its title may indicate Baudrillard's essay is an attempts to explain and criticize Michael Foucault's the order of things (1977). Just as Foucault attempted to write a history of representation, Baudrillard wants to write a history of simulation as well as an analysis of its logic. He identifies three orders or stages of simulation :

There are three orders of simulacra, running parallel to the successive mutations of the law of value since the Renaissance :

The counterfeit is the dominant schema in the 'classical' period, from the Renaissance to the industrial revolution .

Production is the dominant schema in the industrial era.

Simulation is the dominant schema in the code – governed phase (Baudrillard.1993, p. 50)

These orders are chronological. The first order is, the counterfeit, which is born with the Renaissance with the end of the feudal order and the emergence of the bourgeois order and the competition at the level of signs of distinction. Baudrillard relates this to fashion saying that there is no fashion in a caste society, or in a society based on rank because assignation is absolute and there is no class mobility. In feudal caste societies signs are limited in number and their circulation is restricted. " The end of obligatory sign is succeeded by the reign of the emancipated sign , in which any and every class will be able to participate " . (Baudrillard, 1993 . pp. 50 – 51) .

With the transit of values or signs of prestige from one class to another, we enter into the age of the counterfeit. We pass from a limited order of signs, these multiple signs are not related to the restricted circulation of the obligatory sign but counterfeit it. This counterfeiting does not take place by changing the nature of an original but it is a complete change of a material which was dependent on restriction.

It is with the Renaissance, then, that the forgery is born along with the natural, ranging from the deceptive finery on people's backs to the prosthetic fork, from the stucco interiors to Baroque theatrical scenery. From these incredible achievements with stucco and Baroque art we can unravel the metaphysics of the renaissance man. Stucco is the triumphant democracy of all artificial signs, the apotheosis of the theatre and fashion revealing the unlimited potential of the new



class, as soon as it was able to end the sign's exclusivity. (Baudrillard, 1993. p. 51)

The counterfeit, says Baudrillard, still works on substance and form , not yet on relations and structures. To sum up the difference between first and second – order simulacra Baudrillard refers to the automation and the robot. He says that a world separates these two. One is theatrical mechanical and clockwork counterfeit of man where the technique is to submit everything to analogy. The other is dominated by a technical principle where the machine has the upper hand comparing the automaton to the robot, Baudrillard says.

The automaton plays the man of the court, the socialite, it takes part in the social and theatrical drama of pre-Revolutionary France. As for the robot, as its name implies, it works: end of the theatre, beginning of human mechanics. The automation is the analog on of man and remains responsive to him ... The machine is the equivalent of man, appropriating him to itself as an equal in the unity of a functional process. (Baudrillard, 1993 , p. 53).

The automaton questions, what underlies nature, what is within us, what is behind appearances. Only the counterfeit of man allows these questions to be asked. The automaton is man's perfect double in the workings of its organs and intelligence. As for the robot it no longer questions appearances, its only truth is its mechanical efficiency. It, no longer, needs to resemble man to whom it is compared.

The second order is the industrial simulacrum. A new generation of signs and objects arises with the Industrial Revolution. The relation between them is no longer one of an original and its counterfeit but is instead one of equivalence and indifference. Objects become indistinct simulacra of one another and, along with objects, of the men that produce them. The original is extinct and this facilitates the possibility of production. The process of production should be regarded as a process which reabsorbs every original being and introduces a series of identical beings. Production should be understood as an episode of producing an infinite series of identical beings (object- sings) by mean of techniques.

The fabulous energies at work in technics, industry and economics should not hide the fact that it is at bottom only a matter of attaining this indefinite reproducibility. In relation to the ear of the counterfeit, the double.. the serial and technical era of reproduction is basically an era of less ambitious scope (the following era of simulation models and third- order simulacra is of much more considerable dimensions).

(Baudrillard, 1993, p. 55)

The stage of serial reproduction is ephemeral. As soon as dead labour grins the upper hand over living labour, serial production gives way to generation through models. We are dealing with third- order simulacra here. There is no more counterfeiting of an original, as there was in the first order, and no more pure series as there were in the second, there are models from which all forms proceed according to modulated differences. Everything that has a meaning is issued from



the model. The model is the signifier of reference which functions as the only credible conclusion. This is simulation in the modern sense of the term. Baudrillard concludes: "Every order subsumes the previous order, just as the order of the counterfeit was captured by the order of serial production.. So the entire order of production is in the process of toppling into operational simulation" (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 57).

The third order of simulacra is that of simulation. It continues that liberation of the sign we see in the first and the second orders but with one difference. This difference is that whereas there we witness the progressive disappearance of the real in the self- referentiality of the sign, here we have an attempt to speak of it again. But it is a simulated real or an effect of reality Baudrillard says.

The great man – made simulacra pass from a universe of natural laws into a universe of forces and tensions, and 'today pass into an universe of structures and binary oppositions. After the metaphysics of being and appearance, after energy and determinacy, the metaphysics of indeterminacy and the code. (Baudrillard, 1993, p.57) .

At this level the question of signs and their rational destinations being real or imaginary is completely effaced. It is not a real outside of the code, as in the first order but a real that arises within it. This is described by Baudrillard as the collapse of reality into hyperrealism.

Bertens comments on the idea of the orders of simulacra. He says:

After the first order of simulacra, the period from the Renaissance to the industrial revolution, in which value was still 'natural ', that is, grounded; and after the second order, that of the industrial era, in which value was ' commercial ' that is, based upon exchange, we have now entered the third order of simulacra, which is that of the differential value of the sign. The third order, which is an order of simulation and is controlled by the code, is also the order of the media, which form and embody the media through which the hyperreal has managed to replace the real. (Bertens, 1995, p. 150).

The Hyperreal

The hyperreal is one of the terms that are related to simulation in Joseph Childers ' the Columbia Dictionary of literary and cultural Criticism the hyperreal is defined as:

A term coined by the French theorist Jean Baudrillard, hyperreality describes a common phenomenon in the late twentieth century and refers to his idea that it has become impossible to tell the difference between the " real " and reproduction of the real . When reproductions of things seem more real, authentic, and powerful to us than the thing being reproduced, then we are in the realm of hyperrealism. (Childers , 1995 , p. 142) .

In symbolic Exchange and Death Baudrillard defines hyperrealism as:

The meticulous reduplication of the real, preferably through another reproductive medium such as advertising or photography. Through reproduction



from one medium into another the real becomes volatile, it becomes the allegory of death, but it also draws strength from its own destruction, becoming the real for its own longer the object of representation, but the ecstasy of denegation and its own ritual extermination: the hyperreal. (Baudrillard, 1993, pp. 712).

The hyperreal is a very precise reduplication of the real. This reproduction needs a medium such as advertising or photography. After this process the real object vanishes or is destroyed and this destruction detaches the hyperreal from the real object. This is similar to the worship of an object by pagan people as they believe that a spirit lives in it. This object is no longer the real object; it is a lost object. The hyperreal is the ecstasy of the absence, denegation and extermination of the real object .

Hyperrealism is a necessity because of the change of the status of the real. Baudrillard writes:

Realism had already inaugurated this tendency. The rhetoric of the real already signals that its status has been radically altered (the golden age of the innocence of language where what is said need not be doubled in an effect of reality). Surrealism was still in solidarity with the realism it contested, but which it doubled and ruptured in the imaginary. The hyperreal represents a much more advanced phase insofar as it effaces the contradiction of the real and the imaginary. (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 72).

Baudrillard cites several possible modalities or forms of realistic simulation, One of the modalities of the process of simulation is the detailed deconstruction of the real by the close reading of the objects i.e. the flattening out, of part- objects. Another is what he calls the abyssal vision which is splitting the object in two and duplicating it in every detail. The infinitive refraction is nothing more than another type of sterility in which the real is no longer reflected but folds in on itself to the point of exhaustion.

A third form of simulation is the properly serial form, it is a continuity of the same dimension B|audrillard gives an example of the erotic photograph of twin sisters where the fleshy reality of their bodies is annihilated by their similarity. The gaze can go from one to the other, and these poles enclose all vision. This is, he says, a subtle means of murdering the original. The fourth form Baudritllard cites is not pure repetition but minimal difference. He concludes that:

The very definition of the real is that of which it is possible to provide an equivalent reproduction, It is a contemporary of science, which postulates that a process can be reproduced exactly within given conditions, with an industrial rationality which postulates a universal system of equivalence but transcription, interpretation and commentary). At the end of this process of reproducibility, the real is not only that which can be reproduced, but that which is always already reproduced: the hyperreal.(Baudrillard, 1993, p.73).



Classical representation is interpretation and it is not valid any more. The real, now, is that of which an equivalent can be reproduced. The real is always already reproduced. Baudrillard says:

The hyperreal is beyond representation ... only because it is entirely within simulation, in which the barriers of representation rotate crazily, an implosive madness which, far from being excentric, keeps its gaze fixed on the center, on its own abyssal repetition.

In fact, hyperrealism must be interpreted in an inverse manner: today reality itself is hyperrealist. (Baudrillard , 1993 , pp. 73 – 4)

Reality, says Baudrillard, has already incorporated the hyperrealist dimension of simulation so that we are now living within the aesthetic hallucination of reality. The old slogan " reality is stranger than fiction " has been outrun, since there is no longer any fiction that life can possibly confront, even as its conqueror. Reality, he says, has passed into the game of reality.

Baudrillard says that the consummate enjoyment of jouissance of the signs of guilt ,despair, violence and death are replacing guilt, anxiety and even death in the total euphoria of simulation, This euphoria aims to abolish cause and effect, origin and end and replace them with reduplication. " At this point art entered into infinite reproduction with everything that doubles itself even the banal reality of the everyday, falling by the same token under the sign of art and becoming aesthetic". (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 75). The same goes for production which, expelling all context and finality, becomes somehow abstract and non- figurative.

In this way it expresses the pure form of production, taking upon itself, as art does, the value of the finality without end. Art and industry may then exchange their signs: art can become a reproductive machine, without ceasing to be art, since the machine is now nothing but a sign, production can, glorify in the prestigious hyperbolic and aesthetic signs

So art is everywhere since artifice lies at the heart of reality. So art is dead, since not only is its critical transcendence dead, but reality itself entirely impregnated by an aesthetic that holds onto its very structurality, has become inseparable from its own image...The cool universe of digitality absorbs the universe of metaphor and metonymy. The simulation principle dominates the reality principle as well as the pleasure principle. (Baudrillard, 1993, pp. 75 – 6).

The sign's value, according to Baudrillard, is an expression of faith in a notion of the real, its function is to represent or disguise some aspect of reality. This is most evident in the sign's first stage, that of reflection, it functions as a good appearance or a faithful image of a referent. " This is the stage or order of the sign in the classical realist text, for example, such that the narrative as a whole can be taken as a kind of archaeological record of the life world it accurately and verifiably depicts ". (Lucy,1998 , p. 50).

The second order or the second stage sign represents the malefic or evil appearance. " In the third stage the sign passes beyond being good or had



appearance to the order simply of celebrating or playing at being an appearance " (Lucy, 1998, p. 50) The sign, sign, here, conceals the absence of a basic reality.

Simulation and the postmodern sign

Baudrillard examines simulation in the postmodern society. In the same book symbolic Exchange and Death Baudrillard deals with the postmodern sign under the title ' kool killer or the insurrection of Signs'. He says that in the spring of 1972 a spate of graffiti broke out starting with ghetto walls, and then continued in subways, buses, lorries ,elevators and monuments completely covering them with graphics either simple or sophisticated. The content was neither political nor pornographic; they were names or surnames drawn from underground comics such as kool killer. The graphics were erased and the graffitists were arrested and imprisoned, the sale of marker pens and spray cans was forbidden; this was useless as youths manufacture them by hand and start again the following night. Those graffitists sprang up after the repressions of the great urban riots of 1966 – 70.

The city [New York] is no longer the politics – industrial zone that it was in the nineteenth century, it is the zone of signs, the media and the code. By the same token, its truth no longer lies in its geographical situation, as it did for the factory or the traditional ghetto. Its truth, enclosure in the sign – form, lies all around us. It is the ghetto of television and advertising, the ghetto of consumers and consumed, of readers read in advance, encoded decoders of every message, those circulating in, and circulated by, the subway, leisure – time entertainers and the entertained, etc. (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 77).

Today, Baudrillard says, a multiplicity of codes submit socialization or desocialization, as every space time in urban life is a ghetto, of this structural breakdown. He compares this to the past where there was solidarity, either local or class solidarity. He says the era of production, commodities and labour power merely amounts to the interdependence of all social processes, including exploitation, and it was on this socialization realized in part by capital itself that Marx based his revolutionary perspective. This historical solidarity whether factory, local or class solidarity has disappeared. From now on they are separate and indifferent under the sign of the city represented in many ways, examples of them are the signs of television or the signs of behavior models inscribed everywhere in the media or in the layout of the city. " Everyone falls into line in their delirious identification with leading models, orchestrated models of simulation " (Baudrillard, 1993, p.78) Everyone is commutable like models themselves. Baudrillard describes the postmodern as the era of geometrically variable individuals. The geometry of the code remains fixed and circularized and is the genuine form of social relations.

A further explanation of the place of the sign in society, now, is given in the following extract:

Superbeespix cola 139 kool Guy crazy cross 136 means nothing, it is not even a proper name, but a symbolic matriculation number whose function it is to derail



the common system of designations. Such terms are not at all original, they all come from comic strips where they were imprisoned in fiction. They blasted their way out however, so as to burst into reality like a stream, an interjection, an anti- discourse, as the waste of all syntactic poetic and political development, as the smallest radical element that cannot be caught by any organized discourse. Invincible due to their own poverty, they resist every interpretation and every connotation, no longer denoting anyone or anything. In this way with neither connotation nor denotation, they escape the principle of signification and, as empty signifiers, erupt into the sphere of the full signs of the city, dissolving it on contact. (Baudrillard, 1993, pp. 78 – 9).

Those inscriptions are meaningless. Baudrillard describes these inscriptions as a kind of riot of signs. He says that those graffiti's can be analysed as art: a primitive millennial, communication form and can also be analyzed in terms of a reclamation of identity and personal freedom.

Baudrillard gives Disneyland as a model of the third order of simulation. He describes it as a play of illusions and phantasms such as pirates, the future world, etc. This imaginary world is supposed to be the reason of its success but what draws the crowds is much more the social microcosm. He says addressing the reader you park outside, queue up inside and are totally abandoned at the exist. In this imaginary world the only phantasmagoria is in the inherent warmth and affection of the crowd. The contrast with the absolute solitude of the parking lot is total. This world has been conceived by a man called waltDisney. In the system of objects Baudrillard says:

So, it is no longer the question of a false representation of reality but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real and thus of saving the reality principle. Baudrilliard says that the Disneyland imaginary is neither true nor false. It is a device set up to rejuvenate the real. In Disneyland there are stations such as the Enchanted village, magic mountain, the marine world ", these 'imaginary stations ' feed reality, reality – energy, to a town whose mystery is nothing more than a network of endless, unreal circulation " (Baudrillard, 2000, p.406).

Bertens Says

...There are places like Disneyland with their implicit confirmation of the hyperreal as the realAfter the mid-1970s;Baudrilliard sees everything exclusively in terms of cybernetic control. Disneyland's role within a traditional capitalist ideology is here ignored and replaced by its function as a purposefully unsuccessful simulation of another, perfect, simulation: the hyperreal. (Bertens, 1995, p. 154)

Simulation and the Media

Similar to the Disneyland example is the media. Simulation controls the media; this is clear in wartime. In his essay “The Gulf War: Is It Really taking Place?” Baudrilliard says that just as the psychical or the screen of the psyche

transforms every illness into a symptom and all the symptoms pass through a sort of black box in which the psychic images are jumbled and inverted. The illness becomes reversible, escaping any form of realistic medicine. So is war. When it has been turned into information it ceases to be a realistic war and becomes a virtual war; it becomes symptomatic and, consequently, is the object of endless speculation. On our screens, we are left with the symptomatic reading of the effects of the war or of discourse about the war, or strategic evaluation as well as evaluations of opinion, provided by polls, whose figures, fluctuate as the fortunes of the stock market. Baudrillard then raises a question:

Whom to believe? There is nothing to believe. We must learn to read symptoms as symptoms, and television as the hysterical symptom of a war which has nothing to do with its critical mass. Moreover, it does not seem to have to reach its critical mass but remains in its inertial phase, while the implosion of the apparatus of information along with the accompanying tendency of the rate of information to fall seems reinforce the implosion of war itself, with its accompanying tendency of the rate of confrontation to fall. (Baudrillard, 2001, p. 64)

Controlled by simulation with all its symptoms of war displayed on the screens, information, says Baudrillard, is like an unintelligent missile which never finds its target nor its anti-missile and crashes anywhere or gets lost in space on an unpredictable orbit in which it revolves as junk, information is as erratic missile with a fuzzy destination; it seeks its target but is drawn to decay. The effort of information is, to some extent unpredictable. It is like a missile which does not know where it lands and perhaps its mission is not to land but to have been launched as its name indicates:

In fact, the only impressive images of missiles, rockets or satellites are those of launch. It is the same with promotions or five year plans: the campaign launch is what counts, the impact or the end results are so uncertain that one frequently hears no more about them. The entire effort is in the programming the success is that of the virtual model. (Baudrillard, 2001, p.65).

Information has become a privileged branch of industry which is used in various fields. War is one of those fields. The influence of simulation is, very widespread. In wartime it is almost impossible to see or to know clearly about the enemy, because the media, controlled by simulation, never presents a clear picture. The enemy is isolated so much that it is impossible to know about his capacity for resistance. The media acts as a barricade hiding the enemy and if shot it is impossible to know if he is dead. It is a clean war. Baudrillard describes the idea of a clean war, a clean bomb or an intelligent missile as a technological extrapolation of the brain and as a sure sign of madness. It is a war enclosed in a glass coffin, like Snow White.



Shortly, almost one month after the publication of this article, Baudrillard published another “The Gulf War Did Not Take Place,” and stated it justifying the title saying: “Since this war won in advance. We will never know what it would have been like had it existed.” (Baudrillard, 1995, p. 63) He describes the first Gulf War as:

Fake war, deceptive war, not evens the illusion but the disillusion of war, linked not only to defensive calculation... but also to the mental disillusion of the combatants themselves, and to the global disillusion of everyone else by means of information. ... Information has a profound function of deception. It matters little what it “informs” us about, its “coverage” of events matters little since it is precisely no more than a cover: its purpose is to produce consensus by flat encephalogram. The complement of the unconditional simulacrum in the field is to train everyone in the unconditional reception of broadcast simulacra. (Baudrillard, 1995, p. 68)

According to Baudrillard when people are vaguely aware of being caught up in this illusion they swallow the deception and remain fascinated by the evidence of the montage of this war.

Simulation is a necessity. In the *Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena* he refers to “both the extreme attempts of simulation to represent and master the world and the extremes that rose up against it. Baudrillard says that talk about Art is increasing rapidly but the soul of Art has gone. There is no gold standard of aesthetic judgment or pleasure. There are no more fundamental rules, no more criteria of judgment.

In reality, however, what has occurred is a *materialization* of aesthetics everywhere under an operational form. It is indeed because of this that art has been obliged to minimize itself, to mime its own disappearance ... Like all disappearing forms, art seeks to duplicate itself by means of simulation, but it will nevertheless soon be gone, leaving behind an immense museum of artificial art and abandoning the field completely to advertising. (Baudrillard, 1999, p. 16-17)

We have no access to either the beautiful or the ugly and are incapable of judging. The beautiful and the ugly multiply; they become more beautiful than beautiful and more ugly than ugly. In *Postmodernity and its Discontents*, Zigmunt Bauman Says:

In this respect the arts share the plight of postmodern culture as a whole – which as Jean Baudrillard put it, is a culture of *simulacrum*, not representation. Art is now of many alternative realities... and each has its own set of tacit assumptions and



openly proclaimed procedures and mechanisms for their self-assertion and authentication (Bauman. 199S. pp. 101-2)

Bauman says that it is increasingly difficult to ask, and even more difficult to decide, which of the many realities is more real, primary or secondary, and which reality is to serve as the reference point and criterion of correctness or adequacy for the rest.

The postmodern culture is a culture of simulation Moreover, from here it is only a miner step – but again with major implications – to claim that anything that can be duplicated is already a potential simulacrum and hence at least on the threshold of the hyperreal. (Bertens, 1995, p. 152)

In uncritical theory: Postmodernism, Intellectuals and the Gulf War (1992) Christopher Norris describe Baudrillard's analysis of the Gulf War as wrong and silly. He refers to Baudrillard's essay published in *the Guardian*, about the war in which he declared that it would never happen existing as it did only as a figment of mass-media simulation, war games rhetoric or imaginary scenarios which exceeded all the limits.

Norris explains Baudrillard's view that during the past forty years the idea of war became unthinkable except as a rhetorical phenomenon, an exchange of ever-escalating threats and counter-threats whose exorbitant character was enough to guarantee that no such event would ever take place. There would be no war because talk of war had now become a substitute for the event. We had lost all sense of the difference between a war of words, a mass-media simulation and war itself. But what would happen if or when war occurred? In this situation, according to Baudrillard, we might drop all the self-deceiving talk of real Versus media Wars and acknowledge that reality or truth behind appearance is no longer what it used to be.

Commenting on Baudrillard, Norris says; So Baudrillard is not to be caught out in the event - the unlikely event, as he still sees it - that the Gulf War should actually materialize to the point where bellicose words give way to belligerent deeds. For even then there will be nobody in a position to know that what they are seeing, reading or hearing is not some fictive 'simulacrum' of the real, conjured up by the ubiquitous propaganda machine or the various techniques of media disinformation. Indeed, it is culpably naive to carry on thinking in those terms... In short, there is no point lamenting the lack of factual, objective or unbiased information when we simply don't possess any yardstick - any grounds for comparison - what could enable even the most expert observer to achieve such critical perspective. (Norris, 1992, p. 12)

This applies not only to the viewing millions but also to those figures of authority and power. Those figures that we might suspect that they know the matters

that are concealed from the bewildered citizens may have the situation we, the viewers, have. They belong to a system whose working they are thought to control but which in fact feeds them with a constant stream of simulated images and pre-packaged news. Even the apparent protagonists in this affair – George Bush, John Major and the pentagon strategists are picking up some crucial battleground facts from those same television channels. The decisions of those figures of authority and power will have a strong influence not only on public opinion but also on the conduct of real-world war-fighting strategy. This proves that

we have entered a phase of terminal indifference where the passage to war is a non-event, something that either would not happen - as Baudrillard inclines to believe - or whose happening will in any case not be noticed, since we have long since lost any means of distinguishing reality' from its simulated counterpart... A Gulf War would not even register two or three on the Richter scale this way. It is unreal, war without the symptoms of war. (Norris, 1992, p. 13)

Norris believes that simulation never produces the real or the hyperreal and the simulation war is unreal. Truth is defined only in rhetorical terms. He continues saying that during a long period – more than two millennia, the idea prevailed among philosophers, moralists, social theorists and others that truth could indeed be arrived at through an effort of disciplined critical thought, a process that would enable the thinking to disciplined critical thought, a process that would enable the thinker to distinguish authentic values from the various kinds of illusion:

But it has now become obsolete, Baudrillard thinks, in so far as we have lost all sense of the difference ... between truth and the various true- seeming imaging images, analogues and fantasy – substitutes which currently claimed that title. So (are) the Gulf war figures as one more example in Baudrillard's extensive and varied catalogue of postmodern "hyperreality". It is a conflict waged- fir all that we can know – entirely at this level of strategic simulation a mode of vicarious spectator involvement that extends all the way from the fictive war-games to saturation coverage of the 'real-world' event, and which thus leaves us perfectly incapable of distinguishing the one from the other. (Norris, 1992, p. 15)

Norris believes, then, that it is naive to substitute the so-called hyperreal for the real as we, viewers, always need the real as an origin to compare to. Simulation never produces the real but it defines truth in rhetorical terms. To believe in simulation is to oppose or, at least, to ignore the idea prevalent among intellectuals, politicians, philosophers and social theorists that they must distinguish between truth and illusion. Yet, says Norris, we cannot ignore the idea of simulation or what Baudrillard says about the Gulf War for a good reason. The reason is that this war is

a postmodern war. It is an exercise in mass-manipulative rhetoric and hyperreal techniques which confirm Baudrillard's observations. There is an inverse relationship between extent of coverage and level of informed public grasp. The profusion of meaningless statistical data created an illusory sense of factual reporting. The absurd claims about precision bombing and pinpoint accuracy convinced the public that civilian casualties were almost non-existent in spite of all the counter-evidence provided by the images of urban mass destruction. The newspapers, TV commentators and all the other propaganda means which the White House and the Pentagon were currently promoting managed to marginalize all the dissident opinions. Moreover, hyperreality circulates false information.

Besides, there is another reason why we should not ignore these writings, which is the possibility of creating a public opinion through literary theory. Norris says that on Baudrillard's reckoning it is a mere illusion or it is just a washed-up relic of the old Enlightenment myth suppose that such arguments could possibly make any difference, or that public opinion might have been turned around if a sufficient number of people could realize the extent of mass media disinformation, the propaganda lies or the grossly under-estimated casualty figures. Norris concludes:

Of course I am not suggesting that the best thing to do in these present bad times is to sit around endlessly debating such specialized matters of truth, language and representation. Much better leave off these discussions for now and devote all one's time and energy to protesting the massive Injustice of a war whose causes were inextricably hid up With the history of US and British regional policy; whose high-sounding justificatory rhetoric was a cover for crude economic self-interest, whose conduct involved unprecedented levels of coercive propaganda and mass-media distortion, and whose cost in terms of civilian casualties and environmental impact will most likely never be known, since any details coming back are subject to the tightest 'security' restrictions. (Norris. 1992, p. 29)

Norris makes clear that he is not suggesting that a better understanding of the philosophic issues would automatically produce the desired change of attitude. Still, it should be cause for reflection on the part that theory has shown itself not only ill-equipped for any kind of effective resistance but also quite incapable of giving support to consensus-based doctrines.

Unlike Norris, Douglas Kellner believes that the emergence of simulation and hyperreality has affected a break with modernity and the beginning of a new postmodern era. Simulation for Baudrillard describes a process of replacing real with virtual or simulated events. Simulation models generate simulacra, representation of the real. The world of simulacra for Baudrillard is a postmodern



world of signs. In *The Postmodern Turn* (1997) Steven Best and Douglas Kellner say:

Simulacra are mere signs and images of me tea dial come to constitute a new realm of experience, the hyperreal. Baudrillard's hyperreal is the end result of a historical simulation process in which the natural world and all its referents in which the natural world and all its referents have been replaced with technology and self-referential signs. This is not to say that representation has simply become more indirect or oblique... but that in a world where the subject object distance is erased, where language no longer coheres in stable meanings, where originals are endlessly reproduced in copies, and where signs no longer refer beyond themselves to an existing knowable world, representation has been surpassed. (Best and Kellner, 1997, p. 101)

Thus, hyperreality is a rupture in the notion of the real. Reality is no longer a touchstone by which to measure everything else. Baudrillard claims, says Kellner, that reality becomes what can be infinitely extended and multiplied in a series through a reproductive medium. It finitely resembles itself in identical copies. It is no longer the touchstone of everything but it is confused with its copies or even devalued in light of them.

When the real is no longer directly represented and is reproduced it becomes hyperreal; a reality replicated from a model, doubled or multiplied within reproductive processes and is open to infinite multiplication. The definition of the real becomes that of which it is possible to give an equivalent reproduction; the real is not only what can be reproduced but that which always already reproduced: the hyperreal.

Best and Kellner says For Baudrillard, the era of modernity was defined by production and governed by the industrial bourgeoisie. In his view, modernity has now been superseded by a postmodern era of simulations characterized by information and signs and governed by models, codes, and cybernetics. Cumulatively... the emergence of simulation and hyperreality as organizing principles of society has affected a break with modernity and the emergence of a new postmodern historical era. (Best and Kellner, 1997, p. 104)

Norris, Best, Kellner and Bertens agree that Baudrillard's idea on simulation and the hyperreal are important. Although Norris sees his analysis of the media naïve and ridiculous, yet it cannot be ignored because of two reasons. First, it has a diagnostic value; it reveals that the media can be used in a war like the Gulf War because it was a postmodern war that depended on propaganda. The second reason

is that it was an opportunity for the world to realize that literary theory can participate in resisting unjust war.

Bertens believes that regardless of all criticism against Baudrillard he is an influential postmodern theorist. He says:

...Baudrillard has undeniably become a major influence. Although the terms do not necessarily originate with him, it is through Baudrillard's work that the simulacrum, simulations, the hyperreal, implosion, and so on, has become part of our critical vocabulary. Undoubtedly the political climate of the American 1980s substantially contributed to Baudrillard's sudden importance. Under a seemingly simulated presidency and administration and with the help of such perfect simulations as the Iran-Contras affair and its protagonists, Baudrillard's writing seemed prophetic of a new order that had already come to pass. (Bertens, 1995, p. 157)

Bertens says that there are better reasons to take Baudrillard seriously: his analysis of the information influence of the electronic media has given important new impulses to critical theory. Likewise, his earlier analysis of the sign has become the starting point for other important theorizations of the postmodern. Bertens says: "Even if we refuse to follow him into the dystopia of his later work... Baudrillard leads us to a vantage point from where we have a better view of the contemporary scene." (Bertens, 1995, p. 158)

Conclusion

The idea of simulation in Baudrillard's work started as early as the late sixties in his writings about the system of objects and the sign. He thinks that no object has any meaning in itself; its meaning is determined according to a system of objects which precedes the possibility of any single object. Baudrillard analyzed objects in terms of arrangement, like the modern pieces of furniture or according to atmosphere such as the colours' division as cold and hot. The sign can be consumed as a sign. This is clear in advertising. We consume the product as product and we consume its meaning through advertising. This is clear in the concept of the brand, in which it is substituted for the thing itself.

Baudrillard organizes the history of the production of simulacra into three parts: there are three chronological orders or stages of simulacra. First: the counterfeit which is the dominant schema in the classical period. Second: production which is the dominant schema in the industrial era. Third: simulation which is the dominant schema in the code-governed phase. Those stages are chronological. The first started with the Renaissance with the end of the feudal order and the emergence of the bourgeois order and the completion of the signs of distinction. It is the order of the original and its counterfeit.

The second order arose with the existence of a new generation of signs and objects which arose with the Industrial Revolution. The relation between them is not that of the original and its counterfeit but it is that of equivalence, objects become indistinct simulacra of one another along with the men that produce them.

In the third order simulacra there is no counterfeiting of an original as there was in the first order, and no more pure series as there were in the second; there are models from which all forms proceed, this model is the signifier of references which functions as the only credible conclusion. This is simulation in the postmodern sense of the term. Simulacra pass from finally into a universe of structures. The question of the imaginary and the real signs is completely effaced.

Closely related to simulation is the hyperreal. The hyperreal is the meticulous reduplication of the real. This reduplication needs a medium such as advertising or photography, after this process of duplication the real object vanishes. Hyperrealism is a necessity because of the change of the status of the real. The hyperreal is not hidden or interior, it is the hallucinatory resemblance of the real to itself. The hyperreal is the exit of the crises of representation. This can be interpreted as what Baudrillard says today reality itself is hyperreal. Reality has incorporated the hyperreal dimension of simulation. The simulation principle dominates the reality principle.

Simulation dominates society; this is clear in the abstraction or Idealization of the object and the passing of the object from material presence to sign. An example of this is the meaningless inscriptions of the walls of a big city like New York. Those signs burst like a scream into reality from fiction. Those inscriptions are names which do not belong to persons but claim group or ethnicity, clan or gang or age. Which are exchanged as words to introduce group members.

Baudrillard says that the objective profile of the United States may be traced throughout Disneyland which is a model of the third order of simulation. The Disneyland imaginary is neither true nor false; it is a device .call up to rejuvenate the real. Similar to Disneyland is the Media. Simulation controls the media. When war has been turned into information it ceases to be a realistic war and because a virtual war, it becomes symptomatic and, consequently, is the object of endless speculation. We are left with the symptoms of war on our screens. Information has become an industry used in various fields. War is one those fields.

Simulation dominates the Media. This is clear in wartime. When war has been turned information into information it ceases to be a realistic war and becomes virtual. On our screens we are left with the symptomatic reading of the effects of war. In wartime it almost impossible to see or to know clearly about the enemy because the media, controlled by simulation, never present a clear picture.

The postmodern culture is a culture of simulation. Simulation is a necessity because there are no more fundamental rules or criteria of judgment. Art seeks to duplicate itself by means of simulation. We have no access to either the beautiful or



the ugly and we are incapable of judging. Both the beautiful and the ugly multiply; they become more beautiful than beautiful and more ugly than ugly.

Although some critics oppose Baudrillard and consider his analyses of the media and the Gulf War as naive or even ridiculous, yet these writings as well as all of his other writings cannot be ignored. According to Norris, Baudrillard's opinions about the Gulf War, even if they are wrong, still they are worthy of studying for various reasons. One of these reasons is that his analysis reveals the nature of this war as well as the postmodern era. Another reason is that his analysis of the media can stimulate the intellectuals and scholars to try to influence the public opinion or to support oppositional attitudes through literary theory.

Best and Kellner analyses the idea of the hyperreal which they consider a rupture of the real. The hyperreal and simulation represent the transition between modernity and postmodernity. They say: "For post- 1975 Baudrillard, there is no one to turn to, nowhere to go, and nothing to be done. Taking postmodern theory' to its ultimate conclusions, his thought leaves us paralyzed and without any ground tram which to articulate any opposition." (Best and Kellner, 1997, p. 117)

Bertens believes that regardless of all criticism against Baudrillard he is an influential postmodern theorist. Although he does not originate terms such as simulacrum simulation, the hyperreal and implosion, a is he who brought those terms into criticism vocabulary. He also leads us to a point from where we have a better view of the contemporary scene.

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