

# Simulacra and Simulation



# Table des matières

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>I - The Precession of Simulacra</b>	<b>4</b>
1. Simulation and Simulacra .....	4
2. Three Orders of Simulacra .....	4
3. The Hyperreal .....	5
4. Disneyland .....	5
5. Reality TV .....	5
<b>II - The Implosion of Meaning in the Media</b>	<b>7</b>
1. Mass media and information .....	7
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>8</b>

# Introduction

Jean Baudrillard is a French sociologist, philosopher, and cultural theorist. He is best known for his criticism of Media, Consumerism, Ideology, and Techno communication. He criticizes US consumer culture run by the fantasy of marketing and advertising.

*Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) marked *Jean Baudrillard's* first step towards theorizing the postmodern. It became one of the most essential works of postmodern thought.

These concepts are crucial to an understanding of the postmodern condition where it is hard to distinguish between the original and the artificial.

# I The Precession of Simulacra

## 1. Simulation and Simulacra

💡 *Fondamental : Epigraph*

" The Simulacrum is never what hides the truth - It is the truth that hides the fact that there is none" - Ecclesiastes.

Baudrillard argues that *to simulate* means to pretend to have what one does not have. Therefore, it threatens the difference between the *imaginary* and the *real*.

" whoever fakes an illness can simply stay in bed and make everyone believe he is ill. Whoever simulates an illness produces in himself some of the symptoms"

- Baudrillard supports his theory with the example of the map and the territory. Cartographers of the old empire draw maps, with time the map are taken for the real empire ; becomes the real thing, and the real territory is impossible to behold, therefore the image of the real thing precedes. This is what Baudrillard calls the *\*Precession of Simulacra*.

Simulacra is, therefore, a *fake imitation* of the real model. It becomes more real than the real thing.

This concept has been expressed by other philosophers before Baudrillard. The Allegory of the Cave by Plato is one such example.

In the Allegory, a group of people are imprisoned in a cave, and they can only see the shadow of the tree. Eventually, they came to believe that the shadows are the real trees.

## 2. Three Orders of Simulacra

Simulacra disrupts the process of *representation*. Representation, or the image, stems from the *principle of equivalence* of the sign and the real. It is supposed to *reflect a profound reality*.

the disruption happens in three phases or orders:

1. It masks and denatures a profound reality (It becomes a counterfeit of the real).
2. It masks the absence of a profound reality. (A model without an origin).
3. It has no relation to reality whatsoever. (It becomes its own model).

### 3. The Hyperreal

Based on Baudrillard's theory, Hyperreality is reality that has been produced. When the models or copies replace the original (the real no longer exists) they become hyperreal. In other words, the simulation becomes more real than the real. Hyperreality happens when the distinction between reality and simulation has been dissolved.

In today's culture, Hyperreality is taking different forms. Some of those are the popular VR Games (Virtual Reality, with the help special headsets the virtual reality becomes more real). Another example is TV reality shows where actors or people undergo a documentation through filming of their experiences. their filmed (fake )reality is the real thing for the masses.

### 4. Disneyland

Baudrillard claims that "Disneyland exists in order to hide the fact that it is the real country, all of the real America that is Disneyland."

Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real.. By creating an imaginary world, the real world becomes more real and credible because of the high contrast between the two.

Disneyland is one example to the way simulation destroys the real and the distinctions between reality and representation to produce a hyperreality.

For further explanation on Disneyland, check the following link :

<http://culturalstudiesnow.blogspot.com/2012/10/jean-baudrillard-on-disneyland-and.html>



### 5. Reality TV

- The American TV verité experiment in 1971 that recorded The Louds' family for seven months of uninterrupted shooting.

- After the continuous broadcasting without script or a screenplay, and all the dramas and joys of the family, (Raw historical document) the family fell apart eventually because of this experiment.
  - "More interesting is the illusion of filming the Louds as if TV weren't there".
  - TV producers would claim: "They lived **as if** we weren't there"
- This is another example where the real is confused with the model.

# II The Implosion of Meaning in the Media

## 1. Mass media and information

*"We live in a world where there is more and more information, and less and less meaning"*

Three Hypotheses

1. Either information produces meaning, but cannot make up for the brutal loss of the signification in every domain.
2. Or information has nothing to do with signification.
3. The loss of meaning is directly linked to the dissolving action of information, the media, and the mass media.

Implosion arises from the destruction of meaning and the reality-effect due to the precession of simulacra.

Baudrillard argues that information devours its own meaning.

Our mental pictures of the perfect life have been created through constant exposure to recycled media depictions that have no roots in life. (Fantasies that become real)

# Conclusion

Baudrillard's work invites the reader not to believe all what is seen and not to be deceived by Media and its specters. He is posing a theory of semiotics, pointing out the problematic nature of how we represent the world through signs and language.