**SIMULACRA, SIMULATION AND HYPERREALITY:**  **JEAN BAUDRILLARD**

French sociologist, cultural critic, and theorist of postmodernity, Jean Baudrillard was born on July 27, 1929 in the northern town of Reims. The son of civil servants and the grandson of peasant farmers, Jean Baudrillard was the first in his family to attend university. Jean Baudrillard was a university sociology teacher and a leading intellectual figure of his time. His early life was influenced by the Algerian war of the 1950s and 1960s. He taught German before completing his doctoral thesis in sociology under the tuition of Henri Lefebvre. He then became an Assistant, in September 1966 at Nanterre University of Paris X. **He was associated with Roland Barthes, to whose semiotic analysis of culture exercised great influence on his first book, The Object System (1968). He was also influenced by Marshall McLuhan, who demonstrated the importance of the mass media in any sociological overview. He is influenced by the student revolt at Nanterre University in 1968. He is cooperated with, Utopia, evidently influenced by anarcho-situationism, structural Marxism and media theory.** He has published a number of theoretical articles on the atmosphere of capitalist prosperity and the critique of technology. He became Maitre-assistant at the University in 1970 and left in 1987. Jean Baudrillard taught at the European Graduate School from its earliest period until his death on March 6, 2007. Jean Baudrillard is a thinker who built on what was being thought by others and breaks through via a key reversal of logic to make a fresh analysis. **He was influenced by Marcel Mauss, Claude Levi-Strauss in the Durkheim’s objectivity and linguistic-sociological interface and Georges Bataille, as well as, the Situationists and Surrealism. Another background influence on Jean Baudrillard is Sigmund Freud and psychoanalysis, but a far more direct influence is Marxism**. Jean Baudrillard’s thinking has passed through three phases actually shifts of strategy, tenor, and emphasis rather than content comprising a path from the post Marxist (1968-71), via the socio-linguistic (1972-77), to the techno-prophetic. In recent years he has become best known as a prophet of the implosion of meaning that attends the postmodern condition. There were debates in academic circles in France on the meaning and importance of postmodernism further increased when cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard appeared on the scene in the early 1980s. Although never overtly discussed ‘postmodernism’ by name, Baudrillard’s writings have been no less instrumental in shaping our understanding of postmodernism than Lyotard’s. **Jean Baudrillard’s philosophy centres on the twin concepts of ‘hyperreality’ and ‘simulation’. These terms refer to the virtual or unreal nature of contemporary culture in an age of mass communication and mass consumption.** We live in a world dominated by simulated experiences and feelings. Jean Baudrillard believes and has lost the capacity to comprehend reality as it actually exists. We experience only prepared realities, edited war recording, meaningless acts of terrorism, and the destruction of cultural values and the substitution of referendum. **In Jean Baudrillard’s words, the hyperreal is entirely in simulation**. The real has become possible to give an equivalent reproduction. The real is not only what can be reproduced but it is always already reproduced. **Jean Baudrillard defines Simulacra. A simulacrum is a copy of a copy, so far removed from its original, that it can stand on its own and even replace the original.** **It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal.... substituting the signs of the real for the real (Baudrillard, Jean, 1983).** Jean **Baudrillard described the period as a “age of simulations” (Jean Baudrillard 1983, 4).**

**Simulations and Hyperreality:**

Baudrillard regards Marxist thought as part of the Enlightenment and western culture. In the later 1970s and during the 1980s, Baudrillard’s analysis broke with the Marxist approach and extended on the view that symbols, signs, and simulations have become all covering. It is no longer possible to distinguish the real and the symbol. Baudrillard thus argues that we have entered a new era that is beyond the modern, and this constitutes a break with an earlier era much like the break between the premodern and the modern. In the modern era, the problems of industry, production, use of labour, exploitation, and accumulation dominated the organization of the economy and society. **In the current period there is “a new era of simulation in which computerization, information processing, media, cybernetic control systems, and the organization of society according to simulation codes and models replace production as the organizing principle of society” (Ibid. 118).** Signs take on a life of their own and constitute a new social order structured by models, codes, and signs. **Semiotics refers to the theory of signs- types, meaning, and relationships among signs. A sign is any information carrying entity from language to road signs. Baudrillard is arguing that the signs, simulations, and codes characterize the current era. This has developed to the structure of society and makes it difficult to distinguish these signs and symbols from social reality. The social reality becomes the signs and simulations in the social world. In developing this analysis, Baudrillard develops several new concepts.** Simulations are processes whereby events or situations in the past are replaced with virtual, electronic, or digitized images and signs. **For instance, drama may simulate real life, we generally think of this as representation of some part of the social world, institutions, relationships, and interactions that idealize or characterize aspects of the social world.** Television has carried this further. **Simulacra denote representations of the real but where the essence of the real may be missing. What Baudrillard argues is that these simulacra are so universal that it is impossible to distinguish the real from simulacra. We live in a society of simulacra.** That’s why it is no longer possible to distinguish some underlying reality from the simulacra. **Hyperreality is “the blurring of distinctions between the real and the unreal. The prefix ‘hyper’ signifies more real than real whereby the real is produced as per model” (Ibid. 119). This hyperreal is the “end result of a historical simulation process in which the natural world and all its referents have been gradually replaced with technology and self-referential signs”.** Video games become more real than other forms of interaction, theme parks which are examples of simulacra become more desirable than the originals (Las Vegas, Disneyworld), and even nature becomes better viewed through national parks and reconstructions. **Baudrillard uses the term hyperreal to refer to the process whereby the image or simulation and reality collapse on each other and become the same. This is a process of social entropy leading to a collapse of boundaries. It is the flow of information, entertainment, advertising, and politics.** If Baudrillard is correct, then earlier forms of social theory may be inadequate to analyse this postmodern society. Earlier analysis focussed on signs, symbols, and meaning, fashion, and power of the media. **There were subjects or individuals who developed a sense of self through communication and interaction with others. It develops the patterns, institutions, and structures of the social world. There is a subject and object. Meaning is associated with knowledge and consciousness of others, symbols, and relationships. Baudrillard argues that the subject-object distinction disappears in the contemporary setting. The signs and symbols do not have meaning in the conventional sense. In fact, meaning itself becomes questionable in these circumstances.** He argues that there has been a destruction of meaning in the contemporary era. Baudrillard’s analysis argues that it is not really possible to do this in the conventional manner. Instead, he proposes various strategies and perspectives.

**SIMULATIONS**

**The meaning of Simulations in Baudrillard’s work is copy of the reality. For example Fashion, Environmental Design, Opinion Polls, Theme Park, Telecommunication and Cybernetics are the part of simulations. This concept of simulation is elaborated in his book Simulations (1983). He gives the example of simulations as Disneyland, Psychosomatic illness, America’s Water Gate Scandal, and Highjack. According to Glen Ward the dictionary has linked simulation to the fake, the counterfeit, and the inauthentic (Ward, Glenn 1997).** Simulation can no longer be seen clearly as the opposite of truth, it duplicates or imitates by a pregiven real. Simulation and reality have a necessary attachment to each other. For Baudrillard this connection has long since shattered, so that simulation can no longer be taken as either an imitation or distortion of reality or as a copy of an original. There is no firm pure reality left against which we can measure the truth or falsity of a representation and electronic reproduction. It has gone so far that the notion of originality is irrelevant. Baudrillard analysed linguistic or symbolic codes purely in terms of their internal relationship without reference to some objects that they might be supposed to represent. He has argued that words have relationship with words and not the real object. From this perspective theory of commodity culture removes any distinction between object and representation. He pictures social worlds constructed out of models of simulations which have no foundation in any reality except their own. In fiction the characters and events are purely imaginary but the story represents the reality. The stories are their own creation. Date, Year and Places given in the novel are creations of their imagery. It represents the reality of society. In 1988 Mark Poster explained the meaning of simulation with above reference that it is the real piece of imagery. It has no relationship with any reality. Baudrillard writes the four phases of order of simulacra. A simulation is different from a fiction or lie that it only presents an absence as a presence, the imaginary as the real. It also undermines any contrast to real, absorbing the ‘real within itself’. Baudrillard now discerns only a hyperreality, a world of self-referential signs. He has moved from the TV which however never completely erases the Commodity it solicits to the TV News cast which creates the news if only to be able to narrate it on the soap Opera whose daily events are both referent and reality for many viewers. We have a number of examples of it. For Example any soap advertises on the TV or any objects advertise on TV. **Baudrillard’s favourite example of simulation is his Disneyland. It is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real; in fact reality is no longer real. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality, but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real. As a matter of fact, Baudrillard’s postmodern message is that the media images do not merely represent reality; they are reality, because their meaning derives from their position within a system of signs, not from some referent in a real world outside that system.** Simulation is a generation by models or events; situation placed by electronic, virtuality and media is placed in code, sign and images. It never represents its reality but only the codes, signs and images. Baudrillard in his various writing has made it established that there is no distinction between the real and the imagery. For Baudrillard, the true and the real have ceased to exist. Since there is no longer any truth or reality, signs no longer stand for anything. We live in “gigantic simulation” “not real”. This simulation is sometimes used conterminously with hyperreality. **The meaning of hyperreality is entirely within simulation. The hyper is not produced but is reproduced. More specifically simulation is more real than real, more beautiful than beautiful, truer than true. In a hyper world there is no way of getting at the source, the original reality. Baudrlliard gives a good example of pornography. He views it as ‘more sexual than sex’... hypersexuality (Baudrillard, Jean 1988). In other words, Baudrillard says that today, reality itself is hyperreality. There is no more reality; all we are left with is hyperreality. Baudrillard gives another interesting example of hyperreality of America. In his book America first published in France in 1986. He says that in a postmodern society such as America, everything is simulation, everything is hyperreality.** He further writes that everything is destined to reappear as simulation. It includes landscapes as photography, women as the sexual scenario, thoughts as writing, and terrorism as fashion. Things seem only to exist by virtue of this strange destiny. You wonder whether the world itself is not just here to serve as advertising copy in some other world (Baudrillard, Jean 1988). For conceptual clarity, hyperreality is more real than real. When the real is no longer real what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. All sorts of myths and strange stories, which can never be believed or verified, are associated with the authenticity and objectivity of the simulation. Baudrillard argues that the hyperreality created by simulations increases the feeling of reality. Their authenticity creates a special effect. They are hyperreal rather than really real.

**Orders of simulations:**

There are three orders of simulacra parallel to the successive mutation of law of value since the Renaissance. The first order simulacrum rests on the natural of value, the second order simulacrum on the market law of value and the third order simulacrum on the structural law of value (Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan 1998, 492). Baudrillard looks at the postmodern society with the perspective of simulation which denies the existence of reality. Baudrillard says that postmodern society has moved from a capitalist-productivity society to a neo-capitalist cybernetic order that aims at total control.

**The first order: The image is the reflection of reality**

In the beginning, from enlightenment to the emergence of industrial revolutions, there were simulations. Northrop Fry, Freud, Lacan talked about collective representations, consisted of collective conscience and repressive laws. These were found in the society which had mechanical unity. Such societies were primitive ones. Baudrillard says that in their evolution of first phase or order, the simulations represented the reality of society. There was no gap between reality and image. The images represented originality in an authentic form. If there was portrait of a man, all fleshy curves were depicted. In India, the Sanskrit poet Kalidas described the image of Shakuntala with all reality of the body of a woman. Wole Soyinka’s in A Dance of the Forest depicted the folk drama of the tribal’s of South Africans through pictures of Tree and their discourse. Reality is never locked behind these imageries. At the first order of simulations, images were not supposed to control the society. There were only piece of art, aesthetics and recreation.

**The second order: The image disguises or conceals reality**

At this stage, industrial society gets mature. It is characterized by production of the scale of Fordism. Baudrillard says that simulations during their second phase of development reproduce identical objects. There is reproduction of a motor car, a refrigerator. The reproduction at this stage is the repetition of the same object. Furthermore, there is no need to counterfeit in the industrial era since the products are made on a massive scale and there is no issue of their origin or specificity. The simulations in this order misuse or corrupt the reality. There is always a place to play corrupt to the basic reality. It is the period of late modernity.

**The third order: There is total absence of reality**

At this stage of society, postmodernity emerges. The society is dominated by codes, signs and images. It is the society actually controlled and dominated by simulations. In the contemporary simulation society demonstrable examples to show that the line between simulation and reality has been erased. For example, the role of any character in the film or advertisement on the TV show is really questionable. Baudrillard says that there is no way of identifying a real which exists outside of simulations, because the simulation society is structured according to all sorts of beliefs, ideals and blueprints. In short, reality is structured according to codes. Some codes are manifested indirectly in political ways; some are in the drafting of bills, the creation and enforcing of law, and so on. Some are inscribed into concrete intuitional-education, industry and prisons. The others appear in less obvious ways such as entertainment media, consumer goods, architecture and designed environments. Still more show themselves in the constant surveys, polls and questionnaires which classify the population according to their consumption patterns, income brackets, sexual orientations, and so forth. **In his book America (1986), Baudrillard says that simulations in this country are considered more than reality. They are, in fact, hyperreal. Simulations for American society precede the real in the sense that they produce the real social order in which all the Americans participate. And all can be said to feel the sense that they affect real people.** Baudrillard’s America gives the information about the America**: “The only physical beauty is created by plastic surgery, and only urban beauty by landscape surgery, the only opinion by poll surgery... and now, with genetic engineering, plastic surgery for the whole human species” (Baudrillard, Jean 1988).** In addition to it, it is impossible to isolate the processes of the real or to prove the real. All are like simulations. It is decorated in forward in the decoding rituals of the media. Baudrillard says that even our day-to-day needs are structured by signs and images. **In India when we go for food shopping, we choose between designer foods, health foods, exotic foods, saline-link foods, luxury foods, natural foods, traditional foods, convenience foods and ethic foods. Others are ‘fast foods’ and ‘junk foods’. Out of these foods, we choose the ones, which suit to our image. Perhaps, our image is about a particular film actor/actress or the model/cricketer.** Recently, a cosmetic manufacturing company has come out with a variety of cosmetic items. These are favourites for any film actress. These items are sold for anything through media. The products are ranging from biscuit to motor tire, car, motor bikes, cold drinks, tooth paste and even gutkha. These are sold on their brand ambassador’s name and fame. The high prices products are consumed on the label of codes and images. All these examples focus on images thrown by the media. In the third order simulations, there is total absence of reality. In the industrial society, production was dominant. It was the production which controlled the society. This has changed the neo-cybernetic capitalist society. **Now, instead of production, reproduction controls the society.** **Baudrillard observed that it is on the level of reproduction fashion, media, publicity, information and communication networks as the level which Marx negligently called the sphere of simulacra and of the code that are the non-essential sectors of capital.** Here is the global process of capital is founded. **Baudrillard very strongly argues that the third order simulations are the strongest means of social control in the contemporary postmodern society.** He cites the examples of referendums, political polls and public opinions. In referendum, the answers are designed in advance by the questions. All the alternatives in the answers are reduced to a binary code with DNA serving as the sample of this. The genuine discourse, the public opinion emerges from such referenda is a simulation and hyperreal. It is more real than people’s beliefs. Polls represent nothing because as we have seen, the masses respond with simulated replies. Baudrillard interprets that we recordeverything, but we don’t believe it, because we have become screens ourselves, and we can ask a screen to believe what it records. To simulation we reply by simulation, we have ourselves become systems of simulation... it is this that makes good, old, critical and ironical judgment no longer possible... there is no longer a universe of reference ...polls will never represent anything. The distortions associated with polls are part of a broader set of distortions, which means that even with non-stop polling total uncertainty will never be lifted. Quite like lead respondents to reproduce what the pollsters are seeking; respondent do not produce opinions of their own. Baudrillard says that it is impossible to obtain a non-simulated response to a direct question, apart from merely reproducing the question. There is total circularity in every case; those questioned always behave as the questioner, imaginer imagines. It’s like to ask for just hot air. Concluding his comments on the role of simulations as methods of social control, Baudrillard says that referents, polls and elections are examples of soft technological control.

**The fourth order: There is no relation to any reality**

Baudrillard argues that today the American and European societies have reached at a stage, which is “fractural, viral, or cancerous”. There is an endless proliferation. Everything, from DNA to AIDS to television images, follows this pattern. He declares the death of meaning, the Death of Reality, the Death of history, Death of Social, the Death of political and the Death of sexuality in postmodern society. **The speciality about this pattern of postmodern culture is that there is end of difference.** **Baudrillard labels it as a “culture characterized by transpolitical, transsexual, and transaesthetic attributes. In other words, everything is political, sexual and aesthetic, and as a result, nothing is political, sexual and aesthetic”.** It is worse because the media are interpreted all these aspects of culture. Baudrillard presents the situation of postmodern culture. Art is developed but in the process it loses its distinctive qualities, especially its capacity to counteract and be in opposition to reality. Thus, there is intersexuality as well as Tran sexuality involving the elimination of sexual difference, our new model of sexuality. Tran sexuality can be achieved surgically, but more importantly it can be achieved semiotically. Baudrillard says that the culture makes all efforts to remove the differentiation between genders. In fact, negativity has been banished by this culture. In our country day in and day out the TV serials present their image of women deprived of many of the differences in gender in the realm of food habits, dress pattern, mannerism and lifestyle. There is abundance of positivity. Baudrillard says that the lack of differentiation in sexuality and lifestyle leaves us in a world resembling the smile of a corpse in a funeral home. Baudrillard furthers his point of view and writes about the fourth order of simulation. **There is no relation to any reality. It is its own pure simulation. Here is perfect hyperreality.** In this fourth order all efforts are made to cancel the differences. There is jogging, weight training, aerobics, body piercing and adventure holidays for all, regardless of sex. The fourth order is characterized by private life going public in talk shows, digital special effects, songs, ads and self-help manuals. These implore to find yourself, do it our own way, express yourself, unlock the real you, and find your inner child. Glen Ward (1997) has abridged the fourth order of simulation in a very effective way. Baudrillard claims that when the real is no longer what it used to be, longing is its full meaning. The real is produced because of simulation. So once again the real is not so much given as produced which basically means that we cannot win. Baudrillard has discussed the simulation society with all details**: “At this fourth stage of the development of simulations we are at a point where we suffer from cancer and viruses. These viruses are of social nature. Our efforts to remove all negativity have left us with a failing ability to defend ourselves. Like the AIDS’ patient, we are all becoming immune deficient. Because our defenses have disappeared, we are coming to be destroyed by our own antibodies, by the leukemia of the organism”.**