

TEXT: 'Simulation and Simulacra' by Jean Baudrillard

-Umberto Eco: language — coins some of the terms Baudrillard

simulacra: copies that depict things that have no “original”

simulation: imitation of real-world processes/systems

hyperreality: conditions where fiction and reality are blended (there is no line between where one stops and the other begins)

-Baudrillard argues that our understanding of the world represented by simulations, not direct reality.

-In the “postmodern” world, the social realm does not exist. Everything is a simulation, and our experiences are mediated by models and codes.

-Everything has been reduced to signs and symbols, and we have only superficial interactions in consumerist cultures.

Examples:

-Disneyland

-Social media

-Political systems — rules

Discussion Questions:

-In what ways do we experience hyperreality in our daily lives?

-How have social media and virtual reality technologies contributed?

-Social media creates an alternate world to reality. We are living a ‘dual world,’ but our perceptions and daily lives are blended. We need a simulation define reality.

-We put on different personas depending on those we’re with (or if we’re by ourselves!). Are there any examples of how we could attain a perception of true reality?

-Nick Bostrom: theory that it is very likely that we live in a ‘layered simulation,’ that may have been created by future people(s). There is no true reality because we are living under so many simulations.

-Time! :0 Dimensions of being. If we exist in one linear line, this is similar to the dimensions, and having a full field of time (Kant?)

-*Atlas Six* — time is another particle that is there, but we can’t see. Time is a circle?

-Movie *Arrival*: perception of time, viewing different moments happening all at the same moment in time. Linguist who was in contact with aliens (who communicated sentences circularly!!!!). Harnessing that language allowed them to view time as a circle.

-How do these ideas reflect our relationship with material goods and consumerism?

-Companies fulfilling predicted wants, which alters our perception of reality.

-How stores alter decision-making: loud music, lots of colors and textures.

- Asian (and general) beauty stores: altering lighting which makes all makeup look good on you.
- Disneyland: invisible scent dispersion, which make you feel hungrier and encourage you to buy food. A form of escapism and altered reality — finding security in a simulated world.
- In Disneyland, those working there are actors, but everyone in society is acting, too.

-Spiritually grounded people: expectation is that they would be well-integrated in society, but they are often social outcasts.

-Baudrillard's argument is that the real world is not that different from Disney.

- When we argue that something is a 'simulation,' it has to be in relation to something else.
- Hyperreality: a blend of simulations vs non-simulations. (Circular Moebius loop thing :0)

-What implications does the concept of hyperreality have for our understanding of truth and authenticity in contemporary society?

- Ideology: discourse on ideology is also discourse on truth (last line!).
- Creating ideologies — belief systems probably have some (?) truth to them, because even if we are living in a 'fake' society, these ideologies were created to help us navigate our world.
- Contemporary religion reveals itself in icons: we have anthropomorphized images of God. Rules

Janisim: Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity

-Humans are between the idea of Heaven and Hell? A perfect balance has to be achieved — balance is the optimal state.

-How do Baudrillard's ideas apply to the modern media landscape?

- Advertising and subliminal messaging: the way things are advertised.
- Protein powder products being used in the backgrounds of ads.
- Clout with advertising
- When we see people wearing objects. "Companies pick people knowing that they'll become good products."
- Stanley Cups, it's kind of mandatory for businesses and content creators to help monetize things. They have to manipulate the customers and time is money.
- Tik Tok: constantly changing the layout of the app, which makes people spend more time on the app, acclimating to the layout.
- Instagram listening to your conversations, it's supposed illegal???
- Amazon: If you want to buy something and get it shipped to you, you have to use Amazon. But they have also branched in the grocery business, and are able to copy things and make them cheaper. (similar to Shein and Temu)

-Do media and advertising create a world that is more real than reality itself?

-Can we ever access the "real" directly?

-Are these arguments a convincing argument in the context of today's society?

First Impressions:

- Dead Internet theory: the internet is mostly bot activity — algorithms. Our own experiences are not shaped by interactions with other humans anymore. ‘Code talking to each other’
- Ernest Becker — justification of reality and denying death. We try justify a ‘reality,’ but we cannot live in a reality with a distinction between things that are real and a simulation, but we need definitions.
- Disneyland!! We enter a simulated world, and believe that we are able to come back to reality, but we aren’t (symbols constantly consumed by other symbols).
- Whole idea that we can simulations within simulations. Technology, advanced far enough could help synthesize other simulations.
- Symbols are constantly consumed by other symbols, and each symbol only masks the fact that each layer before it had no meaning to begin with.

TO READ!!!

- Walter Kaufmann — Nietzsche
- Axiarchism — “Everything has a name” (Sextus Empiricus)