

Simulacra and simulation article review sample

Countries, United States



Summary of the article/introduction

Baudrillard mentions that postmodern simulacra and simulation are no longer a question of imitation but rather an analysis of how images of the real are substituting for the real. However, he does not suggest that the postmodern culture is fully artificial since the concept of artificiality still needs some sense of reality against which to recognize the deceit. To simulate refers to the pretence of having what one doesn't have while the opposite (dissimulate) refers to the pretence of not having what one has. However, simulating is not pretending since it threatens the difference between reality and imagination while dissimulating leaves the principle of reality intact. According to Baudrillard, the contemporary American society has become so reliant on maps and models that they have forgotten the real world that existed before the map. The loss of distinction between simulacrum and reality is explained using several phenomena but this discussion will focus only on American media analysis.

Discussion

The media culture in the United States is made up of a wide range of medium (internet, television, magazines and billboards). Media does not only convey messages but also interpret ourselves for us as we view that world and each other through the lenses of media images. A well known reality show in the United States is "The Real Housewives" and it plays an important role in television broadcasting. Ironically, this show is far different from true reality and has greatly influenced the society and the American popular culture. The Real Housewives show follows the lives of wealthy,

bourgeois and expert women living in suburban areas of different United States cities. The society no longer acquire goods because of real needs but rather to satisfy desired that are increasingly being defined by commercialized images and commercials which keeps us a step further from the reality around us and within our bodies. The show has created a short lived popularity for styles of music and fashion. The show provides entertainment for the audience and distracts them from their real surrounding. The capitalist culture further erase the distinction between reality and simulacrum whereby instead of purchasing an item in terms of the real uses to which it will be put, everything begun to be translated to how much it is worth (exchange-value). The reality show showcases a wide range of household goods, cars and fashion that are very expensive. The society has been transformed such that people desire to obtain goods or even services as showcased in the reality show. The problem pops up when the society abandons critical thinking, which is the essence of theoretical culture that now belongs to past life.

Multinational capitalism is another contributing factor whereby the things we use are as a result of complex industrial processes leading us to lose touch with the hidden reality of the goods we consume citing the example that most consumers do not know how that products they use relate to reality. Baudrillard points out that science fiction is eminent in the post modern era following the transformations in technology. The reality show depicts revolutionary themes such as divorce that the society has come to accept, suicide, bankruptcy, alcoholism and foreclosures. Instead of science fiction becoming a critical theory of the world it has become a mode of awareness

for the society. Urbanization which is the development of available geographical locates contributes to lose of touch with any sense of the natural world. The society has developed infrastructure at great levels and people desire to live in posh areas as shown in the reality show. Presently, natural spaces are understood as protected which is in contrast with reality but with signs to point out how real these sites are. Lastly, Baudrillard illustrates how language and ideology deters us from accessing reality. Since we rely on language to structure our perception, any representation of reality is usually already ideological and always already constructed by simulacra. Baudrillard claims that the modern society has reinstated all meaning and reality with signs and symbols and that what is termed as human experience is only but a simulation of reality. The procession of simulacra phenomenon as described by Baudrillard refers to the situation whereby the society becomes so involved with established simulacra and our lives so saturated with societal constructs resulting to all meaning being rendered worthless by being substantially alterable. The article describes how simulacra have come to lead the authentic in good judgment rather than a succession of any historical phases of the image. Baudrillard argues that just like the modern society the simulated copy has superseded the inventive object so did the map precede geographical history.

Conclusion

It is evident that the article represents an outstanding and original work to reshape cultural presumption from the viewpoint of an up-to-the-minute concept of cultural greediness, which is characteristic of postmodern formulations of the society. The idea is basically that people increasingly

footing their lives on a collective idea of things and these ideas can willingly change and become something separated from realism. This result to a free floating the idea of society and the world that supersedes concrete reality in its outcomes. Baudrillard's work offers constructive work to the issues of media culture.