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Baudrillard's *Hyperreality* and its simulacral foundation

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Abstract The idea that our life is part of an *hyperreal abstraction*, supported by Baudrillard throughout his research, has its foundation in his particular philosophy of language of the seventies, in a close relationship with his theory of *simulacra* in the same seventies. The work we present here intends to evaluate from a philosophical point of view some pages of *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1976) and other texts of the early eighties, in order to identify some motivations of our contemporary *virtuality* in the perspective of studies of Jean Baudrillard. Baudrillard has been not only a sociologist, but also a philosopher. He was able to hold together philosophy, theory of art and the media, cybernetics, political economy and much more. There is a link according to Baudrillard between virtuality, hyperreality and the communication/information networks, not only in the seventies, but also during the last fifty years. Scholars such as Pierre Levy, Thomas Maldonado, Paul Virilio, Mario Perniola, Bifo Berardi, Derrick De Kerchove, Luciano Floridi, have continued their studies on this line, until the recent debate on the so-called *post-truth*.

0. A brief introduction to the meaning of the research and some methical notes

As anticipated in the abstract, I would propose to reconstruct some moments of Baudrillard's philosophy in the seventies that were a part of the foundation of his theory that our *reality* is a hyperreality. Our study is based on some Baudrillard's works, in particular *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (1976), the chapter entitled *L'ordre des simulacres*, but also *Simulacres et Simulation* (1981), with special attention to the first part entitled *La précession de simulacres*, together with a small reference to *Power Inferno Requiem per le Twin Towers* (2003) published many years later. We are convinced that at the base of his overall theory of abstraction and derealisation/hyperrealization there was his idea that already in the seventies it was evidently facing to a real collapse of the language systems. Baudrillard identified this collapse already before (Gogan 2017: 31-125; Cook 1994: 150-167), in *Le système des objects* (1968), *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972) and then again in *A l'ombre des majorités silencieuses ou la fin du social* (1978). Among the critical

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literature dedicated to the study of Jean Baudrillard's thought, we have chosen the one that we considered the most up-to-date on the theme of *simulacra* and their relationship with our abstract daily hyperreality.

1. Our world is a *simulacrum* caught in the mesh of *black magic*

According to Baudrillard, for years we have been in the *desert of reality*, in a world of *simulacra*, a world *covered by maps* that precede territories, almost as if the crazy project of some cartographers had been supported. Baudrillard: «The facts no longer have a specific trajectory, they are born at the intersection of models, a single fact can be engendered by all the models at once» (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 16-17). The world corresponds to a *map* updated on *cybernetic models*, which make it work with their specific «switching». Baudrillard: «Everything is metamorphosed into its opposite, to perpetuate itself in its expurgated form» (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 19).

Baudrillard does not shy away from the disturbing question that dominates everything: «[…] law and order themselves might be nothing but simulation» (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 20). Moreover, we are not allowed to do «anything against this indefinite recurrence of simulation, against this nebula whose weight no longer obeys the laws of gravitation of the real» (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 21). We live in an «irreferential» world and that because we are part of a *continuous simulation* that envelops us and that tires us in the search for a *lost reality*. The pursuit of the real and the return to it paradoxically ends with a new *resurgence of the artificial* that is a mass consumption. In Baudrillard's American and French seventies, the earliest forms of *truth TV* (something like the daily *Big Brother*) show this. These television broadcasts are made of excessive *transparency*, of distancing (between the viewer and the screen), of immeasurable (hyperreal) "enlargements" of people's lives that are filmed by cameras in their family *ménages*. In *L'échange symbolique et la mort*, in a kind of premise to the pages dedicated to *simulacra*, Baudrillard points out that *images*, when they appear, always represent something *disturbing*. An image detaches from us, it is transportable, storable, and reproducible, it gets out of hand, and it no longer belongs to us (Codeluppi 2020: 115-122). The proliferation of images was certainly an important part in the construction of a complex cybernetic code in the Baudrillard's 1970s (Pawlett 2011: 34-36). Something like a *code* and those who created it aim at a rational manipulation of things and people, with an all-round control function, which is achieved thanks to a *genetic miniaturization* of our lives.

Baudrillard links this miniature codex to a *death*. Nevertheless, whose death? The one of the real man, the one portrayed in the image, the one reduced to miniature (Merrin 2005: 150-159; Philips 2009: 159-171)? The subject is complex and we cannot deal with it. It is well known that Foucault himself, at the end of his *Les motes et le choses* (1966) foreshadowed *man's death*, because *life*, which dominates, has become a set of *centers of power* that cannot be identified anywhere. Baudrillard moved the question from the *life* of Michel Foucault to the cybernetic dimension of our contemporaneity. He wrote: «There is no longer a medium in the literal sense: it is now intangible, diffused, and diffracted in the real, and one can no longer even say that the medium is altered by it» (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 30). We have been living since the seventies, but most likely also much earlier, in a *web* that looks like Los Angeles that Baudrillard described as follows:

> Los Angeles is surrounded by these imaginary stations that feed reality, the energy of the real to a city whose mystery is precisely that of no longer being anything but a network of incessant, unreal circulation – a city of incredible proportions but without space, without dimension. As much as electrical and atomic power stations, as much as cinema studios, this city, which is no longer anything but an immense scenario […] (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 13).

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We are in these *centers of power*, inside these kinds of cities, in the circuits of the codes that regulate them and make them work. The relationships between people and between people and the world consist in *connections*. Those connections are governed by small miniature codes, which identify us and function only within relationships between *forces*, which are themselves connections, articulated within some complex systems of signs. These relationships/connections/systems are far more important than the forces themselves that they govern. In this hyperreality how does Baudrillard's man die? Baudrillard gives us an answer, which seems to clarify at least some passages:

> Everywhere we live in a universe strangely similar to the original – things are doubled by their own scenario. But this doubling does not signify, as it did traditionally, the imminence of their death – they are already purged of their death, and better than when they were alive; more cheerful, more authentic, in the light of their model, like the faces in *funeral homes* (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 11).

We are on the verge of *death' death*, we have come to *clonation* (De Concilis 2009: 77-96), to the serial reproduction of everything in images. We are in a world of *simulacra*. For Baudrillard simulacra are part of a *black magic* (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr. 2017: 71): some religions do not admit simulacra because they correspond to nothing, and still, they replace what is transcendent in a divine sense. Nevertheless those simulacra are full of a *fascination* against which we must fight as *iconoclasts*, to prevent the *death* of the divine/real *referent* (Merrin 2005: 28-44; Altobelli 2020: 75-103). The iconoclastic battle was a desperate one, because those who fought it had the grave suspicion that there was actually nothing (God, the reality) behind those images. Nonetheless, everyone had a hope left, which Baudrillard represents us as follows: «All Western faith and good faith became engaged in this wager on representation: that a sign could refer to the depth of meaning, that a sign could be exchange» (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 5).
Mario Perniola (1983: 127-128) reminds us that those who rely on simulacra are not measuring themselves with anything, at least with nothing true, with nothing false, because *no original* corresponds to the simulacra. Simulacra are not linked to a principle of truth: there are no longer even *secrets*, because there is nothing behind signs. Baudrillard believes that this *black magic* coincides with something like a *code*, which is based on an "immanent logic" linked to a "principle of operativity" (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 66). Its aim is to *produce* without interruption, and not only in an economic sense. This is the triumph of machines, in a world of *productions* and *re-productions*. Baudrillard: «Panic-stricken production of the real and the referential, parallel to and greater than panic of material production: this is how simulation appears in the phase that concern us […]» (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 7).

2. Inside a tangled web of signs with no way out
The problems of language and economics (production/re-production of signs and commodities) go together, in the perspective of studies of Jean Baudrillard, because in both fields we find a continuous *production* and *re-production* of signs and commodities (commodities which are signs themselves), signs and commodities that are both emptied, because they have lost every *use value*. Bourdie, quoted by Baudrillard, writes: «The essence of every relation of force is to dissimulate itself as such and to acquire all its force only because it dissimulates itself as such» (Bourdieu 1970, in Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 14). Baudrillard's seventies are so already the years of *disguised fields of forces*, of fields producing simulacra, in a time of *in series* production of everything. No contract

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can keep together workers and employers, because any contract would involve speech, when *symbolic exchange* no longer works: it is *dead*.

Signs and goods are all *identical*, because there is *no original*, there is not even a real (or just a semiotic) prototype, from which to start: we are arrived with Baudrillard to *equivalence* and *indifference*. Every «referential reason disappear» (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 77), every man, every concrete thing vanishes, become *phantasmatic*, while a *code* made by binary oppositions works, realizing the Leibnizian thought, where everything is regulated by a *binary system*, which brings together 0 and 1 and proposes only this choice. There are no *designations*, purposes, *similarities*. Nevertheless, even if this is admitted, what should something look like if there are no longer any *referents* or rather, if these same referents are artificially *resurrected*, but only within the same systems of signs and never in reality? The most popular semiotics in those years (Baudrillard's seventies) is already that of computers, where *information* and *communication* coincide, where everything coincides with a *function*, where *programmatic digital signs* work, which have no other task than to make a machine, a program work. The *code* about which Baudrillard wrote in 1976 is the set of questions and answers programmed in a closed *cellular space*, and it is we who are imprisoned in this system of Leibnizian monads, where there is the automatic link of question and answer, with a *simultaneity* that cancel time. According to Baudrillard we are part of a great DNA, at the center of a convergence between genetics, linguistics and zoosemiotics (Sebeok 1973), in *a unitary cybernetic system*. Baudrillard:

> One must think instead of the media as if they were, in outer orbit, a kind of genetic code that directs the mutation of the real into the hyperreal, just as the other micromolecular code controls the passage from a representative sphere of meaning to the genetic one of the programmed signal (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 30).

All that awaits us and is due to us is written from the beginning in our genetic code and in the semiotic/linguistic code that we talk. The seventies of Baudrillard are the years of the triumph of biological and biochemist sciences, in a world made of forecasts, programmed anticipations, simulations. A *cybernetic neo-capitalism* rules everything (Sawchuck 1994: 89-118), imposing a call to *operation*: we are continually subjected to tests, in a circuit made up of questions and answers, subjected to continuous stimuli that measure our reactions (McQueen 2016: 53-71). The language in Baudrillard's 1970s is just a set of programmed questions and answers, it is a *referendum*, a poll, where all signs are *simulacra*, that admit only answers *designated* in advance (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 83). Baudrillard:

> But beware, since by the same token you are yourself constantly selected and tested by the medium itself. Just as we select a sample for purposes of a survey, the media frame and cut sample receivers by means of beamed messages which are in fact a network of selected questions. By a circular operation of experimental modifications and incessant interference, like nervous, tactile and retractile impulses, probing an object by means of short perceptual sequences until it has been localized and controlled, the media localise and structure not real, autonomous groups, but samples, modelled socially and mentally by a barrage of messages. "Public opinion" is evidently the finest of these samples - not an unreal but a hyperreal political substance, the fantastic hyperreality which survives only by editing and manipulation by the test (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 84-85).

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Here Baudrillard's thought is close to McLuhan's (1964) notion of *tactile*, because between spectator and media there is not distance, but a continuous and direct *con-tact*. Where there is no distance between question and answer, between medium and message, between viewer and television/radio (web), there is no space for reflection (Merrin 2005: 45-62; Codeluppi 2017: 53-60). The *message* is tactile, it is the *massage* of a machine that feels and tests us, «the laser that touches and pieces» (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 93). It is a totally *tactical* world, which goes hand in hand with the *tactic* that is worked out. There are no social relationships, only *con-tacts*. In every moment the machine, the code, the medium want an answer, which is a *simplification of signs*, reduced to the dynamics of a general *equivalent*, which we are called to *re-produce*.

We move continuously between *productions* and *re-productions*, with a *reproduction/shooting* of ourselves, of our words, of our behaviors, of our images. Moreover, we are at the same time almost «dissuaded», because we have no (real) alternatives within the *monad* in which we are programmed. Baudrillard:

> The discourses "circulates" is to be taken literally: that is, it no longer goes from one point to another, but it traverses a cycle that *without distinction* includes the positions of transmitter and receiver, now unlocatable as such (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 41).

Maybe we still live in a democracy, in which *people's requests* applie, but in which people live *in the shadow of silent majorities*. Yet not all seems lost, if Baudrillard, thinking about ethnology, points out that:

> […] the circular response of those polled, the analysands and the natives is nevertheless a challenge and a victorious revenge: when they turn the question back on itself, isolating it by holding the expected mirror-image response up to it, then there is no hope that the question can ever get out of what is in fact the vicious circle of power (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 88).

Many years later in *Le crime parfait* (1996) Baudrillard will write about a *Revenge of the people of mirrors*, an *exit* of the people of mirrors from mirrors, because that people are no longer the reflection, the answer to any code, which photographs it, imagines it, figures it out. *The people of mirrors* are no longer in the mirror (Amendola 2009: 53-62). Baudrillard:

> Our image in the mirror is not innocent, then. Behind every reflection, every resemblance, every representation, a defeated enemy lies concealed. The Other vanquished, and condemned merely to be the Same. This casts a singular light on the problem of representation and of all those mirrors which reflect us "spontaneously" with an objective indulgence. None of that is true, and every representation is a servile image, the ghost of an once sovereign being whose singularity has been obliterated. But a being which will one day rebel, and then our whole system of representation and values is destined to perish in that revolt. This slavery of the same, the slavery of resemblance, will one day be smashed by the violent resurgence of otherness. We dreamed of passing through the looking-glass, but it is the mirror peoples themselves who will burst in upon our world. And "this time will not be defeated". What will come of this victory? No one knows. A new existence of two equally sovereign peoples, perfectly alien to one another, but in perfect collusion? Something other, at least, than this

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subjection and this negative fatality. So, everywhere, objects, children, the dead, images, women, everything which serves to provide a passive reflection in a world based on identity, is ready to go on to the counter-offensive. Already they resemble us less and less... *I'll not be your mirror!* (Baudrillard 1994, eng. tr.: 148).

However, this is another story, perhaps a *revolt* already underway, in our time of cybernetic triumph. Because, yes, there is something that does not work, that somehow short-circuits, this time in the positive. If you want, it is *power* itself that is in front of a *mirror*, where it does not find true answers. The question of *who* is asking these questions and with what intentions would be legitimate: here, perhaps, Foucault could answer us, the Foucault of the sixties, the seventies, the last eighties. But we know that for Baudrillard it is important only to describe what was happening in the mid-seventies counts: the breaking of the domination of a cybernetic code, made up of programmed questions and answers, in a circle in which we are continually subjected to stimuli, in a direct *con-tact* with everything that is achieved through the tests we undergo.

3. What happens in our cities and what Andy Warhol clearly shows us?
The corresponding political field is also co-implicated, because it is crossed by a:

> […] neutralization of this contradictory referential, under the sign of a public opinion which from now on in equal to itself, mediatized and homogenized by means of anticipation (polls), will make possible an alternation (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 89).

The result is the absolute «reversibility of every discourse» (*ibidem*). Even in politics, everything is *simulation*, because even in politics a binary code works: one party and another party, zero and one, a regulated opposition, a couple in simultaneous opposition. Baudrillard: «[…] in a field unhinged by simulation, all determination evaporates, every act is terminated at the end of the cycle having benefited everyone and having been scattered in all directions» (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 16). Always Baudrillard adds: «Kennedy were murdered because they still had a political dimension. The others, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, only had the right to phantom attempts, to simulated murder» (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 19).
Bat what happens in our *cities*? Baudrillard:

> Why has the World Trade Center in New York got *two* towers? All Manhattan's great buildings are always content to confront each other in a competitive verticality, from which there results an architectural panorama that is the image of the capitalist system: a pyramidal jungle, every building on the offensive against the other. […] This image has changed completely in a few years. The effigy of the capitalist system has passed from the pyramid to the punch card. The buildings are no longer obelisks, but trustingly stand next to one another like the columns of a statistical graph. This new architecture no longer embodies a competitive system, but a countable one where competition has disappeared in favor of correlation (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 90).

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Even the buildings of New York are in an architectural and urbanistic *connection*, which does not foresee a competition between the buildings themselves. Two *twin towers* are not in competition, because they are identical, they are *twins*, because they have been *produced* and *re-produced*: they look at each other as in a *mirror*, in a «series based on the binary code» (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 91). A «definitive model» is followed, which responds to «unchanging genetic code» (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 91). Many years later, faced with the collapse of the Twin Towers, which in any case delivered them to a definitive imaginary precisely because no longer *real*, Baudrillard will write:

> […] c'est l'agression symbolique qui a entraîné leur effondrement physique. Comme si la puissance qui portait jusqu'ici ces tours perdait brusquement tout ressort. Comme si cette puissance arrogante cédait brusquement sous l'effet d'un effort trop intense: celui de vouloir être l'unique modèle du monde. Fatiguées d'être ce symbole trop lourd à porter, elles ont succombé cette fois physiquement, elles ont succombé verticalement, à bout de forces, aux yeux éblouis du monde entier (Baudrillard 2002: 15).

The *code-system* has its own internal *fragility*, the one of a power claiming to be the *unique model*. The collapse of the Twin Towers was an *event* and like all events, it is dissociated from its *causes*. Baudrillard: «Y a-t-il précession de la pensée sur l'évènement? On a l'impression que l'évènement a toujours été là, présent par anticipation, et qu'il va plus vite que la pensée […]» (Baudrillard 2002: 22-23). If that is the case then an *exchange* between *words* (la pensée) *and things* (l'évènement) is not simple. Nevertheless, Foucault already had some doubts: probably *words* and *things* belonged to two different worlds, to two parallel and disjoint phenomenologies, that of words and that of things.

The Twin Towers are a doubling of each other; they are an architectural and urban example of a *serial* multiplication, without a *designation*. The city is thus the space for the full implementation of the *code*. In the city everything must work: housing, transport,

work, free time, play and culture, with an analytical definition, with a confinement of everything and everyone in a form/sign that is *functional* and *programmed* in a serial multiplication. We are all *connected* in the code of a *semiocracy*. For Baudrillard the city 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. Every space–time of urban life is a ghetto each of which is connected to every other (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 98).

Is there a solution, if we look at things from a political/semiotic point of view? As known, in all the subsequent years of his research, Jean Baudrillard did not propose any real solutions. Baudrillard has always been convinced that the intertwining between reality and hyperreality, reality and linguistic codes was essentially inextricable and it made no sense for him to ask if a solution were possible in the direction of our liberation from the *semiospheres* that we inhabit and that dominate us. However, it is interesting to note how, following a classical solution in *L'échange symbolique et la mort*, Baudrillard's response by reasoning of *graffiti*:

> The graffitists went further in that they opposed pseudonyms rather than names to anonymity. They are seeking not to escape the combinatory in order to regain an identity (which is impossible in any case), but to turn indeterminacy against the system, to turn *indeterminacy* into *extermination* (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 99).

Graffiti are something that has to do with some sort of *nonsense*, they are beyond language, because they do not *denote*, they cannot be *interpreted*, they do not *connote*, they *escape signification*, they are *empty signifiers*. Graffiti break with the city *full of signs*. They are tribal, initiatory denominations: they are not owned by anyone. They are new forms of *territorialization* of the *white* city of New York, otherwise made up only of walls covered with advertising. Graffiti have no content, they do not convey any message, because with them we are witnessing a «content recession». Graffiti are the result of a *revolutionary work* on signs, because they respond to a total manipulation of codes and meanings. Graffiti are based on an *absolute difference*, which does not make system with other differences, going back into a code. Graffiti confuse urban signs in a kind of tangle. Baudrillard: «[…] just as the Czechs changed the names of the streets in Prague to disconcert the Russians: guerrilla action» (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 101). Graffiti do not belong to the urban and architectural code of the city because:

> Graffiti runs from house to the next, from one wall of a building to the next, from the wall onto the window or the door, or windows on subway trains, or the pavements. Graffiti overlaps, is thrown up, superimposes (superimposition amounting to the abolition of the support as a framework, just as it is abolished as frame when its limits are not respected). Its graphics resemble the child's polymorphous perversity, ignoring the boundaries between the sexes and the delimitation of erogenous zones (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 102).

The city of graffiti is the same New York of the *Twin Towers*. Graffiti are *transideological, transartistic*. Again, the reasoning does not add up, because even graffiti escape any reference, any origin. Their message is null: they are *wild signs*. They may not be simulacra, but they refer to nothing like the simulacra. These graffiti are a «Sioux litany, this subversive litany of anonymity, the symbolic explosion of these war names in the heart of the white city, must be heard and understood» (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 104).

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With Baudrillard and his graffiti, we are at a «Savage-fiction» (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 9). Maybe graffiti are not new simulacra, but they too are signs without meanings, without referents.

In the same pages we are studying, Baudrillard speaks of another kind of signs, of fetishes, which represent a new case of empty sign. Andy Warhol's many Marilyn Monroe are replicas without a *designation*, without a *reference* to the real Marilyn Monroe, since she (Marilyn Monroe) does not count anything, in spite of being the original. Andy Warhol's Marilyn Monroe have a value because they are endless serial re-productions of images. Baudrillard takes up Baudelaire's (1855) idea of art as «absolute commodity», a formal and fetishized abstraction, without any *use value*, without any *exchange value*. As commodities, works of art are fetish-objects without exchangeable value. The *fetish* is not part of a symbolic exchange, because it has value only for those who have given it that value, value which cannot be exchanged for another who does not share that value, that fetish, that sign.

According to Baudrillard, Warhol's *Campbell Soup Cans* are vulgar commodities, because there is nothing special about a Campbell Soup Cans. Such vulgarity exerts a strange *seduction* (Codeluppi 2020: 106-114) linked to an obscenity that in this case is proper to the commodity, and that will spread to everything, on a mass media line. In the last fifty years we have "seen" how seductive things, people, situations can be, precisely because obscene, because certain television debates, the various *Big Brothers*, television fights are obscene (real, hyperreal, virtual, abstract), the footages of the normal life of people who have nothing interesting to show (Scacco 2004: 9-25). Campbell Soup Cans are pure

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objects, pure events, as they are reproduced in series. There is no meaning behind their reproduction: they are simulacra. Starting from their images and on the shiny surface of the painting that represents them, we can hear the *irony* of the world of goods, the irony of objects. They do not care about us, as they mean nothing to us, if not else because they often have no use value left. However, they are objects and objects do not need us. Walter Benjamin still had an *aura* of originality to defend, an authenticity to save. For Baudelaire (the one read by Baudrillard) attending the 1855 Exposition Universelle in Paris, there is no aura, no authenticity, no sacredness, no originality, neither in the people he sees walking around the exhibition, nor in the goods displayed. Moreover, it is along this line that Warhol will want to become «an absolute machine», with the aim of a negative *ecstasy* of representation, which will lead to the disappearance of art (Toffoletti 2011: 37-67; De Simone 2017: 61-70). There will be nothing left for us, because there is nothing real to deal with. Moreover, perhaps the man himself dies precisely because he is submerged by the series of simulacra that surround him, which have no secrets, are not true, have no meaning. The seventies of Jean Baudrillard herald the disappearance of the real, of art, the end of *representation*, of the aura, of the authentic, of secrets, of something original and unrepeatable. Baudrillard already in the seventies denounced the *hyperreality* of our lives, in a world made of simulacra, which no longer designate anything.

4. Some possible conclusions

Baudrillard therefore argues about, among other things, *the end of representation*, because there is no painter (Foucault's Velasquez), no easel, no colors and models, no real world to *represent*. There are model, but only the twin series of the Twin Towers that are no longer there today. According to Baudrillard in the seventies, we began to be part of a *series*, the seriality of our behaviors. These behaviors are the reflexes and results of the continuous tests we undergo, within dynamics governed by programmed questions and answers, in a *tact/con-tact* with the binary code that questions us, proposes polls, makes us participate in referendums, where we are requested to say *yes* or *no*. At that time and with these conditions there was no more a language, because there was no longer any syntagm (the series of images is made up entirely of identical objects), there was no longer any paradigm, because nothing can replace anything, because everything is identical. Baudrillard: «In the series, signs subdivide like protozoa» (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 93) and the *human too human* model is the scientific one, according to which processes can be reproduced. Baudrillard:

> In any case, the logical evolution of science is to distance itself increasingly from its objects, until it dispenses with it entirely: its autonomy is only rendered even more fantastic – it attains its pure form (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 7-8).

The basic code is a complex system, because it consists of a «diffraction of models that plays the regulative role: no longer the form of the general equivalent, but the form of distinct oppositions» (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 91). The *code* is made up of *distinctive diffractions* and *oppositions*, which require us to *adapt* ourselves, acting almost with animal responses, guided in the case of humans by *environmental devices*, with *saturation thresholds*. This is the *hyperrealism* described by Baudrillard. This is a closed system that protects itself from the anguish of the referential. Baudrillard: «[…] when there is no more virgin, and hence available to the imaginary, territory, when the map covers the whole territory, something like the reality principle disappears» (Baudrillard 1976, eng. tr.: 106).

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Reality is immediately contaminated by its simulacrum. The signs are no longer able to *remove* anything in a psychoanalytic sense: we are in psychosis. From metaphor and metonymy, which still admitted semantic shifts, today we have moved on to *digital* in which nothing moves, except in the short space and time that go from 0 to 1. However, basically, the first Baudrillard, the one who reasoned about capital (Schoonmaker 1994: 168-187; Der Derian 1994: 189-208), already reminded us:

> Because in the end throughout its history it was the capital that first fed on the destructuration of every referential, of every humane objective, that shattered every ideal distinction between true and false, good and evil, in order to establish a radical law of equivalence and exchange, the iron law of its power. Capital was the first to play deterrence, abstraction, disconnection, deterritorialization, etc., and if it is the one that fostered reality, the reality principle, it was also the first to liquidate it by exterminating all use value, all real equivalence of production and wealth, in the very sense we have of the unreality of the stakes and the omnipotence of manipulation (Baudrillard 1981, eng. tr.: 22).

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