

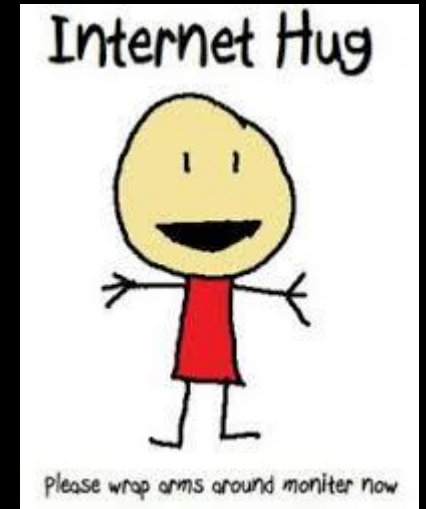


Introduction

- Baudrillard and simulacra
- How these ideas can be applied to social media
- Learning Outcome 1: Demonstrate an understanding of debates and key issues in relation to commercial applications of social media.

Baudrillard – ideas

- Baudrillard – our world is no longer real but a simulation of the real
- Signs, images, models have become detached
- The world is composed of simulations of reality
- Hooked into simulations of reality that replace the real thing
- E.g. virtual friends



Phases of representation

- The image reflects reality
- The image masks/changes reality
 - Perversion of reality – untrue copy
- The image masks the absence of reality
 - Pretence of reality – pretends to represent a faithful copy but does not represent anything close to the original
- The image is disconnected from reality



Social media and hyperreality

- On social media we connect in a hyperreal space
- Hyperreality: inability to recognise what is real and what is a simulation/fantasy.
- Symbolic virtuality has replaced immediate reality
- Overwhelmed by symbols
- Lose control over those symbols
- Including our online identities – which lose the connection with reality?



Avatars

- An avatar in a game or a virtual world is a representation of ourselves.



Baudrillard – which is the copy/original?



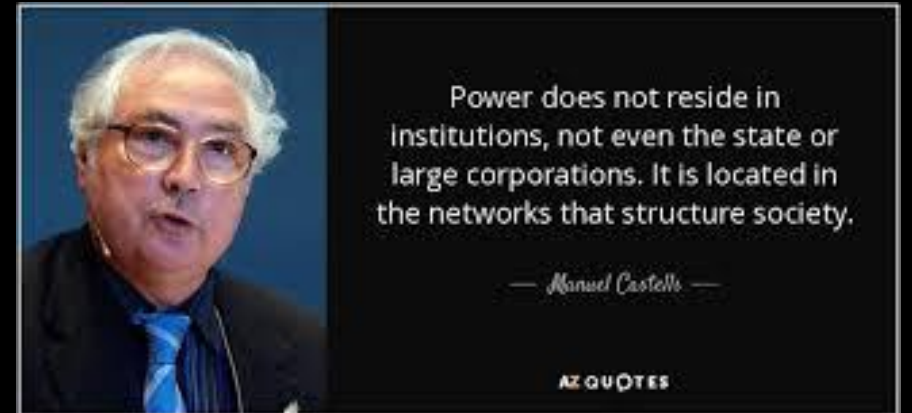
We cannot assume that the first face is the original/Any one of these could be the original image.

The Artefact after the Fact

- Recording experiences more than being there
- Separated from our own experiences
- Live experiences are mediated
- Instagram incites a mentally constructed image of a person
- Space and time are radically reconfigured
- The hyperrealism of Instagram
- <https://nikoleweber.wordpress.com/2014/03/18/the-hyperrealism-of-instagram/> (24.19 mins)

Manuel Castells

- Tension between globalisation and individualisation
- Breakdown of patterns of social communication - world flows and personal experiences
- But global flows of information are saturated with personal experiences



Sherry Turkle

- Onscreen symbols interact with other symbols
- Construct our identities
- Online selves are always shifting
- Everything on the internet is an image on a screen referring to another image on a screen etc.



We expect more from technology and less from each other. We create technology to provide the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship.

— Sherry Turkle —



AZQUOTES

Celebrities on the Internet

- Celebrities are the ultimate media creation – embodying the notion of simulacra
- Interchangeable array of simulations which rarely refer to any reality outside of themselves
- Celebrity industry may obscure how real society is saturated by empty media symbols and images

Simulacrum Metaphor; that reality is a hyperreality

"Don't try and bend the spoon,
try to realise there is no spoon"



In other words:
Inside the simulacrum you must
realise that the need to locate the real
or original is no longer relevant

"The simulation is never what hides the truth – it is
truth that hides the fact there is none.
The simulacrum is true."
(Baudrillard, p.1)

Real and virtual coexisting?

- Some argue that the real and virtual interact
- They are in a relationship rather than one replacing the other
- We produce our own personal hypertext
- But the real and virtual coexist and converge
- We know we are real

Summary

- <https://youtu.be/8AXIAM7dTTg> (9.51 mins)
- Baudrillard's ideas could be applied to social media
- Whether the virtual has (or has not) overtaken reality
- Whether that reality still exists or not
- E.g. Virtual friends v real friends

References

- Merrin, W. (2005) *Baudrillard and the Media. A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity
- Poster, M. (ed.) (1988) *Baudrillard Selected Writings*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Redhead, S. (2008) *The Jean Baudrillard Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.