

## CHAPTER III

### VALUES IN JEAN BAUDRILLARD'S THEORY OF CONSUMER SOCIETY

#### A. Biography<sup>1</sup>

Baudrillard was born in Reims, northeastern France, on 27 July 1929. He told to the interviewers that his grandparents were peasants and his parents were civil servants. During his high school studies at the Reims Lycée, he touched with pataphysics (via the philosophy professor Emmanuel Peillet), which was said to be crucial for understanding Baudrillard's later thought. He became the first of his family who attended university when he moved to Paris to attend Sorbonne University. There he studied German language and literature which led him to begin teaching these subjects at several different lycées, both Parisian and provincial, from 1960 until 1966. While teaching, Baudrillard began to publish reviews of literature and translated the works of such authors such as Peter Weiss, Bertolt Brecht, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Wilhelm Emil Mühlmann.

During his time as a teacher of German language and literature, Baudrillard began to transfer to sociology field, eventually completing his doctoral thesis *Le Système des objets* (*The System of Objects*) under the dissertation committee of Henri Lefebvre, Roland Barthes, and Pierre Bourdieu. Subsequently, he began teaching sociology at the Université de Paris-X Nanterre, a university campus outside of Paris which would become heavily involved in the events of May 1968. During this time, Baudrillard worked closely with Philosopher Humphrey De Battenburge, who described Baudrillard as a “visionary”. At Nanterre he took up a position as *Maître Assistant* (Assistant Professor), then *Maître de Conférences* (Associate Professor), eventually becoming a professor after completing his accreditation, *L'Autre par lui-même* (*The Other by Himself*).

In 1970, Baudrillard made the first of his many trips to the United States (Aspen), and in 1973 was his first trip to Japan (Kyoto). He was given his first camera in 1981 in Japan, which led him to be a photographer.

In 1986 he moved to IRIS (Institut de Recherche et d'Information Socio-Économique) at the Université de Paris-IX Dauphine, where he spent the latter part

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<sup>1</sup>Retrieved on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014, from Jean Baudrillard (Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. htm)

of his teaching career. During this time he began to move away from sociology as a discipline (particularly in its “classical” form), and after ceasing to teach full-time, he rarely identified himself with any particular discipline, although he remained linked to the academic world. During the 1980s and 1990s his books had gained a wide audience, and in his last years he became, to an extent, an intellectual celebrity, being published often in the French- and English-speaking popular press. He nonetheless continued supporting the Institut de Recherche sur l'Innovation Sociale at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and was *Satrap* at the Collège de Pataphysique. Baudrillard taught at the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee and collaborated at the Canadian theory, culture and technology review *Ctheory*, where he was abundantly cited. He also participated in the *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies* from its inception in 2004 until his death. In 1999–2000, his photographs were exhibited at the Maison européenne de la photographie in Paris. In 2004, Baudrillard attended the major conference on his work, "Baudrillard and the Arts", at the Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe in Karlsruhe, Germany.

Baudrillard's passed away 77<sup>th</sup> on 6 March 2007 at Paris and Baudrillard's major contributions to social theory may be stated as threefold: first, he developed a theory and analysis of consumer society, design, and objects in his books of the late 1960s; second, his mid-1970s to early 1980s work on simulation and his notorious these about hyperreality remain influential and central to much of today's surveillance and cybercultural theory; third, Baudrillard's poetical and anthropological musings inspired a quirky theory of symbolic exchange and death that still animates his thought.<sup>2</sup>

## B. Baudrillard's Work

### a. Books

1. 1968: *The System of Objects*, this book is influenced by Barthes's work, *The Fashion System* (1967). In this book his serious intention toward postmodern cultural problems. Baudrillard tries to adopt Barthes's semiology method to break down relation and mystification objects in modern social reality.<sup>3</sup>
2. 1969: *Communications*, this bokk discusses about communication structure of sign in society.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> George Ritzer, *Encyclopedia of Social theory*, (Sage Publications, London, Volume 1) p. 29

<sup>3</sup>Medhy Aginta Hidayat, *Menggugat Modernisme: Mengenal Rentang Pemikiran Postmodernisme Jean Baudrillard*, (Jalasutra, Yogyakarta, 2012), p. 53

<sup>4</sup> Medhy Aginta Hidayat, *loc. cit.*

3. 1970: *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*
4. 1972: *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*
5. 1973: *The Mirror of Production*
6. 1976: *Symbolic Exchange and Death*
7. 1977: *Forget Foucault*
8. 1979: *Seduction*
9. 1981: *Simulacra and Simulation*
10. 1982: *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*
11. 1983: *Fatal Strategies*
12. 1983: *Simulations*. In this book, Baudrillard introduces a specific character of western culture society. According to him, western culture nowadays is a representation from world of simulation, namely world that that is formed from relationship of various signs and codes randomly without explicit relational reference. This relationship includes the real sign created by reproduction process as well as apparent sign (image) created by reproduction process. In a simulation culture, the two signs come to pile up and form a unity. I cannot be known which one is real, false, and apparent. Those become part of reality that are done and lived by western society nowadays. This unity is called *simulacra* or *simulacrum*, a world that is built by chaos of value, fact, sign, image, and code. Reality has not reference anymore, except simulacra itself.<sup>5</sup>
13. 1986: *America*
14. 1987: *The Evil Demon of Images*
15. 1987: *Cool Memories*
16. 1987: *The Ecstasy of Communication*, Baudrillard emphasizes that by transparency of meaning and information. Western society nowadays has been over into permanent ecstasy. Social ecstasy (the mass) body ecstasy (over weight), sex ecstasy (indecent), violence ecstasy (terror), and information ecstasy (simulation). (Baudrillard, 1987:82). Nowadays, almost all dimension of western society living is demanded by economic-capitalism logic that offers openness, newness, change, and constant speed. In this condition, problem of life style, mode, and performance become new value which change wisdom and simplicity.
17. 1990: *The Transparency of Evil*

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55

18. 1990: *Revenge of Crystal*
19. 1991: *Cool Memories II*
20. 1991: *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*
21. 1992: *The Illusion of the End*
22. 1993: *Baudrillard Live: Selected Interviews (Edited by Mike Gane)*
23. 1995: *The Perfect Crime*
24. 1998: *Paroxysm: Interviews with Philippe Petit*
25. 1999: *Impossible Exchange (book)/Impossible Exchange*
26. 2000: *Passwords*
27. 2000: *The Singular Objects of Architecture*
28. 2000: *The Vital Illusion*
29. 2002: *Au royaume des aveugles*
30. 2002: *The Spirit of Terrorism: And Requiem for the Twin Towers*
31. 2003: *Fragments (interviews with François L'Yvonnet)*
32. 2005: *The Intelligence of Evil or the Lucidity Pact*
33. 2005: *The Conspiracy of Art*
34. 2005: *Les exilés du dialogue, Jean Baudrillard and Enrique Valiente Noailles*
35. 2006: *Utopia Deferred: Writings for Utopie (1967–1978)*
36. 2007: *Pataphysics*
37. 2008: *Radical Alterity*
38. 2009: *Why Hasn't Everything Already Disappeared?*
39. 2010: *Carnival and Cannibal, or the Play of Global Antagonisms*
40. 2010: *The Agony of Power*
41. 2014: *The Divine Left: A Chronicle of the Years 1977--1984*

#### **b. Articles**

Besides writing books, Baudrillard often writes articles in some science journals whether in French or British and general mass media. He also often writes column in daily newspaper *Liberation and Guardian*, as well as in other journals such as *Spring, October, Art and Text, New Literary History. On the Beach, Calvino and Les Temps Modernes*, the journal belongs to Jean-Paul Sartre, a French existentialism

philosopher<sup>6</sup>, “The Spirit of Terrorism.” *Telos* No. 121 (Fall 2001). New York: Telos Press, and “Divine Europe.” *Telos* No. 131 (Summer 2005). New York: Telos Press.<sup>7</sup>

### c. Audio CDs

1. *Die Illusion des Endes – Das Ende der Illusion* (Jean Baudrillard & Boris Groys), 58 minutes + booklet. Cologne: supposed 1997.
2. *Die Macht der Verführung*, 55 minutes. Cologne: supposed 2006.

Meanwhile, a serious respond toward Baudrillard’s thoughts becomes wider by the publishing of some critique books such as: *Jean Baudrillard Live, Selected Interviews* (1993) by Routledge; *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writing* ( 1989 ) by Cambridge Press; *Jean Baudrillard Critical and Fatal Theory* (1991) by Rouletdge; *Jean Baudrillard’s Bestiary: Jean Baudrillard and Culture* (1991) Rouletdge; *Jean Baudrillard: From Marxism to Postmodernism and Beyond* (1989) by Cambridge Press; and *Jean Baudrillard Reader* (1993) by Rouletdge.<sup>8</sup>

### C. Consumer Society and Meaning Reproduction

In consumer society; Baudrillard launched an ingenious argument regarding needs. Just as meaning in structural analysis<sup>9</sup> is an effect of interdependent signs, thus, there is no direct correspondence between signifier and signified; specific objects are not produced in relation to definite needs.<sup>10</sup>

Baudrillard explains that idea of needs comes from division of subject and false object; idea of needs is created by connecting between subject and object (subject needs object and object is what is needed by subject) will happen repeatedly (*tautology*). Consumer society does not buy what they need, but what code delivers about what should be bought (Baudrillard, 1972/1981:82).<sup>11</sup>

In consumer society which is controlled by code, human relationship is transformed in a relationship with object, especially object of consumption. Baudrillard (in poster, 1988:29) explains that “we live in period of objects”. Those objects have no meaning anymore from real relationship among human. Object is

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57

<sup>7</sup>Retrieved on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 from Jean Baudrillard - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.htm

<sup>8</sup> Medhy Aginta Hidayat, *op.cit.*, p. 57

<sup>9</sup>At the beginning, Baudrillard’s work is influenced positively by linguistic structural Saussure, afterward he left it. See George Ritzer, *Teori Sosial Postmodern, translated by Muhammad Taufik*, Yogyakarta: Kreasi Wacana, 2009, p. 153

<sup>10</sup> George Ritzer, *op.cit.*, 31

<sup>11</sup> George Ritzer, *op.cit.*, p. 139

signifier (it is sign value) and consumption of this object of signs use language that we understood. Commodity is bought a style of expression and sign, prestige, luxury, authority, and etc.<sup>12</sup>

Enjoyment in consumption, for Baudrillard, is impossible; the same thing is claimed about self-fulfillment and liberation of individual needs. One of the greatest ironies and a cogent definition of consumption that Baudrillard claimed is that industrial production of differences that allegedly allow individuals to be themselves, to have their own styles and personalities, simultaneously erases singular differences among people for the sake of replacing them with sign of difference, more and more subtly and minutely defined, in conformity with abstract, artificial models. The consequence to be yourself under the terms of consumer society is to be what you are not.

In consumer societies, socialization takes place through institutions of mental training, such as credit, and this is simply form, as argued by Baudrillard, of social control. Baudrillard was fascinated by the constraints of consumer society, such as the incessant recycling of signs, fashion flavors of the month, combinatorial possibilities of which are predetermined by abstract models to which consumers conform as they live the myth of individuation.<sup>13</sup>

In the discussion of consumer society, desire of reproduction through ideas formed by social process. For the example, Baudrillard sees that structure of created value determines the coming of desire. This structure in consumer society, according to him, represents in codes. Production does not create material as external object anymore, production creates material as codes that stimulates the needs or will as internal object consumption. In the Freudian's view<sup>14</sup>, desire to consumes is basically something instinctual. It is in the first phase of human's structural-physical development, namely *id*. At this *id* phase, all actions tend to principle of enjoyments that is spontaneous. It is clear that the action to reach a satisfaction and enjoyment is

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<sup>12</sup> George Ritzer, *loc.cit.*

<sup>13</sup> George Ritzer, *op.cit.*, p. 31

<sup>14</sup> Sigmund Freud put forward the theory Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality, the theory is regarded as the cornerstone of modern psychology. This theory states that the unconscious need (unconscious need) or the impulse of the human self (drive), such as sex drive and biological needs are at the core of the human personality. According to Freud human needs consists of three elements interact with each other, ie *id*, *Superego*, and *Ego*. See Ujang Sumarwan, *Perilaku Konsumen, Teori dan Penerapannya dalam Pemasaran*, Ghalia Indonesia, Bogor, 2011, p. 40

the irrational phase. Human will naturally fulfil the needs to avoid tension and to look for enjoyment as soon as possible.<sup>15</sup>

Generally, according to Jean Baudrillard, media becomes the role as agent that spreads imageries to the society. The decision to buy or not is really influenced by the power of imagery. A culture of media has come, in which imagery, voice, and lense help resulting daily living nets, wasting time, forming political views, social behavior, and giving material that may be used to build personal identity.<sup>16</sup> So that, the decision to buy is not real from self inside, but it is actually caused by other authority outside that force to but. As the result, society does not only consume, but they have been trapped in a consumerism culture. This culture is called dangerous because it brings negative effect for living environment, so the decline of social relationship and the stay of false awareness in social thought.

Consumerism culture as the lung of capitalism is a culture which includes various kinds of lie, halusination, dream, apparent, artificiality, commodity cover, through strategy of hypersemiotica and imagylogy that finally deconstruct socially by economic communication the power of capitalism. Baudrillard criticizes consumer society, understands it as creating willing combination that is bad and organized hysteria. In Baudrillard's work, his theory of symbolic exchange emerged from theory of consumer society.<sup>17</sup>

#### **D. Morality in Consumer Society**

When consuming object, so we consume sign and at the process we defines our selves. By object, each individual and communal find their each places in a structure.<sup>18</sup> By object, society is stratificated because consumer society has social logic about consumption. This logic is not individual adjustment of logic about usage value, but production logic and manipulation of social sign. Consumption process can be analyzed into basic perspective of two aspects:<sup>19</sup>

1. As significant process and communication that is based on rule of code where practices of consumption come and take the meaning. Today's people tend to articulate identity and their self personality through goods they consume. The

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<sup>15</sup>Ujang Sumarwan, loc.cit.

<sup>16</sup> Douglas Kellner, *Budaya Media*, translated by Galih Bondan Rambatan, Jalasutra, Yogyakarta, 2010, p. 1

<sup>17</sup> George Ritzer, *op.ci.*, p. 31

<sup>18</sup> George Ritzer, *op.ci.*, p. 137

<sup>19</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *Masyarakat konsumsi*, translated by Wahyunto, Kreasi Wacana, Yogyakarta, 2006, p. 60

goods they consumed become their self sign. By goods -clothes, shoes, bags, and mobile phones-people express their selves and personality. People will wear clothe in line with sporty model, feminine, formal, casual or other models to represent their personalities. Here, consumption is sytem exchange and in accordance with language. Signs or codes tied into objects of consumption like symbol of communication that can be *encode* and *decode*. Consuming object means *encoding* sign or object code of consumer selves. The codes in the object then become label of subject of the consumer.

2. As the process of classification and social difference, in which at this time objbjects/signs are similared as value that are agree with a hierarchy.

Consumption in the perspective of Baudrillard also understood as a sign system based on the interpretation of social signs (symbols), such as social class distinction, gender, and race. Baudrillard calls the class distinction with a *distinction*, which the dominant class distinguish themselves through three intake structures, namely: a) food or beverage, b) culture, and c) appearance (Ritzer and Goodman, 2008: 529). Through the three structure of consumption, the distinction level of consumption between social classes from one another appears in the value or quality of an object of consumption although its primary function is similar. The distinction is the nature of consumption. The sign is defined as a vehicle of meaning. Words, sounds and so forth is a sign that is used to tell the meaning. There are two types of signs, rational sign and artificial sign. Made sign is called "symbol". Situation in which there is a sign that implies for someone is called "situation-sense" or "situation-sign" (Kattsoff, 1986:165).<sup>20</sup>

People never consume the object itself (the point of value) -object is always manipulated as a distinguishing sign of status between individual and others. The process of differentiation status is fundamental processes which respectively recorded in the community. This is the moral of level of life, competition status, and levels of prestige.<sup>21</sup>

In the context of consumption of the sign nowadays, object of consumption is becoming a major paradigm for language to work through it, which allows others to talk through it. It could be said that this kind of continuous movement toward a point where it is impossible to determine the specifications of an object to the needs. The

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<sup>20</sup> Fadhilah, "Relevansi Logika Sosial Konsumsi, dengan Budaya Konsumerisme dalam Perspektif Epistemologi Jean Baudrillard" in the Kybernan's journal, Vol.2, No. 1( Maret 2011), p. 15

<sup>21</sup>Jean Baudrillard, *op.cit.*, p. 61

movement from one sign to another sign is only superficial reality of greedy desire because it is based on the fulfillment of sense of shortage, and forever will be a greedy desire for its significance only at the turn of the objects and needs. The need is never really a need for a particular object, but “need” for difference, so it can be concluded that there can be no such thing as achieving satisfaction, so there is no name of need definition,<sup>22</sup> the only is consumerism which closer to consumptive.<sup>23</sup>

Consumer society is demanded to actualize capacity and capability of consumption in defining self-image and identity under the influence of production system. Baudrillard calls that it is not a need as a result of production, but “the system of needs is a product of production system”,<sup>24</sup> production as the power consumption that allows the capitalist reality curb and curtailing freedom of consumer lifestyle, because it is a real freedom of choice offered by multinational capitalism (Baudrillard: 2004, p.78).

### **E. Sign of Commodity**

Baudrillard is influenced by structuralism<sup>25</sup>, including structuralism language. As a result, he sees the system as objects of consumer and communication systems on the basis of advertising as the establishment of “a code of significance” that control objects and individuals in the community. The object becomes a sign (sign), and its value is determined by a code rule<sup>26</sup>. In the logic of the sign, as in logic of symbols, objects are no longer associated with function or with real needs. For example, a washing machine is useful as a household appliance and play as an element of comfort, prestige, etc. All such there are a series of objects / signs or an object / symbol is no longer connected with the object of rational purpose, but the desire and determination of another, namely the determination of social logic of the

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<sup>22</sup>Taken on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014 from KONSUMSI SEBAGAI PENANDA KESEJAHTERAAN DAN STRATIFIKASI SOSIAL (In the Bingkai Pemikiran Jean Baudrillard) \_ the simplyshares.htm

<sup>23</sup>Consumerism is not only about the psychological, but also entered the wider political economy in the form of symptoms, while consumerism is understood to live in the consumer, so the consumer can be said of people who no longer consider the function or doubts when buying goods but considering the prestige attached to the item . Therefore, the meaning of the word consumer is wasteful or extravagant behavior, consuming goods or services in excess, which is more than the desire to prioritize needs, and there is no priority or can also be interpreted as a luxury lifestyle.

<sup>24</sup>Jean Baudrillard, *op.cit.*, p. 81

<sup>25</sup>Ferdinand de Saussure was one of the key figures of this structuralist approach. In structural thinking, Saussure, made a fundamental difference between *langue*, the system codes, rules and norms that manage a language; and *Parole*, which follow the real use of the system by individuals in a society. The distinction between *langue* and *parole* is the structural foundation of a way of thinking, not only in the field of linguistics, but in areas of study that are very wide, such as anthropology, sociology, politics, economics, culture, theology, architecture, media, and art. See Yasraf Amir Piliang, *Semiotika and Hipersemiotika*, Matahari, Bandung, p. 345.

<sup>26</sup>George Ritzer, *op.cit.*, p. 137

unconscious. The problem of needs or satisfaction will not reach the point of perfectness because fashion keeps changing and the changing followed by society led to homogeneous environments, but it is considered by public consumption means that they exist.<sup>27</sup>

Consumption function initially as a tool to meet the needs of individual, but today becomes a social function, function of exchange, function of communication, and distribution of value through the corpus of signs. Consumption is a system that runs a sequence of signs and unification group. Consumption also becomes a moral (an ideological value system), as a result they follow the social unconscious compulsion. Consumption is defined as the exclusive enjoyment. Though consumption is having enjoyment for himself, but the fact of consumption requires assessment of others. Furthermore, Baudrillard calls that consumption is an arrangement of meanings, such as language, or as a family system<sup>28</sup> in primitive society<sup>29</sup>. However, the actual primitive society has die, the community has been turned into a modern society that presents a false commodity abundance. Moving from political economy to political economy signs commodity. Form of commodity give way on the shape of sign. This means the similarity code becomes more significant compared with the exchange of commodities.

There is a fundamental change in the status of commodity and sign in the complex relationship between political economy, language, and ideology in the post-industrial society<sup>30</sup>. The phenomenon of fundamental change in the status of commodity, according to Baudrillard, is characterized by the expansion of the total code signs into commodity bodies everywhere, and the new status of commodity itself as a dispenser of plural power (happiness, health, security, and so on) through the system of capitalism. The object has been disconnected from the substance of use value and become an object whose it's fully value is the value of the sign. According

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<sup>27</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *op.cit.*, p. 84-86

<sup>28</sup>System of family here means the system of consumption which is regulated through its own classification rules, i.e rules of sign (object / signs) and differences, see Jean Baudrillard, *op.cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>29</sup> Baudrillard privileging primitive society in the understanding of symbolic exchange, he refused to share a primitive society as symbolic exchange that happens to them; "Primitive society is not part of the examples of symbolic exchange" (Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, St. Louis: Telos Press, 1973/1975, p. 75) for the primitive society, acts such as eating, drinking, and life are examples of symbolic exchange of the most original, which teaches the application of symbolic social relations (taking something by directly exhausted, no hoarding, repetition, and the average distribution of the surrounding, see Jean Baudrillard, *Masyarakat Konsumsi*, p. 69). Such understanding that creating a rational basis of his critique of the world in general and in particular capitalism rationality, consumers, bureaucracy, science, language and Marxist. See George Ritzer, *Teori Sosial Posmodern*, *op.cit.*, p. 151.

<sup>30</sup> Yasraf Amir Piliang, *op.cit.*, p. 93

Baudrillard sign structure is the heart of commodity form as it as a total medium, as a system of communication that manages all social exchange. As the case of sign shape, commodity is a code that manages the exchange of values<sup>31</sup>.

From it comes the new ideology, namely that the use value/signified<sup>32</sup> and needs/reference crossed and fused with each other. The combination between use value plus the need and signified plus references, for Baudrillard does not signify anything. Value of use and signified no other indication of the effect of sign and the exchange rate as a shadow that always followed it everywhere. Signified nothing more than an alibi of the sign, which is by its false presence signifiers,<sup>33</sup> can play freely. Likewise, value of use (utility) is no more than an alibi of exchange rate, which is by its false presence exchange rate can play freely, involving signs or make the object as a social sign.<sup>34</sup>

Appear of the value of sign, followed by the value of symbol, with reference to Marcel Mauss, Baudrillard accepts that these consumption activities are not necessarily done out of necessity, but rather the symbolic reason: honor, status, and prestige. Furthermore, in the consumer society that takes the sign, value-symbol becomes the main motive of consumption activity. The object of commodities purchased for symbolic meaning in it, and not because of price or benefits (Lechte, 1994: 236).<sup>35</sup>

In the consumption that is based on the value of sign and the image rather than the value of utility, the underlying logic is no longer logical necessity (need) but the logic of desire. If the needs can be met-at least partially - through objects, desires otherwise, will never be fulfilled, therefore the only object that can satisfy the desire is the object of desire (sexual) that appears unconsciously on an imaginary stage, and the object of desire has been lost forever, and can only look for substitutions in a world of objects or symbols that are consumed, as described by Lacan (Yasraf Amir Piliang, 2012: 143).

In view of Deleuze & Guattari that desire always (and will always) be a desire for something else that is different. There is no desire for something, for something that has been owned. The immediate risks of current differences desires incessantly are:

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<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 95

<sup>32</sup> Signified: abstract concepts or meanings generated by the sign (Yasraf Amir Piliang, *op.cit.*, p. 18)

<sup>33</sup> Signifier: mental image or impression of something that is verbal or visual, such as voice, text, or objects. Yasraf Amir Piliang, *loc.cit.*

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 96

<sup>35</sup> Medhy Aginta Hidayat, *op.cit.*, p. 69

that it can sink into the subject areas under their control sign, symbol, or values that are overlapping, confusing, or contradictory, contained in a series of different objects. The character of overlapping, confusing, and contradictory also characterizes the production and consumption of objects in society of late capitalism or consumer society.<sup>36</sup>

## F. Reality dan Simulacra

By the imposing progress of technology of information and communication, according to Baudrillard, it is not only sublime and worth values become steam, but also reality itself. Nowadays, reality is not only being told, presented, and spread; moreover, it also can be created and simulated. In the reality product, simulation of reality has signed a new culture era; postmodern culture. Through his book, *Simulations*<sup>37</sup> (1983), Baudrillard emphasizes that condition of western social culture which he says that it is in the world of simulacra, simulacrum, and simulation. This is the world which has been built as consequence of relation among science development and technology, glory of capitalism, consumerism, and decline of big modernism narrations.<sup>38</sup>

Reality has been replaced by sign systems that re-codifies and replace the real. Simulation precedes and determines the real. Simulation is defined as copies without originals.<sup>39</sup> According to Baudrillard, Simulation is another form of symbolic exchange.<sup>40</sup> *At the beginning*<sup>41</sup>, sign is a simple representation of an object or condition. Sign has clear relation with its sign object. He named a period when sign has clear relation with its sign object as *symbolic order period*, which generally happens in feudal society.<sup>42</sup> *The second step* is called *counterfeit period* which is

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.146

<sup>37</sup> In the discourse of art and mass culture, the term simulation was first introduced by Jean Baudrillard in his book *Simulation* and developed further in *In The Shadow of The Silent Majority and The Ecstasy of Communication*. The term simulation is used by Baudrillard to explain the relations of production, communication, and consumption in Western consumer capitalist society, which is characterized by the overproduction, over communication, and over consumption-through mass media, advertising, fashion, supermarkets, entertainment industry, tourism, and so on. However, the term simulation is used Baudrillard, implicitly also refers to the totality of the experience of living in the world of cutting-edge simulation Western capitalism. Thus, the simulation is essentially inseparable from the development of advanced Western capitalist society itself is also called post-industrial society or the consumer society. See Yasraf Amir Piliang, *op.cit.*, p. 126.

<sup>38</sup> Medhy Aginta Hidayat, *op.cit.*, p. 73

<sup>39</sup> Retrieved on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014 from *Simulacra and Simulations* -Jean Baudrillard.htm

<sup>40</sup> George Ritzer, *op.cit.*, p. 32

<sup>41</sup> Morris dkk, *op.cit.*, p. 175

<sup>42</sup> At that time, when someone says, "I go riding a white horse" or "I go ride the dark horse", then the word 'horse' is a sign that has a clear relationship with what marked a, which is a quadruped, strong and run fast. The color 'white' or 'black' only explicative course, nothing new meaning of the word 'horse' is.

started from renaissance era to revolution of industry. In this era, sign has indirect relation with the object. Sign produces a number of new meanings which do not originally come from the object itself.<sup>43</sup> *The third step* happens in the revolution of industry era which he called *production period*; in which human creates machine to replace human's duty. Machine in a certain rank becomes independent object that is free from human's intervention because it can operate by itself. As it is said by Littlejohn and Foss, "one you push the right button, the metal press shapes the metal, no matter what you might think about it".<sup>44</sup> Therefore, in production activity, at one push the button and machine starts to work, so it will produce certain product consistently, no matter the respond or our thinking about it or anyone else (as signal sender) related to the product result.

Nowadays, we are in the *fourth step* which Baudrillard calls it as simulation era. In this era, sign does not represent the object anymore, but it creates reality on us. Again, we do not use tools or certain object to feel how the real experience. Machine will continuously produce kinds of product, but what we programmed to the machine is really determined by the sign that dominates our culture.<sup>45</sup> He put example that entertainment park (such as Disneyland or fantasy world) has represent simulation era.

Media dominates the society by information that is thought as real experience although it is actually unreal, because the experience does not include direct communication. The medium is the message<sup>46</sup>, as it is formulated by McLuhan in discussing about consumption used by Baudrillard as basic of consumption theory. Mass media has replaced various world become homogeneous world that has relation with one another mass media. Media, especially TV brings ideology includes in sign system.<sup>47</sup> By television, i.e. simulation world appears completely. This is the space that does not care anymore to the categories of real, unreal, right, wrong, reference,

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<sup>43</sup> For example, having certain objects will generate new meanings associated with social status, wealth, and prestige of a person. New meanings can arise depending on how the objects are given meaning. For example, "I go by bike", compare it with the words, "I go by car". Bicycle car is basically equally vehicle, but its meaning has less direct relationship with the target object because it produces a new meaning.

<sup>44</sup> Stephen W. Littlejohn dan Karen A. Foss, *Theories of Human Communication*, Thomson Wadsworth, 2005, p. 289 in Morris dan, *Teori komunikasi Massa*, p. 175

<sup>45</sup> Foucault called *Episteme*, or way of thinking is not determined by the people who live at a given time, but is determined by the structure of the dominant discourse at the time. Discourse include; text (text), language and nonverbal forms, such as architecture, institutions, and even images, or graphics. (Morris dan, p. 177)

<sup>46</sup> Through the phrase, McLuhan explains that the media or communication channels have the power and influence to the community, and not the content of the message. See Morris dan, *Teori komunikasi Massa*, p. 39.

<sup>47</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *op.cit.*, p. 154

representation, fact, imagery, production, and reproduction in which all of them dissolve into one in a filthy sign. Meanwhile, consumption awareness does not separate from reality of media that is leaning to give imager toward current model of consumption life style. The appearance of today images era is the world's image made by reality that is presented by media which connecting major tunnel culture to minor cultur, so that, imageries toward reality also follow the rhythm of mass media.

According to Jean Baudrillard, mass media has made distance become further between symbol and reality or the real experience world. In other word, there is wider gap between sign and represented object and media has big role in pushing this separation process into a point in which there is no real thing anymore.<sup>48</sup> In deeper of perfection technique, world reality<sup>49</sup> will be loser. The booming of media, advertising, the developing of science and technology that are influenced by capitalism becomes simulation aspect that may influence social consumption culture.

Space of today's reality culture becomes mirror to what is called simulacra or simulacrum. Simulacra is space of reality followed by reduplication process of various different living fragment (in the form of imagery commodity, fact, sign, and filthy codes), in one similar dimension of space and time (Piliang, 1998:196).

Simulation of environment shapes tastes, choices, and our needs. What people consumed with what people really wanted is not important, the most important is people continue to consume. The values and behavior of society are fettered by "reality" that is simulated by media. People think that our needs as a unique individual are met, but the actual requirement is the need for a uniform and equal (homogeneous) which is formed through the use of the sign by the media. Objects often show us the meaning of a strange object that caused the already separated from original natural condition. Have a more important object than usage. Interpretation that people give to the object often to use excessive criteria, while the literal meaning or literal object may be blurred or even can be lost. Luxury car only for having

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<sup>48</sup>Stephen W. Littlejohn and Karen A. Foss, *Theories of Human Communication*, Thomson Wadsworth, 2005, p. 276 in Morris dkk, *Teori komunikasi Massa*, p. 175

<sup>49</sup> Reality from Latin *Realitas*, derived from *res* (objects). The term reality in the philosophy introduced in the 13th century, by Duns Scotus, who uses it as a synonym for *being* (there-beings). Indeed, no firm distinction can be drawn between the two terms, nor between "actuality" and "existence". The views of any philosopher of "what is" can be discussed under the heading "existing" or "reality". If a distinction between what is existence and what is subsistence (eg possibilities), the term "actuality" and "existence" is sometimes identified with "what is existence", while "being" and "reality" includes both what coexisting or subsistence. Loren Bagus, *Kamus Filsafat*, PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta, 2005, p. 937-938

status, wearing clothes only for fun, and people eating snacks only for relieve boredom.<sup>50</sup>

Basic thinking of Baudrillard is theory of Hyper-reality and simulation. This concept fully tends to virtual or artificial cultural reality condition in the era of mass communication and mass consumption. Those realities border “us” with various of simulation image form with a deception. This simulation images a reality that is actually not in line with the real reality. This “unreal reality” but it is imaged as reality that determined “our” awareness that is called *hyper-reality*. This reality appears through medias that become the main direction of mass society. By mass media, realities are disconstructed and presented by simulators and finally cluster into clusters of imagery that “demand” modern people into awareness which is presented by those simulators. This is called as simulacra cluster. Some of those simulators appear in the form of advertising, film, cybernetics, quiz, cinema, and etc that appear in television and other media that talking about fashion, food, and fun satisfaction.<sup>51</sup>In the Kellner’s book entitled *Media Budaya* mentioed that according to, Amerika is “original modernity version”, living in simulation continuously, in the coming of sign immediately.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Morrigan, dkk, *op.cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>51</sup>Jean Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of Silent Majorities or the End of Social and Other Essays* Tranlated from Paul Fross, John Johnston and Paul Patton. New York.1983, p. 61 in Intan Fera Yunita, “*Fashion Sebagai Manifestasi Kapitalisme Lanjut Menurut Pemikiran Michel Foucault dan Jean Baudrillard*” thesis. FIB UI, 2010, p. 54

<sup>52</sup> Douglas Kellner, *op.cit.*, p. 431