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The Invention of History: Lacan in Baudrillard Part I: First Simulation Stage (The Classic Age).

Francesco Proto (School of Architecture, University of Lincoln, UK)

If one were to name one central issue that distinguishes the rise of modern thought, it is perhaps none other than precisely the issue of representation, its profound interrogation, and the whole consequent turn against the logic of representation (Alenka Zupančič).

There is no equivalent of the world... No equivalent, no double, no representation, no mirror. Any mirror whatsoever would still be part of the world (Jean Baudrillard).

I. Introduction: "I'll be your mirror"

Baudrillard is more famous for his theory of simulation than for the process through which such a theory originated. It is the precise aim of this paper to bring to the fore some of the mechanisms that underpinned such a process, and especially the two particular models that it is believed substantiated it: Lacan's *double-mirror device* and architectural perspective. This is done in order to fill gaps in Baudrillard's studies little or poorly addressed; as well as to enhance the comprehension of a body of work that remains difficult to grasp, but is still uniquely positioned to shed light on the current *state of affairs*.

Baudrillard's simulation is a theory that stems out of French structuralism, a major turn

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inhabiting western philosophy (metaphysics). Like structuralists, Baudrillard was concerned with opposing representation and representational thought as substantiating such an ideology; unlike structuralists, however, Baudrillard was more interested in showing, of both, their very functioning. The result was simulation, a genealogy of representation that, starting in Italy in the 1400s (i.e. the period that Baudrillard believed to have given birth to the bourgeoisie), spreads across the globe towards the turn of the 20th century.

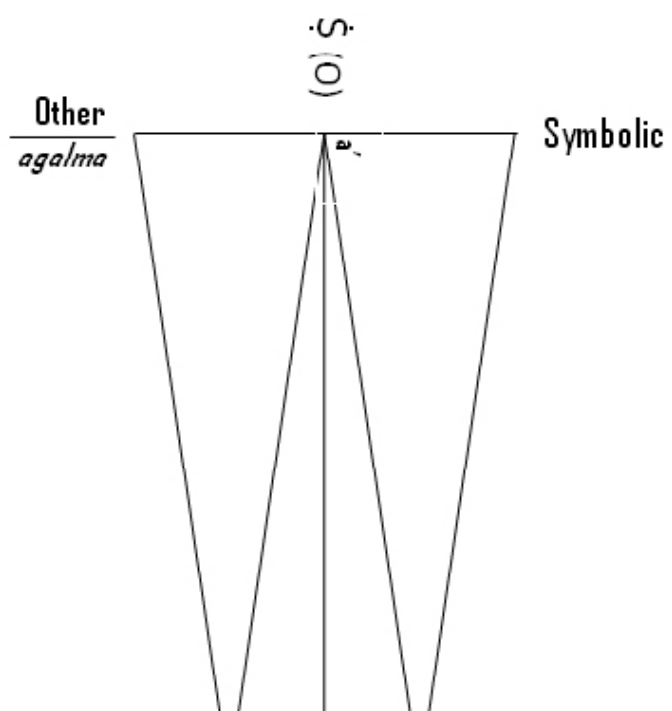
Baudrillard developed, to this purpose, two parallel models: one pre-eminently theoretical (semiotics) and another pre-eminently visual (perspective) – the relationship between the two being so strict that hardly have they ever been separated or considered singularly. In fact, if, through the former, Baudrillard intended to uncover the ideology at work in representational thought (the latter affecting, like a virus, the structuralist discourse itself), through the latter Baudrillard meant to illustrate the impossibility, by any means, of eluding and fighting it. Representation and representational thought, Baudrillard concluded, are one, each the mirror-image of the other¹.

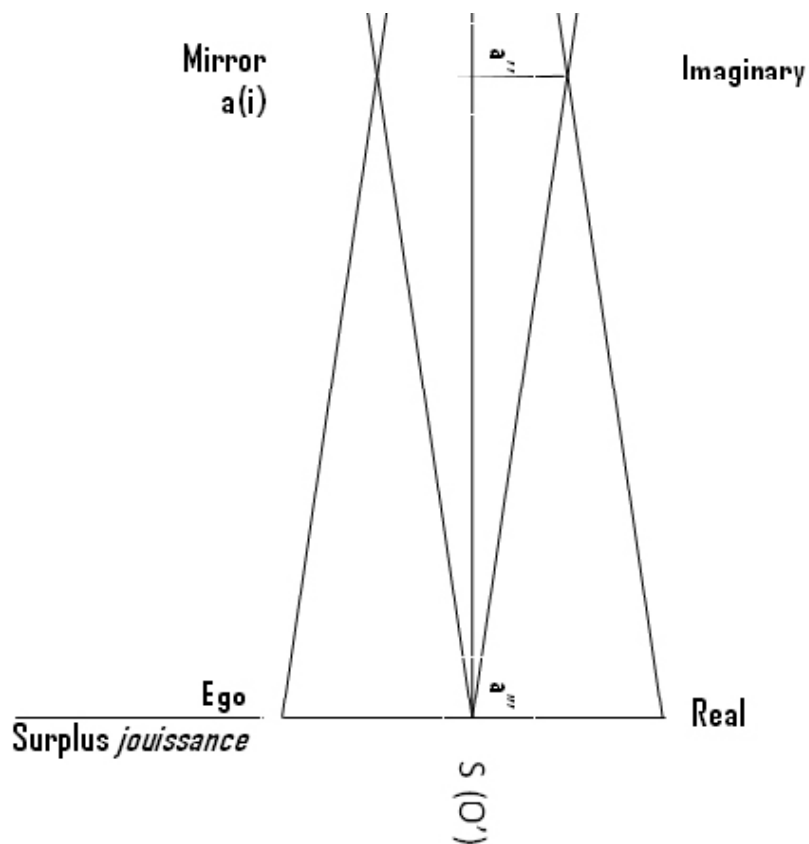
My research suggests that Baudrillard's critique of representation is based primarily on two models of reference: perspective as that optical model allowing for the geometric projection of tridimensional objects onto a bi-dimensional surface (the so-called 'perspective window'); and Lacan's *double's mirror device*, a 1950s set-up with a concave and plane mirror meant to describe the nature of human identification. It is believed that, by combining the two, Baudrillard managed to develop a theory and a methodology to understand the principles at work in simulation from a representational viewpoint ²

The main focus of this paper is on Baudrillard's *first simulation stage*, which corresponds to a time when not only perspective was invented, but one that, by coinciding with the ascent of the bourgeoisie, also saw the raising of the "mirror of production", i.e. of that rationalizing principle of bourgeois ideology that, by "detaching the signifier from the signified" makes of "the signifier its own signified."³

In evaluating Baudrillard's models I therefore employ a methodology that itself derives in part from Lacan's and that involves what, in psychoanalytical practice, is called the 'extraction of the *objet a*'. This is so not only because such an object is, by definition, an *empty signifier*, but also and foremost because its displacement in one or the other of the three domains of the Lacanian discourse (*symbolic, real, imaginary*) determines the subject's desire (its nature and drive).

Diagram One: Lacan's Optical Chiasmus





The article's aim being to reply to the question "where is the *objet a*?" (a' , a'' , a''' in the diagram), the topological implications of such an object are here taken into consideration. And not only to substantiate the distinction that Baudrillard makes of the three simulation stages, but also foremost to stress the analogy with Lacan's *double-mirror device* as a mechanism through which the *object a* was first conceived, addressed and "extracted"⁴.

II. A Code is a Code is a Code

Clearly, it is improper to talk of ideology with regard to Baudrillard's work. Simulation itself (formerly *code*) is a term employed to address a condition where, as Mark Poster stresses, the (Marxist) theoretical model – which distinguishes between economic, political and ideological aspects – is inapplicable (Poster in Baudrillard [1973] 1975:10). The *code* is exactly this condition of the social realm (but also cultural, political, etc.) where no internal contradiction can be detected in the monopoly system and "consumption can be indefinitely extended" (Ibid.). "This is the secret of capitalism as compared with other system: its inexorable growth" (Ibid.:11).

Butler expresses this very well when, in *In Defense of the Real*, he asserts that it is the strategy of simulation to cover the distance between original and representation: there is no outside to simulation because such an outside is always-already contemplated by

simulation itself; and so does Woodward, in finally clarifying simulation's affiliation to postmodern nihilism, of which the end of history is a direct consequence. I am indebted to both for having so astutely (and intriguingly) revealed such aspects of Baudrillard's *oeuvre*.

Mostly however, I am indebted to the work of the Italian geographer Franco Farinelli, who first stressed the relationship between modern politics, ideology and representation. *Terror*, he writes, does not stem from the Latin *terrere* (to terrify) – as erroneously inferred – but rather from the Italian *terra*, i.e. at a point in time when the principles of linear perspective spread all over the land. The law is a matter of representation: only when fear (terror of the law, exactly) is continuously, isotropically and homogeneously diffused over the territory is the state given birth to – the territory being reduced to different visual format, to a *map* (Farinelli, 2009).

Farinelli extends in this way the characteristics of linear perspective, and the consequent illusion provided by the perspective window, to power: so as, thanks to the converging of the parallel line towards the vanishing point, space appears continuous and homogeneous in linear perspective, so, thanks to the uniform spreading of the law on the territory, is the state compacted and perceived as homogeneous too. Isotropic is the displacement of the whole of the territory as directed towards the capital of the state. I myself extend Farinelli's insights to Baudrillard's simulation and describe it as a *principle*, as a *standard*, as a *substance* that, by pervading everything, spreads uncontrollably in modern history.

It is in this respect that Simulation can be considered not only as a critique of those metaphysical principles – such as *aim*, *unity* and *truth* – inhabiting and enhancing the birth and spreading of capitalism; but also and foremost the most accurate and acute explanation of how metaphysics, as the “operating system” of capitalism, extends itself. Simulation is what realizes metaphysics and by so doing de-realizes it. As a consequence, the issue with simulation is not so much that, when in place, representation becomes so convincing as to replace the object of representation; but above all that, in so doing, it endows the object of representation with the *characteristics* embedded *in* representation itself – something that Baudrillard, borrowing from McLuhan, synthesized in the notorious motto “the medium is the message” (McLuhan, 2008).

Given the complexity of Baudrillard's thought, to reduce simulation to ideology critique is not just inaccurate but misleading. Hence, the need for a definition of ideology that rests more on the original definition of "sciences of ideas" (Destutt de Tracy) than the modern significance of "illusion, false consciousness, upside-down reality" attributed to the term by Marx; but most of all for an optical model that might root simulation in a principle as paradoxical as simulation itself and that I have found in the Lacanian *mirror-stage* (Mitchell, in Downing et. al., 1991). This is so not much because it allegedly worked as an inspirational source for the theorizing of simulation itself, but also and foremost due to the rise of illusion to the status of symbolic principle, of a paradoxical 'substance' that, like space in the perspective window, realizes reality by de-realizing it.

All societies are based on a principle of simulacra, all societies produce signs. However, if "[t]o dissimulate is to feign not to have what one has [...] [t]o simulate is to feign to have what one hasn't" (Baudrillard in Poster, 1988), this being the secret of power and this being what power conceals. Ancient sovereigns (emperors, Popes) knew very well that power is a pure symbolic hole, and that the vestiges of power are, to the same extent, empty and arbitrary. Simulation takes place when such a void, such a lack is filled, when the gap separating illusion from reality is covered. When the map – from which modern politics originates – ends up covering the whole of the territory and, in so doing, finds in the mirror its most appropriate counterpart.

III. Lacan: The Underpinnings

There is no clear evidence that Baudrillard deployed Lacan's theory consistently, as Baudrillard himself did his best to erase the footprints of employed sources; yet, Baudrillard's knowledge and use of Lacan is something taken for granted by most Baudrillardian scholars⁵. The *double-mirror apparatus* appears, as a diagram, in Lacan's *Seminar I (On Freud's Paper on Technique, 1954)* and provides the basis for two of the most important elements of Lacan's theory: the *object petit a* (which Lacan will consider to be his major contribution to psychoanalysis) and the *mirror stage*, a systematization of the *double mirror apparatus* itself.

Simply put, the *object petit a* is the object-cause-of-desire, and indicates "the other which isn't another at all" since it represents the imaginary alter-ego of the subject. As such, it is always in a "reflexive, interchangeable relationship" with the ego, of which it represents the counterpart or specular image⁶. Lacan defined the *object a* the "object-

cause-of-desire” in as much as it symbolizes the enigma of desire, what ignites desire; but also “surplus-jouissance” due to the excess of enjoyment produced by the subject at the moment the object is 'grasped' (internalized). Hence the ambiguous nature of the object, which is either too far or too close to the subject, i.e. in a position of ambiguous proximity that is the aim of this article to analyze.

Lacan defines the mirror stage as “formative of the function of the I” because the child’s

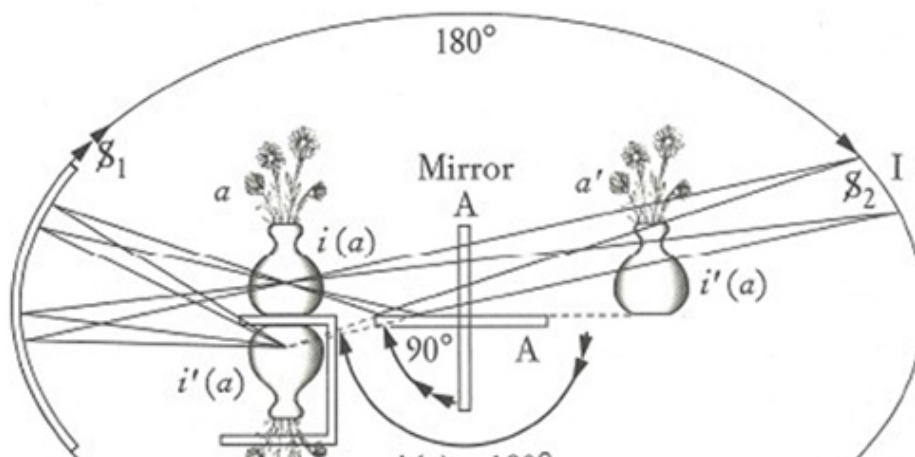
ability to recognize his/her own image in a mirror between the age of 6-18 months:

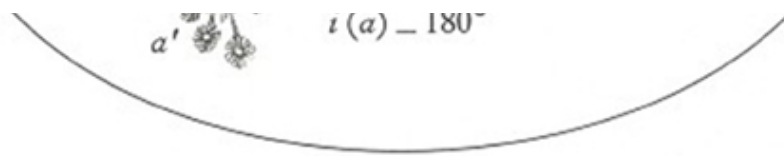
produces an experience of satisfaction and makes up the basis of a broader tendency to approach the world in terms of (self-)recognition [...] In this line of reasoning, the ego is above all based on a specular image; on the perception of the body as a Gestalt on external reflective surface. In fact, what is typical of the mirror stage is that the child shifts from a fragmented experience of the body to the perception of the body as unity. Lacan believed that this experience of the body as unity makes up the basis of any self-experience, and stressed that it installs a generalized search for unity in the world that distorts the experience of reality (Vanheule, 2011:209).

In 1950 Lacan developed a set-up with a concave mirror and plane mirror through which he described not just the nature of human identification, but first and foremost the tendency of the ego for misrecognition. Lacan defined his double-mirror apparatus “the optical model of the ideals of the person” and articulated it as a spatial model, i.e. as an apparatus fundamentally based on the mechanism underpinning the functioning of linear perspective (*dompte regard*) (Ibid.).

Based on the model previously developed by French’s physicist Henri Bouasse, Lacan’s device illustrates the illusory aspects of self-representation, fundamentally based on a misinterpretation of objective reality.

Diagram Two: Lacan's Double Mirror Device





Bouasse's model illustrates the functioning of a concave mirror by pointing out that a hidden flower can be projected onto an empty vase if an observer looks from a certain angle, the illusion created being that there is a flower in the vase.

Lacan built on Bouasse's device by duplicating symmetrically the main components (vase + flowers), thus adding a vertical plain mirror in between and a number of figures meant to illustrate the complex relationship at play between the subject, the symbolic order of society and, more in general, the mechanisms underpinning the construction of the self. Being S, I (ego ideal) and $i'(a)$ (ideal ego) the outputs of the complex mediation operated by images between the inner universe of the subject and the outer world of society, the apparatus substantiated the scientific discovery "that the ego takes shape via recognition of an identification with an external image" and that, in so doing, "reflects a unified picture of the subject."

Originally denominated "mirror-stage" to identify the child's capacity to overcome mental and physical fragmentation (disarticulation), the mirror-stage was later applied to the condition of adult individuals in the search for unity in the world. Lacan's conclusion was that, in order to deny one's own incapacity and internal chaos, not only do individuals focus on distorted images of the self but, in so doing, install "a tendency towards misrecognition". Not only is the experience of reality distorted, but so are feelings of internal inconsistency as projected (and therefore inverted) on an outwardly constructed ideal image (Vanheule, Op. Cit.).

Given the *object a*'s topological implications (it's displacement in space), this research works on the premise that Baudrillard's simulation is based on the same principles affecting the *object a*. Baudrillard developed at first three and finally four simulation stages, whose definition depends on the topological displacement of the viewer/object, i.e. on the distance separating the viewer/object of representation from the perspective window (which is here called major or minor degree of proximity). As shown by the diagrams below: when the *object a* is in the Other it is said to be in the *symbolic* field and the distance from the subject is maximum; when in the *mirror* it is in the *imaginary* field and the distance from the subject is minimum; when in the subject itself the

distance between *object a* and subject collapses. In the latter case the object *a* is in the field of the *Real* and the subject becomes subjected to psychosis.

IV. Baudrillard: Representation & Simulation

Like Lacan's *objet petit a*, Baudrillard's simulation acquired different names throughout his work (code, simulation, hyper-reality, obscene, etc.) and is mainly understood through its structuralist configuration, which Baudrillard first theorized in *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1973). By analyzing the ideological assumptions contained in the structuralist approach to the sign – he claimed the relationship between signifier and signified is not scientifically grounded, but metaphysically constructed – Baudrillard produced a retrospective genealogy of simulation. Structuralism, Baudrillard showed, was a sounding board of capitalist ideology, to the degree that semiotics itself could illustrate how capitalism had infiltrated every sphere of the communication society.

Baudrillard theorized to this purpose three orders of simulation: the first, where the sign's reference is in the natural world; the second, where an equivalence is established between the sign and nature; and the third, where signs find references in themselves: the natural world is excluded by the relationships between signs.

Simulation is not representation, it is opposed to it because, “[w]hereas representation attempts to absorb simulation by interpreting it as a false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum”. As a consequence, “while representation stems from the utopia of the equivalence between representation and reality” (i.e., is an ideal tension towards the perfected resemblance between representation and reality), “simulation stems of the utopia of the principle of equivalence as such” (i.e. the very idea that, behind representation, no natural reference exists but the artificial counterfeiting of reality) (Baudrillard [1981] 1994:6). To paraphrase Debord, simulation is representation to *such a degree of accumulation* that nothing is left for representation to represent.

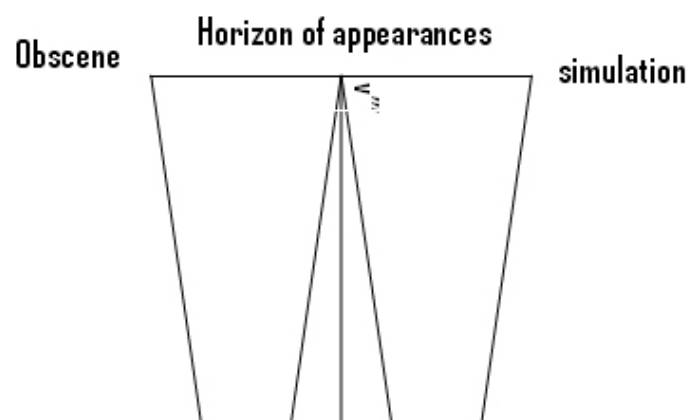
Baudrillard expressed this idea in his genealogy of representation where Lacan's theory of the mirror stage pops up in a very unusual way; that is, not just from the very idea that to different degrees of simulation correspond different degrees of proximity between the object of representation and representation itself; but also that the illusionistic effects of representation can only be achieved on condition that – as with

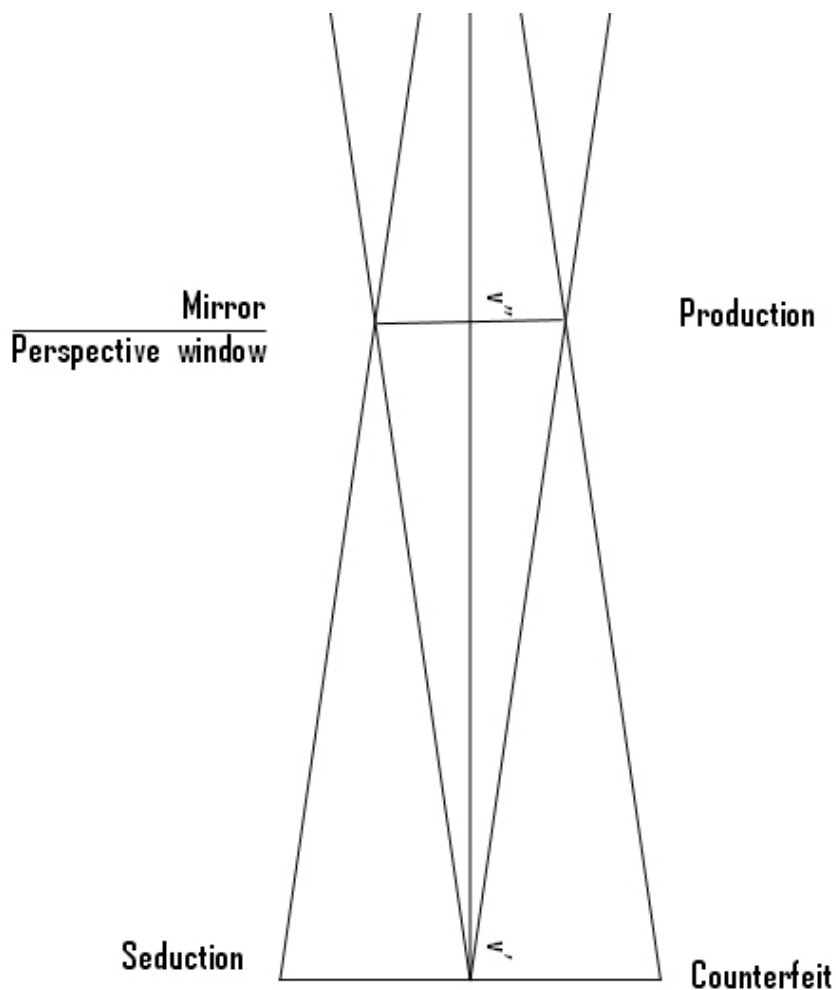
the one point perspective – a given distance and a certain angle of vision must be abided by the viewer for the perspective window to produce the illusion: as soon as such a distance is trespassed, the perspective window may work in reverse.

Thus, in Baudrillard's genealogy all three orders of simulation depend on the different distances interposed between representation and the object of representation, that is, at any point of time being represented: the order of counterfeit (Renaissance to the Industrial Revolution), where representation is based on *resemblance*; the order of production (Industrial Revolution to WW2), where representation is based on *equivalence* (i.e. the 'perfect' resemblance between reality and representation to the point where they become, exactly equivalent); and a third order, simulation proper (the current period), where such perfect a resemblance, or equivalence, makes representation and the object of representation exchangeable.

The first order of simulation is exactly the stage where such gap is still possible, where the distance between reality and its representation is such that the illusory effects of representation can be kept in place. And yet, the mechanisms underpinning simulation are already in place.

Diagram Three: Baudrillard's Three Orders of Simulation





Let us take, for illustration purposes, the ideal city, “a religious vision, or a secular view, in which social consciousness of the needs of the population is allied with an harmonious conception of artistic unity”: be them either those of the theoretical models (*Utopia*, *City of the Sun*, etc) or unrealized plans (*Sforzinda*) or decorative panels

(Urbino’s board, Berlin’s), not only do they act as the real’s counterparts, “the ‘other’ against which the self is defined”; but in so doing *pretend* to be on the imaginary side, “thus maintaining the illusion that a reference in the ‘real’ still operates”, that a reference in the real can still be found (Rosenau, 1983:2; Woodward, 2009:98).

Hence, if cities like Milan, or Venice and Florence receive *laudationes* (praise) rather than advice to conform to any of the above mentioned models (“whomever compares the literature of the 1400s with that of the following century will definitively find out that, in place of utopias, there are *laudationes* of cities [...] and stories, or descriptions of specific regiments suggested by imitation; meditations on buildings to reproduce” - Garin writes) it is because the latter are already mirroring the imaginary back, are already hostage of this “*dyadic specularity*” (Garin, 1965:41; Jay, 1993:351).

Imaginary, in the first order, is not the specular-image as reproduced by the mirror-stage, but rather this “jubilant assumption of [...] [the] specular image”, the drama of insufficiency as absorbed by the imaginary; and despite reality has not become an alibi yet (the 'imaginary' is “the dimension or realm of images”), representation is already in place to downgrade the world, to turn the metaphysics of the mirror *ob-scene* (off-stage) (Jay, 1996:349).

V. The Paradox of Representation

This is the paradox of representation – the very inversion between reality and representation; and Baudrillard expresses this very well by utilizing perspective as an optical model. For not only is the vantage point, in the one point perspective, fixed; but also, due to this inversion, (it) applies to reality the same principle as representation: not only does reality become as illusory (or fictional) as the representation it was illusorily portrayed by, but it also becomes – like space in the perspectival flight – continuous, isotropic and homogeneous. History is the “perspectival convergence” of “the reality principle of space [...] serving as a reference” (Baudrillard [1973] 1975:160).

Rex Butler was the first to introduce, in 1999 (in *Defense of the Real*), a re-interpretation of Baudrillard’s simulation in terms of the “distance” occurring between the object of representation and representation itself. Butler based such an interpretation on Plato’s *Cratylus*, where the dialogue goes as follows:

Socrates: Let us suppose the existence of two objects: one of them shall be Cratylus and the other the image of Cratylus, and then we will suppose, further, that some god makes not only a representation such as a painter would make of your outward form and color, but also creates an inward organization like yours, having some warmth and softness; and into this infuses motion and soul and mind, such as you have, and in a word copies all your qualities, and places them by you in another form. Would you say that this was Cratylus and the image of Cratylus, or that there were two Cratyluses?

Cratylus: I should say that there were two Cratyluses.
(Plato in Woodward, 2009:95).

Butler infers from this that the very paradox of representation at the heart of Baudrillard’s simulation is that the more a copy resembles an original, the less it resembles it. But also, and more importantly, that this is an effect of the gap distancing copy and original: once simulation (ideal resemblance) is reached, the copy becomes independent and lives a life on its own⁷. As Baudrillard himself makes clear:

There is no real, there is no imaginary except at a certain distance. What happens when this distance, including that between the real and the imaginary, tends to abolish itself, to be reabsorbed on behalf of the model? Well, from one order of simulacra to another, the tendency is certainly toward the reabsorption of this distance, of this gap that leaves room for an ideal or critical projection (Baudrillard [1981] 1994:81).

To explain this, Baudrillard targeted three distinct areas of criticism, the same as those addressed, by and large, by both the structuralist and post-structuralist approaches: *reason* as the pursuit of absolute certainty (*aim*), the secure foundation for social emancipation; *history* as the logic culmination of dialectics (*unity*) - and, as a consequence, the very idea that, by unfolding historically, reason progresses to “an ever greater state of enlightenment”; *subjectivity* as the repository of rational knowledge (*truth*) - and therefore as the founding principle of the transparency of history/reason; but most of all of the *logical principle of identity* ($A=A$) that, by informing and substantiating western metaphysics, works not much as a philosophical principle but rather and mainly as an *ideological substratum*: so as “history synthesizes opposites in a higher unity (thus “finding identity where there seemed to be only difference”), so reason establishes identities “by excluding differences that might upset the integrity” of such identities themselves (Woodward, 2009:18).

"History can only be, at bottom, the equivalent of the ideal point of reference that, in the classical and rational perspective of the Renaissance, allows the spatial imposition of an arbitrary, unitary structure" (Baudrillard [1973] 1975: 115). A “universal standard” that sticks together and envelops the world within a higher and more meaningful substance, *identity* is thus the locus of the transparency and intelligibility of the subject (self-identity), of nature and history, of social and political super-structures as disengaged from super-natural forces and made equivalent in their entirety.

Such a principle, which is the homologous of the transcendental subject – that is, that *homo faber* that, by appropriating both sensible and suprasensible power, “faber est suae quisque fortunae” – can be seen at work everywhere in the perspective window and the by now idealized nature of representation as a whole.⁸ That is:

in the *perspectival flight* that, by subsuming all of the objects of representation to the same identical principle (proportioning system), becomes the mirror-image, or the equivalent, of reason;

in the *vanishing point* on the horizon that, homologically projected from the subject's viewpoint (*vantage point*), is now the equivalent of the rational

mind; but most of all in the rationalization of space as a consequence of the rationalization of man; in other words, in that hyper-rationalized aspect of capitalist economy (use-value) that, once scrutinized by Baudrillard, will suddenly prove life to have become the alibi – or rather scapegoat – of economic rather than socio-political – instances:

In the perspective window itself as the geometric locus of Western rationality, where the image turns the imaginary dimension of the *object-petit-a* objective: so as to the proportioning system of the objects in the perspective window corresponds the equivalence of the commodities in the market, so to the convergence of space towards the horizon corresponds the convergence of the divine towards the human, etc. In pursuing the highest degree of resemblance possible, the perspective window so erases the difference between the original and the copy.

No solution of continuity is therefore admitted, in the Renaissance, between man and God, microcosm and macrocosm, etc.: made in the image and resemblance of the

Lord, man is the master of an imaginary world; but also between the visible and the invisible, the future and the past, the body and the mind: made in the image and resemblance of the capital, space is the substance (exchange-value) that connects the cosmos (objects/commodities)⁹.

It is in this respect that Baudrillard's simulation is not just a genealogy of representation (and therefore of the perspective window as the optical model of reference for the spreading of capitalism); but also and foremost an account of the spreading of the *principle of equivalence* first established by the rise of bourgeoisies (merchants, bankers, artists, etc) in XIV century central Italy. From that moment on, not only does representation transubstantiate into the scientific paradigm as formulated by Descartes (*Cogito*), but also lays the foundations for the ideological infiltration of the capitalist spectacle. Turned into an image of mastery and control, capitalism – likewise perspective with the vanishing point – puts utility and rationality on the horizon of history; and does so as if they were those *objet-a* (the objects-cause-of-desire) later to be displaced at the heart of modern (and “rational”) consumption, i.e. in the insignia of that feudal order that, aggressed by the equivalence established by representation, is so de-structured to let an “open competition at the level of distinctive signs” emerge. Sold and exchanged in a regime of the free market, those same insignia (and their 'destructuring') will soon lead to the disappearance of the metaphysical principle of power; but also of history, rationality and the *principle of identity* as unbalanced and made reversible by the folding of linear history upon itself (Baudrillard in Poster, 1988: 135-36).

Francesco Proto is an architect and a theorist, and a Senior Lecturer in Architecture, Visual Culture and Critical Theory at the School of Architecture, University of Lincoln [UK]. He currently investigates the "inhuman strategies of the subject", and his forthcoming releases include, among others, *Baudrillard for Architects* (Routledge).

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Endnotes

1. Butler is correct to have identified this paradox at the heart of representation; yet, it is by drawing out the correspondences with Lacan's *mirror stage* and the historical congruencies with the rise of Renaissance architecture and the Bourgeoisie, that the real substance and depth of Baudrillard's critique are illustrated. Butler in fact says that Baudrillard is one of the greatest translators of Lacan's work, and yet, despite Baudrillard's reciprocal praise of Butler's work – his "On disappearance", written seven years later for the First International Conference on Baudrillard Studies, see he

years later for the First International Conference on Baudrillard Studies, can be considered to be Baudrillard's response to him – there has been no real exploration of the process that such a translation involved. In this respect my research can be understood as a continuation of Butler's work, although this paper focuses mainly on the first simulation stage and the perspective window as an analogy for the birth of simulation over the Renaissance.

2. Both perspective and the *double-mirror device* share the same principles and/or functioning. Both create an illusory perception of reality and force, and require the viewer to occupy a specific position in space. But they are also linked by an analogy subtending the peculiar condition of representation itself: often defined as the “mirror of reality”, perspective was, for a long time, the most faithful and convincing reproduction of reality, at least until the advent of photographic media (cinema, camera, etc.) that occurred during the Industrial Revolution.

3. Jean Baudrillard (1975). *The Mirror of Production*. St Louis: Telos, p 9. It is extremely interesting that Baudrillard chooses perspective as an analogy to illustrate the functioning of ideology. Because not only was architecture, as a discipline, established over the Renaissance, but Baudrillard's own interest in architecture coincides with the French intellectual milieu's interest in architecture as an area little investigated in these terms and one seen instead as having been hugely affected by capital. Hence Baudrillard's attempt to import the challenges that the political movement of the Situationists were already making in respect to art, into the social sciences.

4. Lacan developed the *objet a* throughout his entire career and defined it as its principal contribution to psychoanalysis. It is in this respect that the “extraction” of the *object a* has become common practice in Lacanian clinics inasmuch as its displacement determines the subject's pathology. The *object a* is called *agalma* when posited in the Symbolic and produces *surplus jouissance* (excessive enjoyment) when posited in the *Real*. In the mirror stage (Imaginary), it represents the lack of unity haunting the child and therefore the subject's object of desire.

5. As a Situationist in disguise, Baudrillard did not believe in authorship, thus often playing his favorite authors' theory against the authors themselves. As Baudrillard himself makes clear in the preface to *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, “we must [...] turn Mauss against Mauss, Saussure against Saussure and Freud against Freud” [Jean Baudrillard (2006). *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. London: Sage, p. 1]. Baudrillard turned Marx against Marx in *The Mirror of Production*, where the Marxist theoretical discourse is caught red-handed being “itself taken in the abstraction of representation” [Jean Baudrillard (1975). *The Mirror of Production*. St Louis: Telos, p. 29]; and Foucault against Foucault in *Forget Foucault* by claiming that Foucault's analysis of power is elegant because obsolete. “What if Foucault spoke so well to us concerning power [...] only because power is dead?” [*Forget Foucault* (1987). New York: Semiotext(e), p. 11]. Yet, Kellner stresses, “(i)n his early works, Baudrillard generally cited Foucault positively, and often borrowed terminology, examples and strategies from him. As already noted, Baudrillard's genealogy of the order of simulation followed the model of Foucault's *epistèmes*, or structure of knowledge” [Douglas Kellner (1989). *From Marxism to Postmodernism and Beyond*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 131]. Baudrillard's convergence with Lacan's theory is stressed by Butler (1999), Voela (2013), Lechte (2010), Coulter (2010), Carmagnola (2002), etc.

6. Dylan Evans (1996). *An Introductory Dictionary to Lacanian Psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge, p. 128. *Petit objet a* means “small object a”. The symbol *a* – one of the first algebraic signs appearing in Lacan's work – stands for *autre* – or other. It is always lower case to be differentiated from Other, with the capital ‘O’, which indicates a radical, irreducible alterity (Dylan Evans. *ibid.*). The *objet petit-a* was initially

identified by Lacan with the illusory image of unity that the child wants to possess. Lacan will later distinguish between the two, thus symbolizing the specular image as *i (a)*. The *objet a* rests therefore in the imaginary order because not only is it as such a unitary ideal, but also because, as an imaginary element, it is impossible to realize or achieve in a palpable way.

7. See at this purpose Butler's distinction between Simulation and Seduction in Rex Butler, *In Defence of the Real* and my association of the latter with the *trompe l'oeil* as a Baudrillardian optical model in Francesco Proto (2012). "Berlusconi and Other Hostages", in *The International Journal of Baudrillard Studies - Baudrillard and Politics*, Volume 9, Number 3. As Baudrillard illustrates in the story of the student of Prague, once the student sells his soul to the devil, his mirror-image acquires a life on its own too. See at this purpose Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. London: Sage, 1998: 187.

8. "Every man is the artisan/architect of his own fortune". From Latin *perspicere* (to see through), perspective is the representation, however approximated, of a "real scene" as supposedly perceived by the eye, its main characteristic being the foreshortening of the sizes of the objects represented along the line of sight (the smaller their distance from the observer, the bigger their appearance and vice versa). Linear perspective – or one point perspective – is the simplest construction, and consists of a vanishing point on the line of horizon where all parallel lines converge. Since such vanishing point replicates, in reverse, the position of the viewer facing the 'window' (vantage point), the position of the latter being compulsory: only so can the vanishing point produce that "receding railroad tracks" effect that made of perspective the "mirror of reality". Perspective is geometrical locus of the western principle of identity.

9. According to Baudrillard what is "consumed" over the Renaissance, however improper it is to talk of consumerism in this historical frangente, are the signs of power that, disengaged from their original reference (God in the first place, and the social hierarchies based and established upon this original standard in the second place) are now free to float (and be appropriated) as signs in the process of stopping signifying.