

SIMULATION/HYPERREALITY/INFORMATICS

“No longer can man confront reality immediately; he cannot see it, as it were, face to face. Physical reality seems to recede in proportion as man’s symbolic activity advances. Instead of dealing with the things in themselves man is in a sense constantly conversing with himself. He has so enveloped himself in linguistic forms, in artistic images, in mythical symbols or religious rites that he cannot see or know anything except by the interposition of this artificial medium.” (Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, p. 25)

“Transmitted at the speed of light, all events on this planet are simultaneous. In the electric environment of information, all events are simultaneous. There is no time and space separating events. Information and images bump up against each other every day in massive quantities, and the resonance of this interfacing is like the babble of a village or tavern gossip session. The absence of space brings to mind the idea of a village. But actually .. in terms of time and the speed of the events that are now programmed, they hit each other so fast that even a village is too big a thing to use for comparison.” (Marshall McLuhan, *Reflections on and by Marshall McLuhan: Forward through the Rearview Mirror*, p. 46)

“.. we are condemned to social coma, political coma, historical coma. We are condemned to an anaesthetised disappearance, to a fading away under anaesthesia. If that’s the case, better to feel ourselves dying, even in the convulsions of terrorism, than to disappear like ectoplasms which no one, even desensitised, will want to conjure up later to give themselves a fright.” (Jean Baudrillard, *Cool Memories*, p. 5)

“Depth isn’t what it used to be. For if the nineteenth century witnessed the long process of the destruction of appearances and their supplanting by meaning, the twentieth, subsequently, saw an equally massive process of the destruction of meaning .. and its replacement by what? We find pleasure neither in appearances nor in meaning.” (Jean Baudrillard, *Cool Memories*, p. 6)

“Laundering is the prime activity of this fin de siècle - the laundering of a dirty history, of dirty money, of corrupt consciousnesses, of the polluted planet - the cleansing of memory being indissolubly linked to the -hygienic - cleansing of the environment or to the - racial and ethnic - cleansing of populations .. the rearguards find themselves once again in pole position.” (Jean Baudrillard, ‘The End of the Millennium Or the Countdown’, speech at the ICA, May 08, 1997)

Introduction/statement of problem

- *From the empire of the gaze to the empire of simulacra*
- *Hyperreality*
- *Informatics*
- *The perfect crime ..*

So last week we introduced the idea of the reversal between the subject and object in the age of mechanical consumption. We noted how this reversal denotes a new stage in the *disappearance* of man. Though we touched upon the issues of simulation, the fatality of objects, the redesign of the time and space horizons of population in the age of the commodity-sign, this week let's try to think of the next stage ... the replacement of appearance and representation with *simulation* ... the passing of history from the real to the *hyperreal* ... and the revolutionary implosion brought forward with the rise of *informatics* ...

From the empire of the gaze to the empire of simulacra

- *Baudrillard's genealogy of the present: the three orders of simulacra ..*

	symbolic exchange	<i>primitive and feudal society</i>
i	counterfeit	<i>The Classical age</i>
ii	production	<i>The Industrial age</i>
iii	simulation	<i>Code-governed age</i>
iv	metastatic ¹	<i>Fractal ..</i>

- *The Gulf War did not take place, the year 2000 will not happen ..*

“ .. the history of this century has already come to an end .. we are reliving it interminably .. metaphorically speaking, we shall never pass on into the future .. ” (Jean Baudrillard, ‘The End of the Millennium Or the Countdown’, speech at the ICA, May 08, 1997)

- *ecstasy/hysteresis²/fatality ..*

Ecstasy of the social: the masses. The more social than social.

Ecstasy of the body: obesity. The fatter than fat.

Ecstasy of information: simulation. Truer than true.

Ecstasy of time: real time, instantaneity. More present than the present.

¹ added subsequently ..

² endless repetition .. the record is stuck in one groove .. the film is on a loop ..

Ecstasy of the real: the hyperreal. More real than the real.
Ecstasy of sex: porn. More sexual than the sexual.
Ecstasy of violence: terror. More violent than the violent
etc.³

- *a reversal in time itself --*

“ .. the digital clock on the Beaubourg Centre showing the countdown in millions of seconds .. illustrates the reversal of the whole of our modernity's relation to time. Time is no longer counted progressively, by addition, starting from an origin, but by subtraction, starting from the end. This is what happens with rocket launches or time bombs.” (Jean Baudrillard, ‘The End of the Millennium Or the Countdown’, speech at the ICA, May 08, 1997)

- *what are we to do with the loss of the real?*

“ .. what are we to do when nothing really comes to an end any more, that is to say when nothing ever really takes place, since everything is already calculated, accounted for, expired and realized in advance (the simulacrum taking precedence over the real, information taking precedence over the event etc.)? Our problem is no longer: what are we to make of real events, of real violence, but what are we to make of events which do not take place?” (Jean Baudrillard, ‘The End of the Millennium Or the Countdown’, speech at the ICA, May 08, 1997)

- *the ascension of the void toward the periphery ..*

“Simulation is [an] irresistible unfolding, this sequencing of things as though they had a meaning, when they are governed only by artificial *montage* and non-meaning.” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Illusion of the End*, p. 15)

Hyperreality⁴

- *the receiving of reality .. the presentation of reality: ecstatic reality
the excess of reality (truer than true) .. reality cannot be verified, nor judged from
outside ... the dreamer unaware of dreaming*⁵

³ Jean Baudrillard, ‘The End of the Millennium Or the Countdown’, speech at the ICA, May 08, 1997.

⁴ corresponding to the 3rd order of simulacra ..

⁵ very similar, in this sense, to Virilio's notion of the picnoptic (the one how momentarily

- *but also, the withdrawal of history ..*

“ .. as of a certain point, history was no longer *real*. Without noticing it, all mankind suddenly left reality; everything happening since then was supposedly not true; but we supposedly didn't notice. Our task would be to find that point, and as long as we didn't have it, we would be forced to abide in our present destruction.”(Elias Canetti, quoted in Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, and *The Illusion of the End*)

- *the transpolitical: the automatic disappearance of the world ..*

“The countdown is the code of the automatic disappearance of the world, and all our little humanitarian machines, by way of which we anticipate that disappearance - the Telethons¹, Sidathons² and all the rest of the Thanatons - are merely the promotional Sales Event for the misery of this fin de siècle.” (Jean Baudrillard, ‘The End of the Millennium Or the Countdown’, speech at the ICA, May 08, 1997)

- *the end of the political: the end of the world in hysteresis .. the implosion of meaning through proliferation and acceleration .. the running of history toward its own destiny .. ‘Ghost-events, cloned events, farcical events, phantom events - a little bit like phantom limbs, those phantom extremities which hurt even when they are no longer there’..⁶*

fall asleep in everyday waken-life).

⁶ again, remember Baudrillard's possible ambivalence here, in contradistinction with Paul Virilio: “Trans-politics is the beginning of the disappearance of politics in the dwindling of the last commodity: duration .. For me, trans-politics is the beginning of the end. That's where my understanding of it radically differs from Jean Baudrillard's: for him it's positive. For me, it's totally negative. I fight against the disappearance of politics.” (Paul Virilio, *Pure War*, p. 28).

Not only - it would seem - do they disagree on their political assessment of the end of politics, but they seem also have very different ideas as to what that actually is. For Virilio, the rise of the transpolitical is the final inertia of man. For Baudrillard it would seem on first glance to be the reverse: not so much the end as the retreat from the end. Certainly for Baudrillard this retreat has been accelerated .. almost as if the final countdown to the millennium is speeding up the other way .. Yet despite Virilio's assessment of the differences between them (bear in mind that *Pure War* was compiled 14 years ago!), they seem recently to moved closer together. On the issue of stasis, for example, as Baudrillard writes: “ .. we have passed from growth to excrescence, from movement and change to stasis, ek-stasis and metastasis.” (Jean Baudrillard, ‘The End of the Millennium Or the Countdown’, speech at the ICA, May 08, 1997) Certainly the following recent paragraph of Baudrillard could easily have been written by Virilio: “ .. freedom has been obliterated, liquidated by liberation; truth has given way to verification; the community has been liquidated and absorbed by communication; form gives way to information and performance. Everywhere we see a paradoxical logic which puts an end to an idea by its very realization, its excessiveness. And in this way history itself comes to an end, finds itself obliterated by the instantaneity and

“Whether we speak of the end of history, the end of the political or the end of the social, what we are clearly dealing with here is the end of the scene of the political, the end of the scene of the social, the end of the scene of history. In other words, in all these spheres, we are speaking of the advent of a specific era of obscenity. Obscenity may be characterized as the endless, unbridled proliferation of the social, of the political, of information, of the economic, of the aesthetic, not to mention, of course, the sexual.” (Jean Baudrillard, ‘The End of the Millennium Or the Countdown’, speech at the ICA, May 08, 1997)

- *The implications are staggering .. McLuhan knew all of this well, before the information revolution had even occurred:*

“The psychiatrist’s couches of the world are sagging with people who have lost their sense of identity. They used to feel they were clearly defined entities; they had cards of identity; they knew who they were. Now they go to psychiatrists to be told or to find out, ‘Who am I? What should I be doing?’” (Marshall McLuhan, *Reflections on and by Marshall McLuhan: Forward through the Rearview Mirror*, p. 85)

Informatics

- *Of course in addition to Baudrillard, essential here are the works of Harold Innis⁷, Marshall McLuhan⁸, Karl Deutsch⁹, Alvin and Heidi Toffler¹⁰, Daniel Bell¹¹, and of*

omnipresence of the event.” (Jean Baudrillard, ‘The End of the Millennium Or the Countdown’, speech at the ICA, May 08, 1997) Open Sky is very similar, and not only in tone.

There might however be important differences between them still, and if anything it would relate to the uses of the notion of time in their works. Here it really is only a matter of emphasis, but it is interesting that for Baudrillard the transpolitical is clearly related first and foremost to historical time (almost glacial, and certainly at the level of whole cultures, while for Virilio the rise of the transpolitical is temporal, or sequential (i.e., related firmly to specific military/media practices).

Just a thought .. but it seems interesting that in this sense Baudrillard seems very much the successor to Foucault’s notion of biopolitics, while Virilio is much more the successor to his notion of to anatomo-politics (on the one hand the constitution [or deconstruction] of civil spaces, or spheres, and on the other, intervention at the level of the body and its processes). The latter would fit well with Virilio’s fascination with perception and the control of visuality. Charles Levin confirms Baudrillard’s preference: “Baudrillard’s most effective referent is always at the epistemic level - not social reality as such, whatever that is .. ” (Charles Levin, *Jean Baudrillard: a study in cultural metaphysics*, p. 281).

⁷ Harold A. Innis, *Empire and Communications* (Oxford, 1950), *The Bias of Communications* (Toronto, 1964).

⁸ Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto, 1962), *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (NY, 1964).

⁹ Karl Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government: Models of Political Communication and Control*

course, situationists like Guy Debord.¹² In terms of a philosophical treatment, no-one has made headway on the work of Ernst Cassirer.¹³

- *The 'realisation' of the world ..*

“There is no finer parable to describe this countdown than Arthur C. Clarke's story, ‘the Nine Billion Names of God.’ A community of Tibetan monks has been engaged from time immemorial in listing and copying out the names of God, of which there are nine billion. At the end of this, the world will end. So runs the prophecy. But the monks are tired and, in order to hasten the work, they call in the experts at IBM, who come along with their computers and finish the job in a month. It is as though the operation of the virtual dimension were to bring the history of the world to an end in an instant. Unfortunately, this also means the disappearance of the world in real time, since the promise of the end of the world associated with this exhaustive counting of the names of God is fulfilled, and, as they go back down into the valley, the technicians, who did not much believe in the prophecy, see the stars going out in the firmament, one by one.

This parable depicts our modern situation well: we have called in the IBM technicians and they have triggered the code of the world's automatic disappearance. As a result of the intervention of all the digital, computing and virtual-reality technologies, we are already beyond reality; things have already passed beyond their own ends. They cannot, therefore, come to an end any longer, and they sink into the interminable (interminable history, interminable politics, interminable crisis).” (Jean Baudrillard, ‘The End of the Millennium Or the Countdown’, speech at the ICA, May 08, 1997)

- *an impotence specific to history ..*

“We might speak here of a kind of ‘event strike’, to use Macedonio Fernandez's expression. What does this mean? That the work of history has ceased to function. That the work of mourning is beginning. That the information system is taking over the baton from History and starting to produce the event in the same way that Capital is starting to produce Work, so that labour no longer has

(NY, 1963).

¹⁰ Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *Future Shock* (Pan, 1970), *The Third Wave* (Pan, 1980), *War and Anti-War* (Warner, 1990).

¹¹ Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (NY, 1973).

¹² Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Zone, 1994), *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* (Pirate Press, -).

¹³ Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms: 3 Volumes* (Yale, 1953, 1955, 1957), *An Essay on Man* (Yale, 1944).

any significance of its own, just as the event produced by information has no historical meaning of its own.

This is the point where we enter the transhistorical or the transpolitical, that is to say, the sphere where events do not really take place precisely because they are produced and broadcast 'in real time', where they have no meaning because they can have all possible meanings. We have, therefore, to grasp them now not politically, but transpolitically, that is to say, at the point where they become lost in the void of information. The sphere of information is like a space where, after emptying events of their meaning, an artificial gravity is created for them; where, after deep-freezing them politically and historically, they are re-staged transpolitically, in real - that is to say, perfectly virtual - time." (Jean Baudrillard, 'The End of the Millennium Or the Countdown', speech at the ICA, May 08, 1997)

- *from metaphysics to 'pataphysics'*¹⁴ ..

"Our situation is a wholly pataphysical one, that is to say, everything around us has passed beyond its own limits, has moved beyond the laws of physics and metaphysics. Now, pataphysics is ironic, and the hypothesis which suggests itself here is that, at the same time as things have reached a state of paroxysm, they have also reached a state of parody." (Jean Baudrillard, 'The End of the Millennium Or the Countdown', speech at the ICA, May 08, 1997)

- *is this an escape from responsibility? No. Its to escape the **imposition** of responsibility .. we are neither tapped by the media, nor beyond all reversibility .. and perhaps we can get closer to the reversibility by saying that nothing is reversible!*

¹⁴ 'the science of imaginary solutions'. 'Pataphysics' as a concept finds its origin in the work of Alfred Jarry (1873-1907), meaning in Jarry's terms, the 'logic of the absurd'. This contempt for the traditional universe was expressed through Jarry's 'Theatre of the Absurd'. Jarry's theatre production was closed after two nights after riots and general lawlessness (1896). The aim - taken up by the Dada and Surrealist movement - was to denounce the world by laughing at it with biting derision. See also: Maurice Marc LaBelle, Alfred Jarry: Nihilism and the Theatre of the Absurd (New York University Press, 1980), and the various works of Antonin Artaud ('Theatre of Cruelty', 'The Alfred Jarry Theatre'). LaBelle, interestingly, argues that 'pataphysics' has received too much attention from scholars interested in Jarry's work, and that it was in fact a small part of his overall efforts. Even more interestingly are Jarry's own definitions of pataphysics as: " .. the science of .. beings and machines, real or future, with the Power of their usage.", and: " .. [the] study of laws which govern exceptions .. " (Jarry, quoted in LaBelle, Alfred Jarry: Nihilism and the Theatre of the Absurd, p. 142, p 143).

Le crime parfait

notes on the 'murder of reality'

“In the last analysis, object and subject are one. We can only grasp the essence of the world if we can grasp, in all its irony, the truth of this radical equivalence.” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. ii)

- *The Perfect Crime*

- the inexorable procession of simulacra
- the loss of reality:

“The great philosophical question used to be ‘Why is there something rather than nothing?’ Today, the real question is: ‘Why is there nothing instead of something?’” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. 2)

- the material illusion of the world: everything withdraws behind its appearance
- we can cope with neither ‘radical transparency’ nor illusion
- **virtual reality**: the image can no longer imagine the real because it is real
- how far can we go (derealization, hyperrealization¹⁵)?
- maybe the object is toying with us? (**seduction**¹⁶)
- when the world becomes a simulation, we can no longer even ask if it exists!
- the sign makes reality disappear .. then hides the fact that it has done so ..
- nothing wants to be looked at anymore .. but simply to be *consumed*, without *trace*

- *The Spectre of the Will*

- the world only exists on the back of disappearance/illusion
- the endpoint of the realisation of the world stands God!
- best to leave it hanging!
- is truth more unbearable than illusion?

¹⁵ truer than true: simulation

¹⁶ “What makes you exist is not the force of your own desire (wholly a nineteenth-century imaginary of energy and economy), but the play of the world and seduction; it is the passion of playing and being played, it is the passion of illusion and appearance, it is that which comes from elsewhere, from others from their face, their language, their gestures - and that which bothers you, lures you, summons you into existence; it is the encounter, the surprise of what exists before you, outside of you, without you - the marvelous exteriority of the pure object, the pure event .. [B]eing doesn't give a damn about its own being; it is nothing, and exists only when it is lifted out of itself, and into the play of the world and the vertigo of seduction.” (Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, p. 139).

“ .. as Nietzsche writes, ‘truth cannot be regarded as the highest power. The will to semblance, to illusion, to deception, to becoming, to change (to objective deception) is to be regarded here as deeper, more original, more metaphysical than the will to truth, to reality, to being - the latter is itself merely a form of illusion.’” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. 9)

-- “*We cannot project more order or disorder into the world than there is. We cannot transform it more than it transforms itself.*”, p. 10

- the will is something we must not consent to .. it is the illusion of the autonomous subject
- the realm of decidability is expanding infinitely ...
- but there is no reality, no will .. nothing instead of something

- **The Radical Illusion**

- this is the radical illusion of the world
- an unbearable illusion
- we give the world will to avoid it ..

“This gigantic enterprise of disillusionment - of, literally, putting the illusion of the world to death, to leave an absolutely real world in its stead - is what is properly meant by simulation.” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. 16)

- the proliferation of reality is our true catastrophe
- simulation: the *non-distinction* between true and false
- the whole of our culture is collapsing with the excess of meaning ..
- yet the radical illusion of the world cannot be dispelled

- **Trompe-l’œil Genesis**

- did God bury dinosaur bones?
- God as an evil genius of simulation
- the whole of our past is indeed falling in to a fossilized simulacrum
- man’s genesis becoming *cinema*: editing, framing, lighting, sequences ..
- hyperreality as the extermination of the real object
- again, is simulation the work of a beneficent God, or is it a trap?
- are we avoiding the Last Judgement .. are we inventing for ourselves an artificial future?

- **The Automatic Writing of the World**

- the perfect crime is the realisation of the world by the actualization of all data
- the resolution of the world ahead of time by the cloning of reality and the extermination of

the real by its double ..

-- IBM work out the mathematics of the world ..

-- immediate resolution .. accelerated end

-- 'live in real time'

-- 'There is always a hidden camera somewhere .. in any case, the Virtual Camera is in our heads'

-- police surveillance, or advertising?

“We have all swallowed our receivers, and this produces intense interference on account of the excessive proximity of life and its double, and the collapsing of time and distance.” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. 26)

-- telepresence

-- the short-circuiting of real life

“Virtuality is different from the spectacle, which still left room for a critical consciousness and demystification. The abstraction of the 'spectacle' was never irrevocable, even for the Situationists. Whereas the unconditional realization is irrevocable, since we are no longer either alienated or dispossessed: we are in possession of all the information. We are no longer spectators, but actors in the performance, and actors increasingly integrated into the course of that performance. Whereas we could face up to the unreality of the world as spectacle, we are defenceless before the extreme reality of this world, before the virtual perfection. We are, in fact, beyond all disalienation. This is the new form of terror, by comparison with which the horrors of alienation were very small beer.” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. 27)

-- critical illusion has devoured itself ..

“All this digital, numeric, electronic equipment is merely the incidental to the deep-seated virtualization of human beings. And if this so grips the collective imagination, that is because we have already - not in some other world, but in this life itself - in a state of socio-, photo- and videosynthesis. The virtual and the media are our chlorophyllous function. And if we are able today to produce a clone of a particular famous actor which will be made to act in his place, this is because long ago, without knowing it, he became his own replica or his own clone, before he actually was cloned.” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. 28)

-- the mechanics of virtuality:

“The key concept to this Virtuality is High Definition. That of the image, but also of time (Real Time), of music (High Fidelity), of sex (pornography), of thought (Artificial Intelligence), of language (digital languages), of the body (the genetic code and genome). Everywhere, High Definition marks the transition - beyond any natural determination - to an operational formula - and precisely, a ‘definitive’ one, the transition to a world where referential substance is becoming increasingly rare. The latest definition of the medium corresponds to the lowest definition of the message - the highest definition of the news item corresponds to the lowest definition of the vent, the highest definition of sex (porn) corresponds to the lowest definition of desire, the highest definition of language (in digital coding) corresponds to the lowest definition of meaning, the highest definition of the other (in immediate interaction) corresponds to the lowest definition of otherness and exchange, etc.”¹⁷ (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, pp. 29-30)

-- Real Time destroys symbolic exchange ..

“There is a profound incompatibility between real time and the symbolic rule of exchange. What governs the sphere of communication (the interface, immediacy, the abolition of time and distance) has no meaning in the sphere of exchange, where the rule is that what is given should never be returned immediately. It has to be returned, but never right away. That is a serious, mortal insult.” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. 31)

-- *what is at stake in virtuality* ..

“.. we bury ourselves as though in a metal sarcophagus, in a state of weightlessness, dreaming of living out all possible situations by the grace of the Digital. Phantasy of synthesis of all the elements, by which we seek to force the gates of the real world.

With Virtual Reality and all its consequences, we have passed over into the extreme of technology, into technology as an extreme phenomenon. Beyond the end, there is no longer any reversibility; there are no longer any traces of the earlier world, nor is there any nostalgia for it. This hypothesis is much graver than that of technological alienation or Heidegger’s *Gestell*. It is the hypothesis of a project of irreversible disappearance into the purest logic of the species. The hypothesis of an absolutely real world, where, unlike Michaux’s artist, we would have succumbed to the temptation not to leave traces.

This is what is at stake in Virtuality .. Fortunately, all this is

¹⁷ Virilio makes a similar point about the decay of space through the ‘radioactivity’ of interactivity .. We lose the possible meeting place .. Otherness collapses into the void of immediacy .. (significant, I would argue, for a discipline [IR] that sets itself up vis-à-vis ‘the Other’.

literally impossible.” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. 34)

- **The Horizon of Disappearance**

-- the art of disappearance?

“ .. perhaps the function of disappearing is a vital one. Perhaps this is how we react as living beings, as mortals, to the threat of an immortal universe, the threat of a definitive reality ..

Seen from this angle, technology becomes a marvellous adventure, just as marvellous in this case as it seems monstrous on the other. It becomes an art of disappearance. It might be seen as aiming not so much to transform the world as to create and autonomous world, a fully achieved world, from which we could at last withdraw.” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. 39)

- **The Countdown**

-- the speed index of reality ..

“In societies which are over-rapid, like our own, the reality effect becomes hazy: acceleration brings a jostling of causes and effects, linearity gets lost in turbulence, and reality, in its relative continuity, no longer has time to happen. Reality exists, then, only within a certain time-frame at a certain level of acceleration, within a certain window of expanding systems, within a phase of ‘liberation’, a phase in which our modern societies found themselves until now, but which they are currently leaving behind .. ”¹⁸ (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. 45)

The Material Illusion • The Secret Vestiges of Perfection ..

- **The Height of Reality**

-- the death of critical thought ..

“What can critical thought, thought based on the negative, do against the state of degeneration? Nothing. To think extreme phenomena, thought itself must become an extreme phenomenon; it must abandon any critical pretensions, any dialectical illusions, any

¹⁸ the relation of reality to speed, has, of course, been a lasting theme in the work of Virilio: particularly in *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, and more recently in the notion of ‘speed-blindness’ developed in *The Art of the Motor*.

rational hope, and move, like the world, into a paradoxical phase, an ironic and paroxystic phase. It has to be more hyperral than the real, more virtual than virtual reality. The simulacrum of thought has to move more quickly than the others. Since we can no longer multiply the negative by the negative, we have to multiply the positive by the positive. One has to be even more positive than the positive to take in both the total positivity of the world and the illusion of that pure positivity ..

The extermination of the negative is, therefore, the final solution .. But the true challenge is to be nothing rather than something, not to be there where there should be someone: a strategy of non-happenings, *stratégie du pire*, strategy of illusion, strategy of seduction .. ” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, pp. 65-6)

The Irony of Technology

- **Machinic Snobbery**

“Warhol is a mutant.” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. 80)

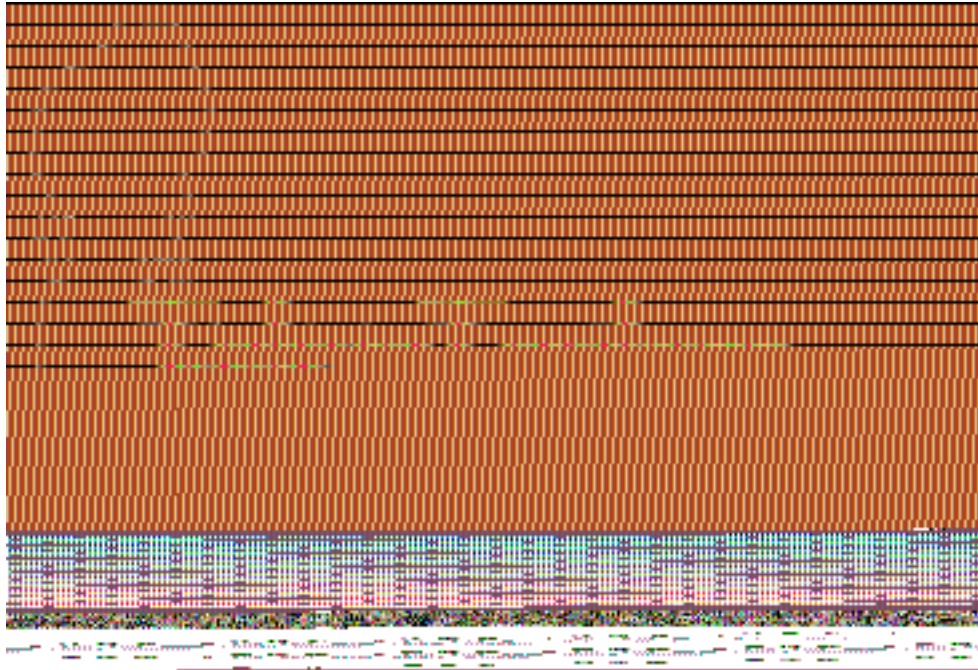
Objects in this Mirror • The Babel Syndrome

- **Radical Thought**

“Why might there not be as many real worlds as imaginary ones? Why a single real world? Why such an exception? Truth to tell, the real world, among all the other possible ones, is unthinkable, except by dangerous superstition. We must break with it as critical thought (in the name of the real!) with religious superstition. Thinkers, one more effort!” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. 126)

The World Without Women • The Surgical Removal of Otherness • The ‘Laying-Off’ of Desire • The New Victim Order • Indifference and Hatred • The Revenge of the Mirror People

“Soon we shall all be decoding machines.” (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. 126)



- *from here we can pass, stumbling, into our final week .. .Virilio and the crash barrier of the speed of light ..*