# Baudrillard

### AT Fem IR/Baudrillard Hates feminism

#### Baudrillard’s theories of liberation unearth feminist movements from neoliberal deceleration and can be used to further patriarchy abolition- the state cannot center a feminist ethic effectively

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The problem of re-grounding feminist politics by use of any subject-centred politics can quite easily be unearthed through Baudrillard’s critique of liberation. The complicity of feminist left-wing nostalgia and techno-salvation in late-capitalism lies in the illusion of subjective emancipation and communication that communicative capitalism upholds – communication technologies which are the main exponents of the deferred promise or aporia of Western humanism. Baudrillard claims throughout his oeuvre that any contemporary politics that fancies grounding itself in the idea of ‘expressing and liberating oneself through mediated communication’ is today accelerating the neoliberal machine while living in the hallucination of facilitating a subversive event. In light of this, it becomes clear that feminist nostalgic reminiscence as well as mediated techno-happy action problematically repeat the Eurocentric myth of the humanist European project as a truly emancipatory affair. They therefore facilitate the emergence of what I in my work call the speed-elite. Speed-elitist discourses typically validate connection, instantaneity, liberation, multiplicity and border-crossing, and often promote highly mediated spaces for action and communication. Such discourses suppress the colonial and patriarchal history of those technological spaces and dialogues. Speed-elitism, as the contemporary high-tech exponent of Euro-centrism, fosters an oppressive sort of unity of struggles through the fantasy of allowing for radical difference. So speed-elitism builds on the formalisation of racism and sexism. The vigorous reinstallation of mediated feminist-subjective activity, and the compulsive quest for salvaging the “subversive” European feminist project by remediating alterity, precisely marks the moment where such alterity gets usurped in the myth of transparent communication that undergirds neoliberal acceleration and disenfranchisement. This remediation of alterity currently runs through romantic feminist recuperations of “Muslim women” and “female migrants” – as if these groups somehow intrinsically challenge neo-liberalism. In Braidotti, it works through a misidentification of radical alterity in those who are becoming nomadic through technological means. In Butler, it runs through a tension in her work, which concerns her affirmation of a subjective politics of re-signification based on the notion of iterability, despite her understanding of such re-signification being borne out of the subject’s lack. The state of left-wing feminist despair should therefore also be read as pointing towards the suppressed history of discursive and material violence that has been inflicted on various raced and classed others in the past and present as an intricate part of European feminism and the techno-scientific project tout court. Feminist nostalgia and techno-salvation therefore function as false oppositions in the service of speed-elitism. This opposition dissimulates the feminist subject of politics’ complicity in the perpetuation of the violence of Western humanism. Let me make clear that my analyses of the feminist speed-elitist subject do not imply that this critique is itself above such a problematic. After all, this piece also performs, to use Butler’s apt yet often misused term, my stance as a left-wing feminist subject and as such accelerates academic production. This agrees with Baudrillard’s point that increasingly all forms of politics, insofar as they come to exist as mere simulations of politics, are wrapped up in a neoliberal logic that relies on the collapse of the semiotic into the axiomatic. This collapse is possible, argues Baudrillard, because the axiomatic has come to rely on the incessant mediation of signs through the consumption of differentiation between signs (2001a:105-106). Signs become objects for consumption, and difference merely sustains the exploitation of the fallacy of binary oppositions (“self” vis-à-vis “other”) for economic growth. The conceptual distinction between signifier and signified constitutes for Baudrillard not a universal truth about the generation of meaning, but marks a historical moment in the evolution of capitalism. The concept of the signified emerges alongside the capitalist model of exchange value as a supposed derivative of use value (Ibid.:103). Use value (in the form of needs and desires), says Baudrillard, just like the signified (or the referent), is simply conjured up as an ‘alibi’ (2001b:78) for a capitalism that justifies itself by positing those desires for emancipation of the (feminist) subject as natural. The conclusion for Baudrillard is (1990a), that all contemporary forms of (or signs of) otherness, and our desire to engage with it, liberate it, ally with it, and understand it, are effects of this new stage of capitalism. It relies on the fallacy that such otherness is empirically real and outside the capitalist logic of the reproduction. Otherness in feminist politics of alliance and liberation is then relative otherness, a transparent mirror image of the speed-elitist subject. The media in particular facilitate this logic because they allow for the incessant circulation and differentiation of signs. The media provide the user with the illusion, due to the humanist fantasy of media as transparent communication, that this “other” authentically wants such subjective empowerment and alliance – that we ourselves as much as any “other” naturally want to be or are foremost subjects (under neo-liberalism). But such empowerment and connection become mere moments in the recirculation of signs, and hence of the acceleration of capital. Baudrillard concludes that in this new stage of capitalism marked by a “humanitarian ecumenism” (1990a:131), the other becomes something to “be understood, liberated, coddled, recognised” (Ibid.:125), leading to an “obsession with becoming ‘other’” (Ibid.:129). Baudrillard even asserts that the increase of information in our media-saturated society results in a loss of meaning because it “exhausts itself in the act of staging communication” (Baudrillard, 1994:80). New media technologies exacerbate the subject’s fantasy of true communication, while increasingly what are communicated are mere copies of the same, a ‘recycling in the negative of the traditional institution’ (Ibid.:80). The “lure” (Ibid.:81) of such a system resides in its requirement of active political dissent. This translates in a call to “subjectivize” oneself – to be vocal, be active, to speak, participate, disagree, and “play the … liberating claim of subjecthood” (Ibid.:85). But radical alterity – that what or those who cannot be assimilated into this logic of humanism and capitalism – is in turn gradually exterminated. What therefore needs to be uncovered is how “difference qua illusion” (Ibid.:131) perpetuates the current logic of capitalism and its problematic reproduction of racism and sexism. Like Grace (2000) I believe that Baudrillard’s insistence on this major moment in capitalism is of great importance to feminist politics, and not sexist or nihilist as many feminists have made his analysis out to be. In fact, Baudrillard’s critique on the feminist compulsion to see (the subject of) empowerment, alliance and liberation as univocally positive is imperative for understanding how Western feminism can better address its complicity in exploitation. In this sense, Baudrillard simply brings the feminist insistence on dissecting the relationship between patriarchy, racism, technologies and capitalism to its logical conclusion. This analysis has also been present in some feminist critiques of alliance and desire. For instance Spivak (1993) discusses how the fantasy of the subject-agent as the centre for evolution and action, relies on the reproduction of marginality. She implies that subjugation is exercised as a discursive and technological form of imperialist violence. Any claim to authentic marginality becomes a commitment to this imperialist subjugation. Feminisms that rely on the idea of the empirical reality that these margins provide, profess to the belief system – humanism and capitalism – that assigns this marginality. The ones who can empower themselves through this claim for marginality become agents of this logic, since they are a “group susceptible to upward mobility” that function as “authentic inhabitants of the margin” (Spivak, 1990:59). They seemingly prove the universal applicability of the humanist subject and its technologies. Spivak therefore exclaims that all this involves “the creation of a general will for post-industrial finance capitalism … It’s a very different tactic than industrial capitalism” (2002:179). It is exactly this “very different tactic” that Baudrillard’s work helps us to understand in much more detail. Nearly all feminist engagements with Baudrillard have stopped short of following through the implications of his thought for a politics based on the humanist idea of subjective empowerment. Many feminists have been suspicious of the emergence of a critique of the subject at the very moment when women finally start to succeed in claiming subjectivity and decentre masculinity from its conceptualisation. Braidotti for instance states that ‘the high priests of postmodernism [may] preach the deconstruction … of the subject … truth of the matter is: one cannot deconstruct a subjectivity one has never been fully granted’ (1994:140-141). While this makes sense in terms of its critique on male philosophers problematically hallucinating the feminine as a site of redemption, I would nonetheless like to turn Braidotti’s remark on its head by asking if her insistence on attaining subject-status is perhaps itself a corollary of an intensifying neoliberal demand. Subject-centred politics and difference – like perhaps especially the enactment in conferences and articles of the difference in opinion regarding the subject between Braidotti and Butler – have become exponents of capitalist consumption. Feminist politics of the subject possibly have themselves developed into a simulation of politics that reinforces the neoliberal status quo. In light of this, it is not surprising that the dominant version of ‘the’ history of feminism starts with the first wave of claims for individual rights and equality, at a moment when industrial capitalism and its mechanical logic of reproduction emerged. This feminist claim and its later development in the second wave was then arguably not one that proved the next stage of Western humanist ‘progress,’ but was instead the result of a sort of command which trickily assigned to ‘women’ the semiotic status of being the relative other of ‘men.’ Nostalgia for these feminist waves in turn hallucinates an authentically progressive feminism in Europe’s history where there was foremost a complicity in the oppression and extermination of incommensurable forms of radical (female) alterity, at ‘home’ as well as abroad. Such feminist nostalgia for an imaginary lost origin indeed grounds a racist and classist narrative of feminist liberation as uncomplicated. We can see this logic even at work in Nancy Fraser’s indictment of second wave feminism as implicated in a new form of capitalism. While I agree with Fraser that there is a “disturbing convergence of [feminism’s] ideals with the demands of an emerging new form of capitalism”, she nonetheless narrates the origins of feminism as residing outside any logic of domination (2009:1). For Fraser then, it becomes a question of “reactivating … [and] recovering feminism’s emancipatory promise” (Ibid.:1-2) against the “new spirit of neo-liberalism” (Ibid.:7). I suggest instead that feminism’s current problem runs much deeper. Despite Fraser’s excellent analysis of the inefficacy of a cultural politics that “claims for recognition over claims for redistribution” (Ibid.:8), her attempt at feminism’s recuperation through “promising new form[s] of activism” and empowerment, like “utilizing communications technologies to establish transnational networks” (Ibid.) is precisely the kind of techno-salvation that the nostalgia for earlier feminism engenders. In fact, the element that Fraser ignores as a possible problematic moment in feminism is where it must “transform those positioned as passive objects of welfare … into active subjects” (Ibid.: 5, my italics). This is not to say that empowerment is unimportant, but to claim that its politics has become increasingly entangled with neoliberal structures of oppression – hence the sense of desperation at the Gender Conference.

#### Baudrillard doesn’t disagree with feminism – his theories critique the lack of historical and cultural grounding within most modern feminist theory

Victoria Grace 2000, ‘Baudrillard’s Challenge: A Feminist Reading’, Routledge, London, accessed 17 July 2022, https://searchebscohostcom.proxy.lib.umich.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=60913&site=ehost-live&scope=site //ONHS IF

Feminist theory, discourse, action is infinitely diverse, traversed as it is by a multiplicity of positions and trajectories within constructs and experiences of identifications with numerous sources of ‘difference’, generally figured in terms of ‘politics’ in some form. The examples of contemporary western feminist theories of gender, or sexual difference, I have considered in relation to the challenges raised by Baudrillard have shown a tendency for these theories to pivot on combinations of concerns including the importance of the ‘female subject’, ‘women’s identity’, ‘women’s desire/feminine desire’, the ‘nomadic subject’, the multiplicities of ‘desiring subjects’, the notion of gender as ‘performative’, the intersection (and inextricability) of ‘gender’ with ‘other’ sources of ‘difference’ (race, culture, class, sexuality, and so on). Where there is a concern to subvert identity, all the tropes of the productive, of positivity in Baudrillard’s terms, remain firmly in place: ‘power’ understood as ‘productive’; the ‘real’ is produced and these productions are contested and resignified, re-produced; identity as self-same reappears in the guise of plurality, becoming, multiple subjects with no objects, nomadic and fluid. These concerns and foci of analysis and deconstruction are undeniably driven by an assumption of the inevitability of the economic (needs, production, value), the inevitability of the law (the bar that structures identity/ difference, subject/ object), even taking into account the attempts at deconstruction and rewriting from a position of a different ‘difference’, and of the inevitability of power. There is no seduction here. These theories unilaterally fail to engage the historically and culturally specific interweaving of the construct of the economic and the structure of representation which, in Baudrillard’s analysis, figures our ontological assumptions. Donna Haraway is a feminist theorist who departs from the constraints of some of the epistemological and ontological presuppositions critiqued by Baudrillard. Her ‘Manifesto for cyborgs’ (in Haraway 1991) shows a determination, like Baudrillard’s, to develop an analysis that is grounded culturally and historically. There are evident in Haraway’s work none of the universal questions or constructs that tend to creep into the works of those other feminist theorists discussed, in spite of their claims to support what Haraway has called ‘situated knowledges’. Nevertheless, Vicki Kirby (1997) takes Haraway to task for instituting the ‘specific’ as the binary opposite of the ‘universal’, a move Kirby questions as one potentially reinstalling ‘the cogito as the subject who only speaks for him or herself’ (1997: 161). Kirby’s interest in an ontology and epistemology that deconstruct this binary and rethink the question of ‘position’ in relation to the speaking subject is important. Haraway (1991) proposes the figure of the irreverent cyborg, a ‘creature in a post-gender world’, with whom she tracks a critical understanding of key facets structuring a world that is also postmodern. The breaching of the boundaries constructing the human is central to her inquiry. But these are boundaries that are still ‘transgressed’ (in accordance with the law). Haraway is concerned at what she views as the need to ‘resist world-wide intensification of domination that has never been so acute’ (1991: 154). This domination functions according to dynamics that are different from those confronted by a socialist feminism of an earlier era; the question of ‘political struggle’ remains, however, itself unquestioned by Haraway. A reading of Baudrillard throws the whole notion of the ‘political’, contemporarily, into question. Haraway’s cyborg manifesto recognises both the dangers (the grid of control) and the possibilities (ways out of the ‘maze of dualisms’) of the ‘New World Order’. Haraway develops a critical theorising on the situated decline in influence and potency of myths of origin (post-gender, a world without gender, without genesis, without end), of totalising epistemologies, of politics defined through immobile identities, of discourses both of unity and of contradiction. She proposes a schema of categories to distinguish the transition from what she describes as ‘the comfortable old hierarchical dominations’ to the ‘scary new networks’ which she calls ‘the informatics of domination’ (1991: 161). This chart of dual categories reflects, in idealised form, a listing characterising what we have moved from (on the left side) and what we have moved to (on the right). Haraway has no reference to Baudrillard in this work apart from the sole point of a definition of ‘simulacra’, yet her portrayal of contemporary social dynamics, and more specifically her chart, have significant resonances with Baudrillard’s analyses of hyper-reality and simulation. Indeed, at the top of Haraway’s list is ‘representation’ replaced by ‘simulation’, although the shift remains untheorised. The informatics of domination marks a world where: communications sciences and modern biologies are constructed by a common move – the translation of the world into a problem of coding, a search for a common language in which all resistance to instrumental control disappears and all heterogeneity can be submitted to disassembly, reassembly, investment, and exchange. (Haraway 1991: 164) Baudrillard’s work develops a critical theorising of precisely this phenomenon; a theorising that leads to a more cautious reflection on the possibilities for ‘political struggle’, and possibly a more nuanced questioning of the implications of a postgender world. It is noteworthy that Haraway’s chart does not include the ‘political’ on the left side, against which we might suggest ‘cool, ludic seduction’ on the right, as a simulated politics endlessly recast as yet another market niche. On the contrary, the ‘political’ appears in Haraway’s essay to assume a meta-position straddling both ‘eras’ (power as a universally applicable and non-situated concept?).

### Sovereignty stuff

#### The aff’s realism and claims of sovereignty disseminates the world into the hyperreal – Trump accelerated the road into the hyperreal and the plan loses the brink. That reproduces a violent reactivation of power that ends rationality.

Paul B. Richardson (2019) Sovereignty, the Hyperreal, and “Taking Back Control”, Annals of the American Association of Geographers, 109:6, 1999-2015 <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2019.1587283> //ONHS IF

The sovereignty delusion is by no means restricted to Brexit as the blurring of fact and fiction, and of 2006 Richardson reality and illusion, has been accelerated in the United States with the ascendency to the presidency of reality TV star, Donald Trump (for examples beyond Brexit, see Dunn 2010; Backman 2011; Cocks 2014; Juss 2017). In our age of the hyperreal, Trump has been called a “sovereign father” for our times (Connelly 2016), a leader who has risen on the tide of a sovereignty myth. It was a myth outlined by Trump at some length during his maiden speech to the United Nations General Assembly in September 2017 in which sovereignty dominated and defined his address, with the words sovereign and sovereignty mentioned twenty-one times (Tatar 2017). In the speech, Trump repeatedly equated sovereignty with global harmony, declaring, “Our success depends on a coalition of strong and independent nations that embrace their sovereignty, to promote security, prosperity, and peace, for themselves and for the world” (Haldevang 2017). He declared that “strong, sovereign nations allow individuals to flourish in the fullness of the life intended by God” (Miller 2018) and talked of a “great reawakening of nations, for the revival of their spirits, their pride, their people, and their patriotism.” That this has historically not been a recipe for “harmony and friendship” went unnoted in the speech (Chhabra 2017). In the Washington Post, Jaffe and DeYoung (2017) suggested that in his appearance at the United Nations, Trump had “cast his presidency as an avatar of international renewal,” a catalyst for a renewed patriotic spirit, national self-interest and cooperation among sovereign nations, which are posited as the solution for all international ills. Trump asked in his speech, “Are we still patriots? Do we love our nations enough to protect their sovereignty and take ownership of their future?” He also invoked sovereignty to attack the “mammoth multinational trade deals” that have supposedly empowered faceless global bureaucracies over nation-states, sent factory jobs overseas, and hollowed out the middle class (Jaffe and De Young 2017). Trump railed against the “unaccountable international tribunals and powerful global bureaucracies” that sap the sovereignty of nations (Jaffe and De Young 2017) and as a counter offered a passionate and populist defense of the principles of sovereignty and patriotism, which in his words could spark a “rebirth of devotion” across the world (Jaffe and De Young 2017). It is a devotion to a sovereign idyll and illusion through a missionary zeal anchored in the ether of hyperreality. As Nasr pointed out, Trump’s definition of sovereignty in the speech is derived “from a very narrow domestic prism” (cited in Landler 2017) out of which the United States emerges as the first among equals. It is a foreign policy doctrine that has been interpreted by some as the fusion of sovereigntism with “a style of big-power nationalism” and, in an echo of earlier presidencies, one that has been labeled by the president and his advisors as “principled realism” and “America first” (Bierman and Lauter 2017). For Patrick (2017a) it represents an invocation of sovereignty to “assert universal truths and to deflect messy realities.” Patrick suggested that Trump’s speech should be seen as part of a broader “sovereigntist” critique of the global order, which has been evident in policy stances from leaving the Paris Climate Agreement, to renouncing the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and the criticism of alliances like NATO, through to threats to ignore the World Trade Organization, and moratoriums on any new multilateral treaties (Patrick 2017b). It is in Trump’s sovereigntist agenda that we glimpse a mourning for the waning of U.S. hegemony in the face of “messy realities,” a lament for the absence of power, which “for some time now produces nothing but signs of its resemblance …; an obsession with its death; an obsession with its survival which becomes greater the more it disappears” (Baudrillard [1981] 1988, 180). Baudrillard ([1981] 1988) wrote of a “[m]elancholy for societies without power,” whereby “power is no longer present except to conceal that there is none” (180–81). It is out of this melancholy for power, and a rage against its loss, that the sovereigntist agenda can materialize in ever more disturbing ways. One such moment occurred on 4 April 2018, with the release of a memo by Trump titled, “Securing the Southern Border of the United States,” in which National Guard troops were ordered to the U.S.–Mexico border in response to a “caravan” of refugees traveling to the United States from Central America (Jacobs 2018). The first paragraph sets the scene of a sovereignty principle in crisis: 1) The security of the United States is imperiled by a drastic surge of illegal activity on the southern border. Large quantities of fentanyl, other opioids, and other dangerous and illicit drugs are flowing across our southern border and into our country at unprecedented levels, destroying the lives of our families and loved ones. … Deadly transnational gangs are systematically exploiting Sovereignty, the Hyperreal, and “Taking Back Control” 2007 our unsecured southern border to enter our country and develop operational capacity in American communities throughout the country. The anticipated rapid rise in illegal crossings as we head into the spring and summer months threatens to overwhelm our Nation’s law enforcement capacities. (Trump 2018, italics added) The memo stresses a border regime where the ability to ensure the sovereignty of the nation is in doubt (see Miller [2018] on Trump’s preference for the term nation), with it suggesting that “our American way of life hinges on our ability as a Nation to adequately and effectively enforce our laws and protect our borders. A key and undeniable attribute of a sovereign nation is the ability to control who and what enters its territory” (Trump 2018). Throughout the memo a sovereignty principle in crisis is invoked, with paragraphs 4 and 5 warning, “The lawlessness that continues at our southern border is fundamentally incompatible with the safety, security, and sovereignty of the American people. … the highest sovereign duty of the President is to defend this Nation, which includes the defense of our borders” (Trump 2018). The memo’s unsubtle generation of an existential threat to “our American way of life” works to regenerate the sovereign nation; it strives to revive a moribund “moral and political principle … in distress” (Baudrillard [1981] 1988, 172–73). From it emerges a pure and perfect U.S. sovereignty that contrasts with the disorder and chaos beyond, “a simulated real, which henceforth supplants the real and is its final solution, a virtual universe from which everything dangerous and negative has been expelled” (Baudrillard 2004). To maintain the illusion of sovereign perfection, in June 2018 children of asylum seekers were separated from their parents at the U.S. border, as Trump declared, “The United States will not be a migrant camp … You look at what’s happening in other places—we can’t allow that to happen to the United States. Not on my watch” (Gambino and Lartey 2018). In the simulated sovereignty of Trump’s America First, the “circulation of hyperreal signs of his ability and often his ability alone … deliver what he defines as truly in the US national interest” (Weber 2017, S-137, italics added; on Trump scripting himself as the superhero, see Dittmer 2018). In one sense, Trump is a continuation of U.S. presidents since Ronald Reagan who have each told us “a meta-theoretical story about Baudrillardian sign theory where presidents … mark different moments of the simulacrum” (Rubenstein 2008, 11). For example, on George W. Bush’s presidency, Suskind (2004) outlined a faith-based administration with a disdain for “the reality-based community.” A senior advisor to Bush at the time, stated to Suskind: “We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you’re studying that reality—judiciously, as you will—we’ll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that’s how things will sort out.” Suskind described a presidency of “unflinching confidence [that] has an almost mystical power. It can all but create reality.” 3 Trump is also a continuation and confirmation of the practice of “statecraft as mancraft” (Weber 2016, 4; see also Ashley 1989), whereby the sovereign foundation of the modern state is presented as a “phantastical yet presumed-to-be-factual ‘sovereign man’—as if it were the singular, preexisting, ahistorical ground that authorizes all sovereign decisions in its political community” (Weber 2016, 4–5). Applied to our own phantastical times, Trump as sovereign man could claim on 5 April 2018—without any corroborating evidence—that in the caravan of refugees “women are raped at levels that nobody has ever seen before” (cited in Z. B. Wolf 2018). Then, in October 2018, as a group of mainly Honduran asylum seekers moved through Mexico toward the U.S. border, Trump called it an “onslaught of illegal aliens” (Darrah 2018). On 31 October he tweeted, “We will NOT let these Caravans, which are also made up of some very bad thugs and gang members, into the U.S. Our Border is sacred” (Evans 2018). In a speech at the White House on the same day, Trump added that if “they want to throw rocks at our military, our military fights back. I told them to consider it a rifle” (Weaver and Manson 2018). In such hypermasculine declarations and denunciations, a state of crisis and threat becomes the norm—a form of “banal geopolitics,” whereby crises and extreme remedy become “nothing out of the ordinary,” “routine,” “normal, taken-for-granted geopolitics” (Sidaway 2001, 606–7). These episodes also recall Brown’s interpretation of border walls and their paraphernalia and performance “as symbolic and semiotic responses to crises” (R. Jones et al. 2017, 2). For against Trump’s refrain that “a secure border is a sovereign right” (Swoyer 2016), Anderson (2018) noted in The San Diego UnionTribune that the immense efforts at securitizing the U.S.–Mexico border have had the counterfunction of 2008 Richardson jeopardizing U.S. sovereignty and human security as “[s]trong, militarized enforcement has resulted in a stronger militarized response by well-financed drug cartels and increased corruption, violence and death, but not a decrease in the flow of drugs.” Extreme violence and discipline were anticipated by Baudrillard ([1981] 1988), who noted that power threatened by simulation “risks the real, risks crisis, it gambles on remanufacturing artificial, social, economic, political stakes. This is a question of life or death for it” (180). It also becomes a question of life and death for those caught in the “collective demand for signs of power—a holy union which forms around the disappearance of power” (180). In the desert of “Making America Great Again” are the drowned of the Rio Grande and the missing of the arid U.S.–Mexico borderlands—victims of a melancholy for a society without power. While hyperreality’s scenario of power conceals the fact that the real power has disappeared (Baudrillard [1981] 1988), simulation does not exclude the violent counterconvulsions of a sovereign tormented by the ebb of its power. As Baudrillard (1983) insisted, the simulacrum of war does not make it “any less heinous for being a mere simulacrum—the flesh suffers just the same, and the dead ex-combatants count as much there as in other wars” (70, cited in Merrin 1994, 444). A condition of the hyperreal makes possible absolute sovereign authority and with it the full realization of sovereignty’s devastating foundational logic—the operation of a binary of those who are protected and those who could legitimately die (Agamben 1998). For Weber (2017), the Trump “campaign and presidency are part and parcel of earlier historical ‘experiments’—in white, Western, heteropatriarchal authoritarian leadership, in neoliberalism and the specific modalities of citizenship, governance and reason” (S-134; see also Adorno et al. 1950; Brown 2003; Bauman 2016; Connelly 2016). Weber saw Trump’s simulated form as president as akin to Badiou’s (2001) description of the function of the simulacrum under Nazism: in which a hyperreal national allegiance to the selfreferential simulacrum as heteropatriarchal leader piles specific fictions upon fictions. It does so not only to mask … the absence of the reality principle but to generate a dangerous, materializable, national fantasy that depends upon particularizing, identifying and regulating abstract allies and enemies. (74; see also Weber 2017, S-135) For Weber, Trump “opposes the ‘righteous’ to the ‘unrighteous’, who he variously named during the campaign as all or many of ‘the blacks’, ‘the gays’, ‘the Mexican rapists’ and the ‘radical Islamic terrorists’” (Weber 2017, S-136). In her polemic, Weber highlighted how simulation and dissimulation “re-code sovereignty … in the name of that particular abstract set of sovereign US subjects on whose behalf the administration (pretends to) claim(s) its authority to rule—‘righteous Americans’” (Weber 2017, S-138). In a haze of “fake news” and “alternative facts” (which are read by some as “real news”) the administration’s strategy is one “that attempts to overwhelm US democracy with … representations, simulations and dissimulations of facts and fictions, so all that remains intact is the authority of Trump and Trump as our authoritarian leader” (Weber 2017, S-137–39). These hyperreal simulations and dissimulations of sovereignty are far from intangible, unreal, or benign but effectively maintain violent exclusionary hierarchies through privileging “righteous Americans” and the elevation of “a particular people and its mode of life above those marked as alien” (Cocks 2014, 3; Weber 2017, 136). It is out of the sovereignty of the hyperreal that there emerge new terrains and possibilities for the “violent reactivation of a form of power that despairs of its rational foundations” (Baudrillard 1980, 110, cited in Kroker 1984, 58).

### Link – A5/transparency

#### Clarifying article 5 reaffirms the newfound project of hegemonic visibility – that reifies operational warfare. 2 impacts – (i): a new form of control through warfare, and (ii): manufacturing the deaths and violence the aff seeks to prevent.

Dan Öberg (2016) War, transparency and control: the military architecture of operational warfare, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 29:3, 1132-1149, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2016.1230733> //ONHS IF

In this article I have argued for the need to examine the way warfare exerts control through discourses of transparency. In so doing I draw upon the insistence that we live in an era of ‘hegemonic visibility’ (Baudrillard 2014, 11) in which global wars are fought to extend a ‘matchless transparency’ (Virilio 2000b, 23) to the world. To analyse this, I have investigated military doctrines so as to illustrate how they render a mental and visual space and time of warfare visible through operational coding. I argue that this logic creates a military architecture characterized by an excess of Kafkaesque bureaucratic and organizational procedures in which warfare becomes a derivate of planning and modelling. At the end point of this logic we find a Weltanschauung characterized by US military operations conducted in ‘an operational environment that is ever expanding’ (AFDD 2007b, 1) where future threats are preemptively erased in real time. Such “transparent warfare” is closely connected to the “liberal way of war” as it helps to manage and mobilize visual regimes employed in and through warfare. One important point outlined in this article is the way the military architecture relies on an operational violence which cuts through political space and time and invests it as calculable, decipherable and foreseeable. The “hegemonic visibility” that Baudrillard has drawn our attention to is therefore an inherent part of the way the military architecture renders itself, the global battlefield and future political subjectivity transparent, and in doing so it helps to affirm a liberal way of life. Dillon and Reid have convincingly argued that the centre of gravity of the liberal way of war is the future itself (2009, 148). But while Dillon and Reid claim such policing centres around biopolitical stakes (particularly the discrimination of which life is worth living and which isn’t), I would argue that liberal control is also waged through the way it renders the future image of global time and space visible through operational coding. Henceforth, the targeting and erasure of future political subjectivity through hegemonic visibility play an important part in the way global liberal governance functions. Arguably, the most important impact of this technique is the way operational violence indicates a type of governing which aims to reduce space/time to a derivate of global warfare and cut it from its political potential. The form and the content of the military architecture—its excess of information coupled with the urgency to render the world transparent and control it—come together as an attempt to conduct a violent futurology which attempts to exhaust and govern the present. We are now in a position to better respond to the conundrum in the introduction of this article—that both the proponents of and those who challenge warfare invoke the need for increased transparency of the battlefield. Those who wish to see and construct the future battlefield rely on the details of its imagery in order to kill. Likewise, those who want to prevent or illustrate the unlawful nature of such attacks rely on virtual reproduction in order to know and prove that the attacks took place. However, if our contemporary world is understood to be enmeshed in an ideology of excessive visibility, the commonsensical answer “more transparency” becomes part of the problem rather than a solution. If seen accordingly, better visibility does not change the fact that control is exerted through the production of a constant demand for transparency that in turn masks the way the military architecture is founded on and enacts control through this very demand. As Chamayou has illustrated by quoting interviews with mutilated victims from drone attacks: When you ask Sadaullah, or Karim, or S. Hussein and others like them what they want, they do not say ‘transparency and accountability’. They say they want the killing to stop. They want to stop dying. They want to stop going to funerals—and being bombed even as they mourn. Transparency and accountability, for them, are abstract problems that have little to do with the concrete fact of regular, systematic death. (Chamayou 2015b, 149) Chamayou is no doubt correct in that more transparency is of little help to the victims of drone violence. However, as I have tried to illustrate in this article, it is not only the actual killings on the global battlefield but the way an ideology of transparency underlies the military supporting system which unveils warfare as a modelling and operationalization of administrative routines which manufacture such killings. If one is to challenge the way drones kill, one needs to understand the supporting system which creates a demand for the killing mechanisms. Every military “telecommuting office worker/hunter” is refracted in relation to an architecture that provides and manufactures an excess of visibility, invisible limits, illusions of choice, erasures and blind spots. This architecture creates a demand for a particular type of violence as it helps to unveil a world which is transparent, open-access, logical, measurable and always connected to the operational. This is not to say that operational warfare always works, or that the demand is always there. It is simply to say that operational warfare aims to keep the potential for violent techniques of control in place by unveiling itself as a particular kind of organizational routine. How would one challenge “transparent warfare”? If there is a “Baudrillardian” wager in relation to critiquing warfare as a means for control, it would arguably be that one needs to do so without reifying the value of transparency. Instead one should aim to ‘potentiate what is new, original, unexpected’ (Baudrillard 1990b, 148) in the military architecture itself. This article has strived to look for the potentially new in operational warfare, so as to tease out the politics of the processing and modelling of warfare. The challenge to “post-heroic” war consists in investigating the various logics of and consequences transparency has as a means for control. The novelty of this relation resides in the way warfare is not, as many tend to argue, first and foremost about a response to practical problems when conducting military operations. Rather, it is characterized by the potential to violently unveil global space (as an area of operations) and global time (as a battle rhythm) to maintain and control political becoming. It remains to be seen if it is possible to create hidden spaces and times, uncoded by operational warfare (see also Baudrillard 2014, 10), that are not conditioned by the hegemonic visibility of military architectures. In my view, to investigate and affirm such a project is a timely and important task for a future critical war studies.

### Link – US influence/imperialism

#### An expanded US influence expands the US’ nation brand – the K is key to explore the impacts of relationships that arrive as a result of the transition of governance into the simulacra.

Kaneva, Nadia. “Simulation Nations: Nation Brands and Baudrillard’s Theory of Media.” European Journal of Cultural Studies, vol. 21, no. 5, London, England: SAGE Publications, pp. 631–48, doi:10.1177/1367549417751149. 2018 Accessed 7/20/22 //ONHS CF

I have argued that Baudrillard’s assault on the real, as he theorizes media-saturated consumer societies, contains a radical potential for the analysis of nation brands. His notion of hyperreality points to the erasure of distinctions between the nation and its simulations. As the signs of nation brands circulate through media networks, they encounter other media signs, all of which intertwine in the play of appearances and seek to seduce media audiences. At the same time, what differentiates promotional simulacra, including nation brands, from other media signs is the overtly programmatic, strategic nature of promotional messages which, by definition, aim to alter perceptions. In that sense, nation brands have become integral to what Baudrillard calls ‘strategies of the real’ in contemporary media cultures. This is the Janus-faced nature of nation brands as simulacra – they claim to simultaneously reflect and alter the reality of the nation. Baudrillard’s theory of hyperreality offers one way to explain how this seemingly impossible feat is made to look real. Furthermore, Baudrillard (2001) describes a ‘precession of simulacra’, whereby non-referential models are used to manufacture simulations that stand in for the real. Based on this argument, the ‘core idea’ of a nation-branding campaign – derived through an obligatory distillation process (Aronczyk, 2013) – serves as the model that precedes the simulation nation that is conjured up through media. This process was clearly at play in Kosovo’s branding, in Ruslana’s Eurovision act and in numerous other nation-branding exercises. Among other things, this means that the simulation nation is not bound by historical fact, although simulacra of history and antiquity abound in its media manifestations. Rather, the simulation nation is created de novo each time it appears in the flickering lights of media screens only to disappear once again as the lights go out. But if there is no way to tell apart the real from the simulated, what can be the basis of critical inquiry into the workings of nation brands and media? How can research peer through the play of appearances and what could be its task? In my view, Baudrillard’s theoretical excursions are of limited help as we tackle these questions because they have little to say about the material aspects of media industries or institutions. Although his critical project starts as a revision of Marx’s critique of political economy, his later work abandons a focus on materiality and focuses instead on ‘the image form’ that emanates from the media, that is, the simulacrum (Merrin, 2005: 155). However, more than simulacra machines, the media exist as material networks of circulation, as technological systems, as profit-driven industries and as professional and cultural institutions, governed by economic, political and technological logics. That is where critical inquiry can continue to intervene and for that we need to look beyond Baudrillard. One source of inspiration can come from Marxist critiques of commercial brands as technologies for the creation of capital (e.g. Arvidsson, 2005). Drawing on Baudrillard, global media brands such as Apple, Google and Facebook can be seen as pure simulacra. Yet, beyond their hyperreal properties, these brands have also generated tremendous amounts of capital, expropriating human desires for sociality. What, if anything, is different about nation brands in comparison to commercial brands? What kinds of profits do they generate, in what ways and to whom do these profits accrue? Andrew Wernick’s conceptualization of the commodity-sign as an object with a dual purpose can be particularly helpful as we seek to move beyond Baudrillard but to retain the value of his critique. Following Wernick, nation brands are revealed to be more than clusters of promotional signs but also ‘objects-to-be-sold’, that is, they are units of media content that are created to generate profit within a system of market exchange. Although they are typically produced with public funds, nation brands as commodity-signs generate profits primarily for private media companies and for promotional outfits (Kaneva, 2015). The justifications for and consequences of this transference of wealth need further analysis. Furthermore, the logic of commodity-signs is not limited to promotional messages but applies to other media content as well. This is illustrated by the fact that some transnational media corporations today have special sales and production teams who approach national governments with ‘package’ offers that include country-specific news content paired with promotional videos, both of which are created by the media organization (Bolin and Ståhlberg, 2015). Media practices that blur the lines between editorial and promotional content have been examined in relation to consumer brands (e.g. Einstein, 2016). However, the impact of such trends on politics and governance needs further exploration. One example of possible implications can be seen in the recent proliferation of ‘fake news’ – fabricated content, the whose main goal of which is to generate maximum attention and, therefore, maximum profit. Despite its ‘unreality’, such content has been linked to shifts in political opinions and decisions, but the scope of this influence is still poorly understood. A related line of research would entail mapping the ways in which commodity-signs enter and move through the circulatory streams of global media networks. Some interesting work on this topic already exists (e.g. Valaskivi and Sumiala, 2014), but much remains to be done. A focus on circulation needs to acknowledge that promotion transcends the boundaries of ‘campaigns’ and infiltrates all forms of media that are not identifiable as ‘advertising’ (e.g. Aronczyk and Powers, 2010; Wernick, 1991). Exposing the industrial and technological protocols of media corporations would shed new light on the ways in which capital is enmeshed in the processes of assembling or dispersing national and transnational publics. These processes have important consequences for political mobilization, for the symbolic production of nationhood and for the construction of shared social realities more broadly. The lines of inquiry I have outlined above are far from exhaustive and are limited by their particular focus on media. The materiality of nationhood – how it is experienced by individuals on a daily basis, how it is enacted in institutional and policy contexts and how it intersects with simulations of the nation – is worthy of its own exploration, but that is a task for another study. At the conclusion of this theoretical exploration, we should be wary of making totalizing claims about the triumph of hyperreality. Nevertheless, we should retain at least one insight from Baudrillard, namely, that simulation functions ‘not only as a mode of communication but also as a mode of social control’ (Merrin, 2005: 24). Despite his self-professed nihilism, Baudrillard never abandoned the goals of social critique and transformation and therein lies the main value of his work.

### Epistemology key – AT IR K

#### The only way to truly access political thought is to relearn the epistemology of the state and state building – the post structuralist approach of the K is key to relearning International Relations

HEHIR, AIDAN. “Hyper-Reality and Statebuilding: Baudrillard and the Unwillingness of International Administrations to Cede Control.” Third World Quarterly, vol. 32, no. 6, 2011, pp. 1073–87. JSTOR, [http://www.jstor.org/stable/41300307. Accessed 21 Jul. 2022](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41300307.%20Accessed%2021%20Jul.%202022). //ONHS IF

The post-structuralist approach, in so far as a coherent approach exists, sees the discipline of IR as part of a wider movement in social thought, emphasises the necessity of an interdisciplinary methodology, and seeks to 'unsettle established categories and disconcert the reader'.4 The theory derives much of its inspiration from Michel Foucault, who argued that power and knowledge are intimately linked, with one implying the other. Using the example of the prison system, Foucault suggested that a generic set of assumptions, derived from particular societal power relations, can be identified as underpinning all aspects of society.5 A dominant discourse or a 'regime of truth' is held to impose critical limits upon our ability to think politically about particular problems faced.6 Post-structuralist analyses, therefore, interrogate discourse on a particular theme to highlight the inherent assumptions which perpetuate a particular dominant belief.7 The manner in which the discourse of intervention and statebuilding is framed involves a strategy whereby 'the need to do something [is presented] as evident'.8 popular portrayal of intra-state crises and domestic political disorder lacks political analysis and facilitates the idea that the solution can only be found in externally co-ordinated administrative, as opposed to political, action. The discourse presupposes a distinction between 'we' and 'they' which narrows the The debate to a focus on 'whether and how "we" should help "them"'.9 The assumption - inherent in the discourse on intervention and statebuilding - that external involvement occurs only after a disaster has erupted is considered to be false given the often casual relationship between external actors and internal collapse.10 The discourse of intervention and statebuilding reproduces power asymmetries; the West is portrayed as the powerful saviour while the 'other' is cast as the needy victim inhabiting a chaotic distant world." The appropriation of 'the good life' and the conflation of human rights and Western value, it is claimed, has facilitated the image of a barbarous hinterland and a civilised core and resulted in human rights becoming a means by which the legitimacy of the present order has in fact been bolster the liberal notion of spreading the good life is in fact a means b 'other' is further mystified and the homeland is venerated. The pr international administrators is inspired more by the sense of purp worth it inspires in them than by the actual good it does for the 'vi discourse serves to reassure the core that there is a differentiated locate this other 'somewhere else, outside'.14 This binary vision is apparent in the rhetoric surrounding th threat posed by 'failed states'. The 2002 National Security Stra United States famously suggested that the US was threatened more than by aggressive states and this heralded the emergence of emphasis on the ostensibly causal link between intra-state colla proliferation of various forms of criminality, instability and, i global terrorism. The Commission on Weak States and US Nation provides an indicative statement of this hypothesis: Weak and failed governments generate instability, which harms the drags down their neighbors and ultimately threatens US interests in effective international system, providing the foundation for continuity, and, not least, protecting Americans from external threats to ou According to this perspective the threat menacing Western soc from sub-state groups that thrive on the conditions endemic in fa The 2005 National Intelligence Strategy of the United States des states as 'breeding grounds of international instability, violence, an In the fight against failed states democracy has been regularly bedrock of stability and key to security; the USA's 2005 National In Strategy describes democracy as, 'the stoutest pillar of support' security and notes, 'the lack of freedom in one state endangers the freedom of others . . . failed states are a refuge and breeding extremism'.17 Democracy is seen as a panacea and a key weapon against terrorism the spread of which - from the core to the per axiomatically good for all.18 What constitutes a 'failed state', however, is open to interpretation of the manifestation of failure a broad divergence is evident to whether the failure manifests as coercive or administrative in terms of the former, Robert Jackson believes a state to be failed i or will not safeguard minimum civil conditions, ie, peace, order, se domestically. [Failed states are] hollow juridical shells that anarchical condition domestically.'19 Another characteristic, however, deemed to be indicative of state where the state fails to meet the needs of the population and 'capacity gap'.20 The definition provided by Foreign Policy and Peace describes as 'failed' those states that 'lack the authoritative collective decisions or the capacity to deliver public service countries, the populace may rely entirely on the black market taxes, or engage in large-scale civil disobedience. The term 'failed state' thus refers to states manifesting two coercive incapacity and administrative incapacity. This diversity states necessarily undermines broad extrapolations derived from t posed by 'failed states' and generic threats emanating from 'fair Additionally, there is very little evidence to support the claims states breed terrorism or are a major threat to international stability.22 Indeed, Justin Logan and Christopher Preble speculate the claims that failed states are inherently threatening seem so d one wonders whether the arguments may not simply be a v generating support for foreign interventions'.23 When used in the global insecurity, therefore, the term is less an objective assess state's domestic condition and more a rhetorical term employs a subjective manner to aid the conceptualisation of a world divided group of progressive states and a periphery comprising failed sta As a term, therefore, 'failed states' lacks real descriptive merit myriad manifestations of failure. This is not to suggest that there is thing as failed states but rather that the range of states which poten into this category is so great that it is not possible to formulat towards this amorphous group. Yet, as is evident, policy produced in the past 10 years have regularly warned of the me by 'failed states' as though there was a generic manifestation. The term appears, therefore, to conform more to a desire to sim complexities of the world into a bifurcated vision of 'good' and 'f 'Failed state' is thus largely a pejorative term used to reaffirm a the core, first, that existing dangers emanate from the periphery an that the periphery is qualitatively differ from the core. Creating a world from where all ills emanate - especially terrorism - enables the shift of blame from itself to the failed states. Self-identification involves the creation of an 'other' against which one can contrast oneself; 'failed states' have served as this referential point.