

The meaning of *Time* magazine's sign representation of visuals of 9/11: a Baudrillardian perspective

ABSTRACT

Baudrillard's concepts of *simulacra*, *simulation* and *hyperreality* were assessed in relation to dominant themes and subthemes contained in the photographic images of *Time* magazine's 9/11 special edition by means of a qualitative thematic content analysis. This event was selected based both on its becoming an 'absolute event' and on the resultant representation of said events via images. As such, visuals, because they contextually reflect a situation, play a powerful role in the representation of major world events. This is particularly true of photographs.

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INTRODUCTION

This article centres essentially around the representation of meaning within signs - viewed from Jean Baudrillard's perspective, while particularly focussing on sign representation within the photographic visual images captured by *Time* magazine of the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks on the United States of America.

The justification for using 9/11 is that this is an historic event of an extreme nature, which tested the American media's ability to cover events and explain this situation and event to their audiences (Just, Kern & Norris, 2003: 19). It is not only this, but as Baudrillard (2001a) implies, it is the 'absolute event', which is "the pure event, the essence of all the events that never happened". Consequently, Apostolov (2004: 121) purports, "in its emotional impact, 9/11 was probably the most horrifying single day in American history". However, in relation to the scale of the event, there is not a large amount of coverage that analyses visual images portrayed or particularly the meaning of the signs represented within visual images of this event. This lack of research became evident after a Nexus database system search. The search revealed that no such topics had been registered for research and, furthermore that no specific research - from a specifically Baudrillardian perspective - had been undertaken on sign representation in the mass media context. The present study is thus exploratory in nature. The Baudrillardian perspective adopted within this exploratory research came from an anti-semiological perspective, because even though semiotic processes - such as symbols, icons, linguistic signs and indexes - are evident in Baudrillard's work, Baudrillard, as his work progressed, became more anti-semiological and insisted that symbolic exchange did not actually have to do with signs (Genosko, 1994: xiv, xv). This was more a way of clarifying issues and conflicts of interpretation raised by de Saussure. Appignanesi (1999: 42) states that Baudrillard felt that de Saussure was misguided and that the only arbitrary link between signifier and signified was making equivalence between them. However, Appignanesi (1999: 21, 34) points out that Baudrillard uses the basis of semiology to extend his argument on the structural logic of consumption but soon he realises that "semiology itself was not a way of demythologising the consumer world - it was part of the problem". Moreover, the images selected within *Time* magazine and the meaning was determined based on how it was represented within the signs in relation to Baudrillard's concepts of *simulacra*, *simulation* and *hyperreality*.

1. RESEARCH PROBLEM

How then, from a Baudrillardian perspective, is meaning represented in the signs, in the dominant themes in selected visuals in *Time* magazine's 9/11 special edition?

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The specific research questions were:

1. How is the meaning of simulacrisation, from a Baudrillardian perspective, represented in the dominant themes in selected visuals in *Time* magazine's 9/11 special edition?

2. How is the meaning of simulation, portrayed in *Time* magazine's 9/11 special edition, when viewed from the perspective of the dominant themes from Baudrillard's framework?
3. How, from a Baudrillardian orientation, are the dominant themes represented in selected visuals in *Time* magazine's 9/11 special edition, reflecting the concept of hyperreality?

3. METHODOLOGY

The next section deals with the various stages of the research methodology that were implemented.

3.1 Literature review

Baudrillard moved away from his critique of Marx's political economy, focussing specifically on people caught up in a mediated mass society in which the value of meaning has been lost to structures and where a media-saturated society exists, filled with images, spectacles and simulacra all distributed via communication networks (Kellner, 2000a: 53). Baudrillard explains the first three orders of simulacra as follows: the first order can be summarised as an order of theatrical status and machinery almost like a 'grand opera', a theatrical fake, with a focus on external reality; the second order is where the industrial and productive status is indicative of power and energy, a stage of the *operative* as opposed to the *operational*; the third order is of cybernetics and meta techniques (Baudrillard, 1994: 127). This is characterised by what Chen (2000: 133) refers to as an order that simulates everything into networks, as well as abandoning the real only to be replaced by the hyperrealism of simulation.

Baudrillard (2000: 56) postulates that in this third stage of simulacra all meaning is based on simulated models, and that meaning here emanates from these specific simulations. According to Baudrillard (1998: 3), a simulation is the replacement of what is established as reality with a new reality that is the personification of the real. The implication is that a simulation is not feigning; it is, rather, a belief in the new reality that is formulated - the simulated reality. Borrowing from McLuhan's concept of *implosion*, Baudrillard sees both the boundary between image/simulation and reality imploding, where the real will disappear (Kellner, 2000a: 54). Kellner (2000a: 54) therefore argues that, for Baudrillard, the contrast between Modernity and post-Modernity lies in the simulation, because where Modernity for Baudrillard is an era of production, dictated to by industrialised elites, the era of simulation is one of information and signs governed by models, codes and cybernetics.

Baudrillard (1994: 5) postulates that simulation is made possible through signs and images because these signs and images imitate a reality, which is more real than real, thus *hyperreality*. If signs can be replaced as meaning, then the entire system on which human beings base their lives becomes nothing but a weightless simulacrum. This is not saying that it is not real, but rather that it is hyperreal (Baudrillard, 1994: 5-6). Kroker (2000: 90) maintains that the mass media should be thought of as a mutation of the real into the hyperreal. Sandywell (2000: 102) explains that, for Baudrillard, hyperrealism is the reduplication of the real in a meticulous manner so as to represent the real and it is usually done through a reproductive medium, for example photography, because the latter is a reproduction of the real. Sandywell (2000: 103) expounds that collectively, in the era of simulation and hyperreality, the society of

the spectacle is found, where the sign bears no relation to reality but rather representations are pure simulacrum - where images and appearances create reality. According to Chang (2000: 121-123), Baudrillard asserts that the masses reappropriate messages through their hyperconformity, in accepting everything and redirecting everything back into the spectacular. In today's society, this view can be compromised and should be viewed critically within a user-generated context-dominant paradigm that uplifts the masses from being mere receivers to being the custodians of the message.

Van Eeden and du Preez (2005: 4) comment that with the increase in visual technological means of being able to view images, visibility has gained significance in the postindustrial information era. Coleman (2000: 1) posits that the visual means of communicating a message carries a large amount of power in contemporary society because the various communication contexts have come to understand that visual communication carries major content within the various information mediums, and is actually linked to the meaning of the message. Swanepoel (2005: 211) adds that photography is part of a visual code system, denoting that it is structured in a particular way. It is no longer a mirrored reflection, but rather an active process of extracting meaning.

3.2 Methodological orientation

Qualitative research was used because of the following characteristics: interpretation, insightfulness, exploration and flexibility (Neuman, 2000: 7). Exploratory research is a means towards better understanding a communication problem, particularly where little research has been conducted or little is known on the topic (Pitout & du Plooy, 2001: 302). This was evident from the findings of the National Research Foundation search (2006), which revealed very limited research in the area of photography - from a Baudrillardian perspective - in relation to a major world event like 9/11.

3.3 Population and sampling

The population was thirty-five photographic images in *Time* magazine's 9/11 special edition. The sample was a non-probability purposive sample, comprising 33 photographic visuals. Two images were excluded because they were illustrations. Ninety-four percent (94%) of the images were thus analysed. It should be explained that the specific reason for using photographic visuals from *Time* magazine is that *Time* magazine is part of the stable of AOL/Time Warner, which at the time of the merger in 2000, was considered the largest media conglomerate ever, and *Time* magazine was then already a leading news magazine. According to Gershon (2002: 64), the merger between America Online (AOL), the largest Internet service provider in America and two stalwarts of the film and magazine industry (Warner and Time magazine, respectively), changed the face of media ownership.

3.4 Research design

The use of a qualitative thematic content analysis allowed for a richer and more in-depth look at the meaning within the dominant themes contained in the photographic visual images, and, because - as Krippendorff (1969: 3) asserts - content is made up of many differing symbolic

configurations, this further allowed for Baudrillard's key terms of simulacra, simulation and hyperreality to be identified as dominant themes as per the research problem. This *modus operandi* takes into account what Welman and Kruger (2003: 195) wrote, namely that content is often assessed on the frequency of themes and the way in which these themes are portrayed within the chosen mass media material. Further, because content analysis makes enquiries into how symbols and messages are exchanged and received and how this interaction of symbols and messages impacts on and structures human behaviour, it is indeed a relevant research design to answer the stated research questions. The primary goal of content analysis is one of describing the characteristics embedded in a mediated text, as well as the way in which the context influences how the message is constructed (Frey, Botan, Friedman & Kreps (1991: 213). Furthermore, content analysis was selected over other methodologies, such as semiotic analysis, because semiotics is insufficient when analysing the moments captured and in the 'consumption' of photography (Burgin as quoted by Price & Wells, 2003: 31). Moreover, Colless, Kelly and Choldenko (in Gane, 1993: 141) in an interview with Baudrillard on the latter's own views of semiology and meaning, stated that semiology will never be able to find the sign in its pure state because it has *signifiers* and *signifieds* and as such the sign needs to stand alone.

3.5 Data collection

Berelson (1952: 138-139) postulates that a theme is an assertion about a subject matter. The theme is one of the most useful units of content analysis because it analyses and assesses issues and attitudes most effectively. The dominant theme categories were defined in relation to the literature review and were also divided into different subthemes that linked to the definition of the overriding dominant theme category. All 33 photographic visuals were analysed and interpreted in relation to where they fitted, based on the defined theme categories and the content of the photographic images. The following is a tabulated summary of each dominant theme category and related subthemes (see Appendix A for the definition of each subtheme).

Theme 1: Social status	Theme 2: Identification of ideals	Theme 3: Religious phenomena	Theme 4: Implosion
Subthemes	Subthemes	Subthemes	Subthemes
a) Occupational roles	a) American patriotism	a) Religious signs	a) Implosion in the representation of physical destruction
b) Representative participants	b) Camaraderie and unity		b) Implosion in the representation of human destruction

Table 1: Summary of themes and subthemes

3.6 Data analysis

Morse and Field's approach to data collection was utilised. Both Morse and Field (1996: 103) and Poggenpoel (1998: 341) concur that this mode of qualitative enquiry has four cognitive processes, namely comprehension, synthesising, theorising and recontextualising. Each stage builds on the next.

3.7 Reliability and validity

Welman and Kruger (2003: 139) explain that reliability can be viewed as the extent to which the obtained results can be generalised and where identical results are obtained if tried again. Reliability was obtained by doing a pilot study where intercoders were used in order to check the accuracy of the definitions of each theme category in terms of how understandable the category definitions were. Wimmer and Dominick (2003: 159) state that validity is asking whether the selected methodology obtained the information that it set out to obtain. These results were obtained and validated by linking the established literature with the findings and interpretation, i.e. by benchmarking.

4. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Baudrillard's principles of simulacra, simulation and hyperreality represented in the dominant themes were all benchmarked against the literature review.

4.1 Social status

The majority of the depictions were found to be deferential to the occupational roles of the service people. This was done in three ways:

Heroically helping victims

This sense of helping the injured was manifested by frequently placing the service people or those whom they were helping as the centre feature of the images in the act of helping victims in some way or another, for example a fireman with his large hand cradling a woman's small hand making her appear fragile. This helping can be equated with heroism because "a hero is a figure who exemplifies the deeds, character and attributes of a strong culture such as loyalty, determination, selflessness, dedication and bravery" (Mesa Community College, 2006). Furthermore, authors such as Goldstein (1989: 9-10), Anon. (2005), and Ocvirk, Stinson, Wigg, Bone and Cayton (1998: 64-65) state that this emphasis on service people would mean that dominance and importance were placed on these people and their actions, and here achieved by making them larger in size, which gave emphasis to expression. Images were also seen to be filled with debris and destruction and service people were restoring order amidst the destruction. It was noted that in only two of the 33 images was there actually blood thereby demonstrating a lack of what would have been obvious, namely human casualties and fatalities. This is reminiscent of Baudrillard's views on the patterns of the media coverage

of the Gulf War. According to Patton's (1995: 3), Baudrillard's view of media coverage of the Gulf War was that the images that were released were 'clean images,' void of human casualty because the Americans had learned a lesson from the bloody coverage of human carnage in Vietnam. So too, with regard to the coverage of the thousands of people who were killed in the terrorist attacks, *Time* magazine's 9/11 special edition only had one image of a dead body and that body was covered. This serves to illustrate that because the media - through globalisation - generates \$3 trillion within the global business environment (Hamelink, 2002: 179) and further because what sells is important, one could argue that the images most likely to be selected would be those that would stand the best chance of being sold. Blood and death were clearly not on the agenda of what would be consumed given the context of this particular event.

Heroically stepping in to restore order to the destroyed streets

This significant display of restoring order heroically links to part of Jonkheid's principle of symbolism of the inner mind (1998: 126-141). When this symbol is used at a conscious level, it expresses abstract qualities such as truth, justice and heroism, which are often ascribed to people or objects and here ascribable to those service people who assisted in the aftermath of 9/11. This sense of restoring order was discernible in the images through the service people being on their knees, crouched over, helping and joining together as one mass unit. This latter representation, in Vidich's opinion (2000: 77), derives from the fact that Baudrillard sees all systems of American society (Baudrillard specifically mentions service institutions) as being part of a cinematic society and moreover a collective faceless people rather than individuals. Running throughout this entire subtheme there seemed to be a value contrast between those who were the heroes and those who were the victims: those who were seen as helping to heal people were contrasted with those who were injured and in need of help; those who were seen to be restoring order were contrasted with the chaotic surroundings of debris. This created a hero/victim dichotomy. Such dichotomous relationships align with the theoretical contentions of Baudrillard's work, which often uses dichotomous roles and binary oppositions (2001b: 130-132). This further correlates with Butler (1999: 25) and Baudrillard's theoretical conjecture (2001b: 130-132) that the mass media are able to aid reduplication by dissolving the boundary between reality and simulated reality. The mass media do this by creating roles such as defeat or victory and victim or terrorist. In this case, it is heroes and victims or heroes and destruction. There were only two exceptions to this heroic representation of service people: two servicemen who were not involved in the action - one a fireman slumped against the subway railing; the other an injured serviceman.

Service people unified and always in identifiable gear

The overwhelming majority of images for this subtheme also depicted the service people as unified and working in groups to help each other and everyone else. They were always identifiable because they were fully badged, gloved, masked and uniformed. This was evident in images where the service people stood out against the chaos, whether in white nurse- outfits, black and yellow fire-fighter uniforms, paramedic gear or police uniforms. Such uniforms are a sign of their position, where according to McLaren (1997: 123), social status is

signalled by distinction, with, in other words, the sign object standing out and being evident. Furthermore, the visual images also depicted the majority of service people wearing codes of dress that were representative of willingness to protect, help and serve. This aligns with Clarke's (2003: 65) explanation that the sign object is coded into a sign according to social relations and codes. This links to Baudrillard's first order of simulacra (2000: 50-51), where he explains that signs in this era were fixed in such a way that a person's clothes, for example, could denote their social position within a given society - an example here is the code of a fireman being fluorescent yellow-and-black gear.

4.2 Representative participants

In respect of the relevance of representative participants, Baudrillard believes that dichotomous roles and binary oppositions are created by the mass media, which was evident in the first subtheme of occupational roles (Perry, 1998: 80). This binary opposition was further evident in this subtheme. In the visuals sampled, the majority of people fell in the middle-aged category and there was also a very definite black and white majority. With regard to gender representation, women were overwhelmingly represented as fragile and emotional, while men were mainly represented as strong, determined and less emotional. This was shown by means of actions, which links back to the subtheme of occupational roles where they were involved in some kind of action, such as being stooped over helping and fixing, taking determined strides and going down on their knees and working in the rubble. These images were juxtaposed with images where women were photographed and portrayed as being emotional in reaction to the event. This was further manifested in a variety of similarities amongst the images of woman, such as women covering their mouths with their hands, staring with their mouths agape, with tears in their eyes and with furrowed brows - all intense expressions of emotions, such as shock and horror. The reason for showing such intense emotion correlates with Galer's extrapolation (1999: 136) that photojournalists intentionally use images to narrate the text. Dramatic shots are one of the examples given within the theory. In this way the audience can see the event vicariously through these people's emotions. Furthermore, the emotional linkage was not only illustrated within the visual images but, as Messaris (1997: v-xxii) explains, also within the viewing of a visual as there is a relationship between the signs and what they signify, based on relationships with signs in the code system. In these images, the meaning of the signs of tears, mouths being agape and hands covering mouths would thus all signify women's intense emotional responses in accordance with the popularised hegemonic belief in respect of the gender representation of women as being the weaker sex and thus fragile. This assertion is confirmed by Dobkin and Pace (2003: 155) who explain that women tend to reveal their emotions and are far more expressive than their male counterparts - particularly in westernised societies.

These interpretations again reinforce the notion of a dichotomous relationship occurring. Butler (1999: 25) adds that the mass media are able to aid reduplication by dissolving the boundary between reality and simulated reality. The media create these roles while simultaneously ensuring that the images 'realistically' portray the illusion of an opposition being in existence.

There were two exceptions to these established similarities of representative participants, namely two men who were not involved in the action or helping with any of the heroic acts, and a woman helping a man. The men who were not fulfilling this heroic role were seen as different because - drawing on Klages (2001) theoretical argumentation - ideology creates false consciousness or illusions because people accept ideological representations of the world that allow them to be dominated. This links to the point made by Attias (2005) that, for Baudrillard, the reason for this lies in the fact that simulation supersedes ideology, where ideology betrays reality by the creation and enhancement of reality with signs, while simulation actually takes away reality and reduplicates the sign, thereby creating a simulacrum. In this case, reality is enhanced by the sign of men as being strong and powerful, which leads to the meaning that they are strong protectors helping the 'damsel in distress'.

4.3 Identification of ideals

The majority of findings illustrated within this particular subtheme showed the representation of American patriotism manifested in three dominant ways, namely:

The buildings

Three main categories of buildings - the World Trade Centre, the Pentagon and the Statue of Liberty - became the embodiment of American patriotism. Furthermore, images showed the implosion of the towers as their representation began to metamorphose into the new reality, namely the destroyed towers. The other buildings that were represented, in addition to the towers, were also symbolic icons of American identity: the Statue of Liberty, standing unaffected amongst all the buildings, rising above them with the flame outstretched, exemplified an ideal and principle of American identity, respectfully freedom and equality, this being in direct correlation with Frutiger's (1989: 233) discussion on the allegorical image where these symbols are a figurative representation of something that is abstract, liberty. The second representation of a building as an embodiment of identity and patriotism was that of the damaged Pentagon, a symbol of American military power and protection, which directly aligns with Klein's argument (2001) that the attacks were symbolic warfare in that they hit the symbols of American capitalism (the towers) and military power (the Pentagon). The opportunities for such attacks were increased through globalisation, because through the global community a large amount of information is available and interconnected. Hence Baudrillard (2001a) states that globalisation is fighting itself, because, ultimately, terrorism is a war against the domination of one hegemonic power in order for another to gain dominance. Lye (1997) therefore claims that ideology exists within a cultural framework, and because of this the dominant ideological system is able to maintain power. In this regard it would be the West fighting Islamic terrorist fundamentalists. Thus, the buildings depicting symbolic power and representing American identity were ideological demarcations, and the ideology disseminated - of what was considered to be American - was represented in this instance by the buildings.

Flags

The representation of the American flag was both identifiable and always intact despite all the destruction and debris surrounding it. The significance of the flag as a representation of ideational ideals in their symbolic form indicates a link between the images of the flag and the theoretical suggestions made by Henric and Scarpetta (in Gane, 1993: 133,135) subsequent to interviewing Baudrillard, who stated that America itself can actually be viewed as a trademark. Their signs of identity, according to Baudrillard, are derived from the pathos of national publicity, where it is a sign, such as the stars and stripes – signifying that America is the best and the land of the free - which denotes its national identity. These findings are resonant with Dolan and Dumm's extrapolations (1993: 49-50) that identity is ideational for America because of its iconic quality, where in this instance the flag has prominence as a symbolic representation that was untouched by the damage, indicating that American identity and ideals were not destroyed. Therefore, the findings suggested that the flag became a symbolic reduplication of identity, where the American flag replaced the reality of identity. In corroboration with this line of argumentation, the American flag was represented as a simulation of identity. This draws an association between the findings regarding the representation of the flag as a representation of identity and Baudrillard's views on simulation (1998: 3), when he explains simulation as something that is not pretending but rather a belief in the ideal, which makes reality. Simulations replace the real world by taking over from reality and replacing it with a new reality, which replaces the real with a personification of reality.

President's reaction

The way in which Bush as President was represented gave meaning to the sign within this theme category, yet although the people represented within the visual images of this edition of *Time* magazine showed emotion throughout, the President, in contrast, was emotionless in the three images that depicted him. They showed Bush appearing to be formal, unaffected and emotionless. However, he was also always shown doing some kind of formalised duty as if business was carrying on as usual. Regardless of how the terrorists had tried to destroy America, the President as a representation of American ideals, would still continue his business as usual with a formal, serious and unemotional demeanour.

Collectively, throughout the subtheme of American patriotism the dominant signs depicting American patriotism - buildings, symbols of identity and the President - directly corroborate Baudrillard's line of reasoning (in Dolan & Dumm, 1993: 49-50) that American identity is dependent on representational characteristics in order to secure its identity. The images in which destruction was juxtaposed with those signs of patriotism that were still intact, were significant because they showed that though these particular representations were destroyed, yet the flag and other representational buildings still stood intact and unaffected.

4.4 Camaraderie and unity

Berendse (2003: 1) explains that "the United States of America preferred a disposition that enabled its citizens to forge their emotions into an emphatic and conformed patriotism and

nationalism". This theoretical postulation directly correlates with camaraderie, in that the images illustrated emotion and empathy to complete strangers in the overriding majority of the images. People were seen as being part of a unit, working together to reach some sort of common goal, and demonstrating togetherness, care and emotion to one another. This sense of camaraderie and unity, and illustrations of togetherness and the striving for one goal were manifested in the images showing Americans helping one another and the injured, uniting to fix and remove debris, and being united and joined together in a group. People and their actions were the focal point of these images, thereby reiterating the dominant patterns found within the subthemes of occupational roles and representative participants. For these images, unity was thus the dominant sign as this was a recurring pattern throughout themes depicting people joined together.

With regard to the subthemes of American patriotism and camaraderie and unity, Baudrillard views America as a simulated hyperreality where nothing is real (Gottdiener (1994: 170). Appignanesi (1999: 109) contends that hyperreality emanates from the ability of the real to have an equivalent reproduction; therefore, this already reproduced representation is more real than real and is the hyperreal. Thus, within the dominant majority of images, American ideals and camaraderie and unity have been reduced to signs so that buildings, flags and unity have become the reproduced representations of idealised ideals.

4.5 Religious phenomena

Within this subtheme the dominance of religion is seen through:

Sacred symbols of Western religion

The majority of images that depicted religion, depicted symbols of religion and the dominance of Christianity, such as the cross, and by extension, Christianity. The cross in the image was shown rising above the building, emerging through all the rubble and smoke and was still standing, unaffected by the event. Another image showed a prayer gathering as a symbol of religion, which demonstrated unity in prayer. The people were standing behind pews, joined together and holding hands in what looked like a Christian prayer ceremony. This is in agreement with Fourie's argumentation (2001: 334-335) on symbolic signs, where, because the sign and the referent do not outwardly correspond, these signs are understood through cultural framing. In other words, the meaning of a cross is only understood if it falls into the cultural understanding and has meaning for those viewing it. Subsequently, this aligns with Jonkheid's explanation (1998: 120) of symbolic signs as being signs that take on an arbitrary meaning, i.e. they are not necessarily the exact replicas of what they represent but they are reproductions of the real because they have become the symbol of reality through enculturation and, from a Baudrillardian (1998: 3) perspective, they would be a replicant. One image depicted a skull cap, which is a symbolic representation of the Jewish faith and the only deviation from all the other representations of Christianity. However, it was evident that there was no representation of Islam within any of these images, which directly concurs with Baudrillard's (2001b) point that states that through media constructionism, Islam has become

the embodiment of terrorism. This dominance of Western Christianity aligns with Sawhney's theoretical argument (2002: 40) that, owing to colonialism, Western nations have enjoyed the privilege of controlling societal systems. Because AOL/ Time Warner and *Time* magazine are controlled within the constraints of Western media news flow, as Rampal (2002: 111) postulates, the bulk of information flow within the world is in the hands of an elite few western media monopolies.

The images replace religion as the sign and become a reproduced personification of the reality of Western religion and this directly concurs with the extrapolations of both Clarke (2003: 77) and Baudrillard (1998: 3) that, for Baudrillard, the reproduction of the sign moves away from the counterfeit and the copy to the third order of pure simulacrum, where the real is finally undermined to the extent that there is a real that has an equivalent reproduction. Therefore, the replicant of religion has arrived in the form of religious phenomena being reduced to signs, and to this end the sign becomes the equivalent reproduction of the concrete construct of religion as a concept. Hence these symbolic sacred symbols of religion and the reduction of Christianity to a sign within these visual images, aligns with Baudrillard's established beliefs (1994: 5) that simulation is made possible through signs and images because these signs and images imitate a reality, which is more real than real (hyperreality). The symbolic signs of religion here appeared in visual images in a global publication, therefore they became more real than the reality of religion and replaced religion with a personification of the real through signs such as crosses and prayer. The cross is more real than real because in its connotative meaning the cross represents structure and stability brought into people's lives where, in this context, chaos had begun to emerge. This directly corroborates Kellner's argument (2000: 56) on the ability of mediated religion to create a new reality, new signs and ultimately a simulacrum aligns with Baudrillard's principles that through the mass media a new reality of religion is coming to the fore in which religion is now dominated by signs that are presented within the media. These signs ultimately become the new reality and religion becomes a simulacrum.

4.6 Implosion

The destruction that resulted from the terrorist explosions that subsequently destroyed the physical settings of New York was seen in three ways within the visual images in the subtheme of the implosion in the representation of physical destruction:

Smoke, debris and fire

Zygmunt (1992: 152) states with regard to simulation from a Baudrillardian perspective, that it is not about false representations of an ideology, but it is the hiding of the fact that the real is no longer more real than that, which simulates or feigns it. Therefore, images of the implosion, of the physical destruction, showed the buildings - the twin towers, the Pentagon and the Statue of Liberty - no longer existed as a representation of American identity as was the pattern in the subtheme of American patriotism. Now the reality of those symbols of patriotism, namely the buildings and the unreality of them being destroyed, were colliding to

form the hyperreal. While the explosions and collapsing towers seemed to be unbelievable, the smoke and debris made the unreal real. This creation of the hyperreal directly correlates with Appignanesi (1999: 109) who states that hyperreality comes out of the ability of the real to have an equivalent reproduction and therefore this already reproduced representation is more real than real and is the hyperreal. These images are a representation of the equivalent of what the towers once were and have now become the reproduced representation. It is a form of virtual reality, where Kennedy (2004:1) extrapolates that for Baudrillard terrorist events are now part of this implosion or the hyperreal. Images appear in the media as a mediation of an event, where the real is no longer possible because it is replaced by the implosion of the real time event and the hyperreal of the mediated images.

Images further reify the unbelievability of the event and how implosion was represented as dominating the images within the manifestation of fire, smoke and debris. These images seemed to depict the destruction of this unreal scenario. Yet the fire, smoke and debris brought reality to the event and images, which created an implosion between the real and unreal and in this way, created a hyperreal. The unbelievability was also made visible by the towers being cloaked in the explosion. This intensity of the physical destruction in the form of smoke, debris and fire was not depicted in the image of the statue of Liberty: she was standing unaffected and looking at the destruction behind her, which links back to the subtheme of American patriotism, where the Statue of Liberty was seen as a sign of identity of American ideals. Within this context, the destruction has an ironic meaning because it is almost a meaning of triumph. In all the representations of the buildings, the images of destruction were always overshadowed by some form of patriotism.

Unrecognisable roads scattered with soot and debris

Images related to this subtheme illustrated the once-recognisable streets of New York looking like a barren wasteland, in which there was just this empty destruction covering the once-bustling roads. The city, which would be expected to be abuzz with people, had nothing but soot, debris and red or grey smoke covering the roads. This recurring pattern of barrenness and absolute destruction featured in all of these images, the scale of debris providing evidence of the destruction that had been wrought. This barren effect discernible in the images related to this theme created the feeling that these images had been taken in some alien experience of virtual annihilation and that they alluded to a film, not something real. This directly echoes Denzin's (2000: 39) argumentation that for Baudrillard, the United States of America is a cinematic society where American lives and those of others in the world are reflected back to them by the glare of the media representations, making the real nothing but both the experience of those representing it and the ideology of those disseminating it. Within the particular context of 9/11, the images seemed to be not really real because what was occurring within the streets seemed so utterly unbelievable, with planes flying into buildings, buildings exploding and once-busy city streets now nothing but barren wasteland. And all of this making said images seem an equivalent reproduction of the real and in this way the image becomes a reality that is more real than real. Therefore Baudrillard's (1994: 85) acknowledged thoughts link in that the media institutions want to disseminate a specific

message and they are thus the bearers of these messages, while, however, simultaneously also creating the meaning ascribed to the messages. They are constantly manipulating the masses but, as the simulators of the system, this is inevitable because meaning and messages are needed. Yet this inevitably results in mediated messages (Baudrillard, 1994: 85). As the key simulation machine, the mass media produce signs, images and codes in order to create the formation of a universal model of the hyperreality (Kellner 2002). In this case, it is extremely unreal that those who were previously perceived as 'untouchable' were attacked on their own soil.

Mangled buildings that no longer resembled buildings

The mangled buildings that were unidentifiable were evident in images, in all of which the towers had been reduced to a heap of mangled rubble that did not remotely resemble real buildings but rather mangled pieces of scaffolding. Some images resembled a ghost town - everything was barren and devoid of life.

4.7 Implosion in the representation of human destruction

Hussey (2002: 1) says that for Baudrillard 9/11 did actually take place in real time and space and so it was not a virtual conflict because in fact it was not a combat conflict at all. However, it changed politics within the global arena and so affected all spheres of globalisation as a result of the symbolic irony that the terrorists used global information and communication technology - computer systems and airplanes - and suicide bombers became kamikaze pilots using American aircraft. Hussey (2002: 1) further contends that, in Baudrillard's view, the towers were a representation of global power and it was thus as if this fantasy of destroying global power happened through the hyperreal. Lemon (2003: 368) explains that in most respects people live in a hyperreal world filled with representations; Wright (2004: 47) adds that within hyperreality there is an excess of signs and symbols that cannot be passed because they have become the representation of the real. Hence, as contended, implosion is where the real and the unreal collide to create a hyperreal image that implodes, therefore echoing the point raised by Zygmunt (1992: 151) that visual images in different media mediums such as magazines, simulate global images that actually appear to be more real than the actual events themselves and in this way they are the hyperreal representation. In this case, the hyperreality in respect of the representation of the implosion of human destruction depicted ordinary people dealing with the unbelievable, where the unbelievability showed people as small specks falling out of enormous buildings, people looking shocked and mummified, barely comprehending what was happening and planes flying into buildings.

Perry (1998: 1) states that hyperreality is the way in which the representation of reality has been displaced by simulacra or signs. These specific images, throughout the implosion of physical destruction and human destruction, represented reality through the hyperreal, where what was depicted in the images seemed unreal but had in fact become the new representation of reality for New York after the terrorist attacks and was represented in the visual images as a new representation of reality. This links to Baudrillard (1998: 3) in that simulations replace the real world, taking over from reality and replacing it with a new reality, which replaces the real with a personification of reality. These images created a hyperreality

of the new existence through the unreality of what they depicted and the reality of the fact that these images were the new real. This implies that the terrorist act changed reality, where the unthinkable became the thinkable reality.

5. CONCLUSION

The research question has been answered in that meaning was represented by the reduction, to signs, of the dominant themes and subthemes, and where signs did become representations of reality. This aligns with Baudrillard's views (1998: 3) that a simulation is a replacement of what has been established as reality with a new reality, which then is the personification of the real. Correspondingly, Ashley (1997: 48) states that Baudrillard believes that in mass-mediated cultures everything is a sign and thus a representation of the real and therefore the real loses meaning and is replaced by the hyperreal so that image and form thus devour the real. As Baudrillard (1994: 5-6) postulates, this is not saying that it is not real, but rather that it is hyperreal. However, because Baudrillard believes that reality no longer exists, we are left with nothing but simulations of the real and a hyperreal existence. The actions that culminated in 9/11 seemed unbelievable yet they happened and therefore imploded into a hyperreality. The hyperreality was globalised through both this media medium of *Time* magazine and the subsequent use of signs representing consumer objects as part of the code system, thereby ensuring the historical magnitude of this event as the 'absolute event', or as Baudrillard (2001a) puts it:

We have had many global events from Diana's death to the World Cup, or even violent and real events from wars to genocides. But not one global symbolic event, that is an event not only with global repercussions, but one that questions the very process of globalization... We are even facing, with the World Trade Center & New York hits, the absolute event, the 'mother' of events, the pure event which is the essence of all the events that never happened.

A possible limitation of this study is that the reading of and engaging with these images occurred within a context that is removed from the actual spatial and temporal frame of the event, which influences the interpretation of the findings owing to a changed context of simulacra, simulation and hyperreality. In addition, it is recognised that, because of the nature of the photographic images analysed, it is possible to investigate the topic from, for example, the perspective of picture theory as "[C]ertain themes imbued with visual metaphors and terminologies of looking and seeing have become the staple diet of cultural and media studies: the society of the spectacle and the simulacrum; the politics of representation; the male gaze and the possibility of a female gaze; the mirror stage; fetishism and voyeurism; the reproduction of the image; the 'other' as the projection of racialised discourse" (Evans & Hall, 2009). It is also possible to approach this topic from John Tagg's view :

What alone unites the diversity of the sites in which photography operates as the social formation itself: the specific historical spaces for representation and practice which it constitutes. Photography as such has no identity... It is a flickering across a field of institutional spaces. It is this field we must study, not photography as such (Evans & Hall, 2009).

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APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS OF SUBTHEMES

The themes were defined as follows:

1. Social status: This can be linked to Baudrillard in that, according to Pefanis (1991: 72), social status within a society is linked to the codes that exist within a particular societal setting and the reified relationship that the people who ascribe to this code have with the sign, in other words the sign between people and social status. Furthermore, Baudrillard's work often uses dichotomous roles and binary oppositions. where Baudrillard (2001b: 130-132) explains that the media create a spectacle and within this spectacle dichotomous roles are formed, such as events and non-events or hostages and terrorists. This could extend to other such dichotomous roles like heroes and victims, which further place them within a societal role. The two sub-themes are:
 - a) Occupational roles
This category included any image illustrating a service-related job or profession specifically related to any civil service duties or care giving usually associated with a crisis situation.
 - b) Representative participants
This entailed the nature and type of people represented in the images. This included representation such as the gender of the majority of people, the estimated age group and ethnicity. Age, being hard to pinpoint, was divided into *child*, *adult* and *elderly* people. Ethnicity was defined as the race or cultural grouping of people depicted in the images.
2. Identification of ideals: In the opinion of Vidich (2000: 70), Baudrillard views the United States

of America as the ultimate simulacrum where people believe so much in the American ideals that are presented to them by the mass media that this is the only way that people come to understand them. The ideals, as Baudrillard (in Dolan & Dumm, 1993: 49) points out, are all representations of this 'space and spirit of fiction'. Furthermore, ideals are identifiable through what Jonkheid (1998: 127-141) refers to as a symbol of identity, which is where abstract concepts are identified with symbolic representations to represent a specific ideal, for example a national flag or justice represented as a blindfolded figure. The two sub-themes are:

a) American patriotism

This referred to any visual representation, both physical and symbolical, of America and within society. It was any object or display of pride or love of a person's country as well as a willingness to defend it. This category represented physical symbols of patriotism.

b) Camaraderie and unity

This was depicted by any actions demonstrating a sense of camaraderie, here viewed as any actions or activities illustrating friendship and trust between people or a state of being united in which people represented being part of a whole or a unit. This did not include prayer gatherings, which was part of religious phenomena.

3. Religious phenomena: Religious beliefs in contemporary society, according to Baudrillard (1994: 5-6), have been reduced to signs, where this sign represents religion and as churches and symbols of religion. Kellner (2000a: 56) posits that new aspects of religion created by the mass media, such as evangelical priests, are represented by the media as the reality and have now become a simulacrum of religion. Hence religion has been reduced to signs portrayed within the media. Jonkheid's discussion on sacred symbols (1998: 127-141) aligns with this theme category, where a sacred symbol is, for example, the Crucifix representing Christianity. The subtheme is:

a) Religious signs

This theme encompassed anything connected with a particular religion. All sacred signs from any faith were incorporated as was any visible object or display of worship or signs of religious aspirations of any denomination.

4. Implosion: - As established by Rubenstein (2000: 99), the surreal attempts to separate the real from the imaginary, dreams from reality, the unconscious from the conscious, and so on, whilst the hyperreal refuses the separation and sees the two as imploding together. According to Gane (1993: 6), implosion is the collapse of one thing into the next, to form a hyperreality. Zygmunt (1992: 151) postulates that the hyperreality is more real than real: it is a state in which everything becomes reality. The subthemes are:

a) Implosion in the representation of physical destruction

This category encompassed the idea that people expected to see physical evidence of what is real within the day-to-day workings of a city. Yet, in this situation, the real and unreal were imploding together. This incorporated any physical evidence of destruction to any part of New York during and after the 9/11 attack.

b) Implosion in the representation of human destruction

This subtheme of human destruction collectively encompassed all forms of human loss, suffering or actions that one could scarcely believe were actually occurring in a given context. It was images specifically of human beings involved in activities that seem almost a combination of reality and fantasy.