

**“Representation and Reality”**  
**Professor Seamus McNerney**  
**Humanities 414 Main Group Lecture**

“The very definition of the real has become: that of which it is possible to give an equivalent reproduction. The real is not only that which has been reproduced *but that which is always already reproduced—that is, the hyperreal.*”

How are representations distinct from reality? (The Classical Concern)

How did representations replace reality (hyperreality)? (The Postmodern Circumstance)

Why this is important—

Legal Consequences--Evidence and Interpretation in a hyperreal world

Economic Consequences—Capital and consumerism

Personal Consequences--Alienation

### **I) A Brief Background on the Problem**

1. Ancient Greece

**Plato**—Allegory of the Cave (Book 7, *The Republic*) 400 BCE

--The Forms--TRUTH

--Reality—Once removed from the forms

--Representations=imitation—Twice removed

Imitation is twice removed from reality (the Forms)

2. The Postmodern Response

**Jean Baudrillard**—Simulations 1980 CE

--There is no distinction between the representation and reality

--The representation is reality—*hyperreality*

The simulation is ‘more real’ than the object which is simulated

The media as an institution for perpetuating the hyperreal

Robert Nozick—Hyperreality as ethical?

### **II). Fiction and Non-fiction—Really?**

JL Borges—The anthropologists are studying themselves

Neil Postman—Aldous Huxley—“Brave New World”

### **III). The past imitates the present—what about the future?**

--Following from above, the future is that is already reproduced by the present which itself imitates the past, and so, the past imitates the present which is the future reproduced

**“A History of the Future”—Reynold Reynolds**

--The future as recycled collage