

Original Research Article

Reyhaneh Taghiyari<sup>1</sup> Hossein Ardalani<sup>2</sup> Abolfazl Davoudi Roknabadi<sup>3</sup>

Received: 4 March 2022

Revised: 16 July 2022

Accepted: 31 July 2022

DOI: 10.22055/PYK.2022.17698

URL: [paykareh.scu.ac.ir/article\\_17698.html](http://paykareh.scu.ac.ir/article_17698.html)

How to cite this article: Taghiyari, R., Ardalani, H & Davoudi Roknabadi, A. (2022). Reviewing Baudrillard's Simulacrum Theory in Azadeh Akhlaghi's Photographs. *Paykareh*, 11 (28), pp. 45-55.

The Persian translation of this article is published in the same issue with the following title

بازخوانی نظریه وانمودگی بودریار در عکس‌های آزاده اخلاقی

## Reviewing Baudrillard's Simulacrum Theory in Azadeh Akhlaghi's Photographs\*

### Abstract

**Problem Definition:** Baudrillard's prominent popularity is due to the presence of essential theories such as Simulacrum and Hyperreality. He considers the post-modern world a simulacrum world in which the boundary between reality and representation has disappeared. In matching image and reality, he recounts four stages during which the image goes from the stage of reflecting reality to the stage of concealing reality, then to the stage of concealing the absence of reality. Finally, in the fourth stage, it reaches a stage that has nothing to do with reality and produces Simulacrum. This research explores Baudrillard's philosophy, mentions the four stages of Simulacrum, and reviews it in photography. For this reason, to explain the empirical evidence, Azadeh Akhlaghi's photo series entitled "By an eyewitness" has been chosen to answer the following questions: "What is the function of staged photography? How is Simulacrum depicted in this particular type of photography?"

**Objective:** This research's primary goal is to review Simulacrum in staged photography, specifically in the photo series entitled "By an eyewitness".

**Research Method:** This research is descriptive-analytical, and the data collection method is library-based.

**Results:** This research describes the simulacrum theory and explains its different stages. While introducing staged photography, it concludes that according to the definition of Simulacrum and its function from Baudrillard's point of view, the main focus of the photo series entitled "By an eyewitness", is based on Simulacrum. The photos of this collection, like what Baudrillard mentions in the definition of Simulacrum, are opposed to simulation and have the power to produce reality; thus, they have obviously challenged the reality that happened in the past.

### Keywords

Jean Baudrillard, Azadeh Akhlaghi, Simulacrum, Staged Photography

1. Department of Philosophy of Art, College of Arts and Architecture, Central Tehran Branch, Azad University of Tehran Center, Tehran, Iran.

2. Corresponding Author, Department of Philosophy of Art, Faculty of Art and Architecture, Hamadan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Hamadan, Iran.

Email: [h.ardalani@iauh.ac.ir](mailto:h.ardalani@iauh.ac.ir)

3. Department of Textile and Clothing Design, Faculty of Art and Architecture, Yazd Branch, Islamic Azad University, Yazd, Iran.

\*This article is extracted from the doctoral dissertation of the first author entitled "Philosophical reading of staged photography focusing on the concepts of Simulacrum and Hyperreality from the perspective of Jean Baudrillard" under the guidance of the second author and the advice of the third author.

### Introduction

In 1981, "Jean Baudrillard" hit his fatal strike on reality. He claimed that the formation of traditional societies in the past was based on symbolic exchanges, and after that, in modernity, the production element has been responsible for this consistency and formation. However, in today's era, the concept of Simulation/Simulacrum is responsible for it, and every moment we witness the representation and simulation of truth in images and media, during which reality has separated from itself the signs that guarantee its existence and now the signs that are making things real; But in the form of simulation and without reference to the principle of reality. By expressing the circulation of signs on their way to be placed in the position of the real thing, he paints the world today: "Desert of the real". Baudrillard does not consider simulation a question of truth; instead, its purpose is to hide the fact that the real thing is no longer real. Mentioning two examples, Watergate and Disneyland, and explaining the impact these two have had on our perception of reality, he expresses his meaning of Hyperreality in the way that in both of these examples, what usually is happening in the world is covered and some deception takes place. The present research deals with the presentation of Baudrillard's simulacrum hierarchy to express its importance, as it was in his opinion, and for a better understanding of the topic, several photos from the photo series of Ms. Azadeh Akhlaghi have been used as visual examples. The main goal of this study is to explain the concept of Simulacrum from Baudrillard's point of view, to read it in the art of photography, especially staged photography, so that in the end, it can answer the following essential questions: "What is the function of staged photography in showing reality and hyperreality?" and "Where is the narrow border between staged photography and other types, especially documentary and news photography?"

### Research Method

The basis of this research is descriptive-analytical. For this purpose and using the library-based method, the study of written texts, including books and articles, in Farsi or English language, and the study of theses with the related subject has been done. After reviewing the literature, the desired philosophy was analyzed. To clarify the discussion, the philosophical concept of Simulacrum was reviewed in three frames from the selected photo series. Finally, the results obtained were presented as the conclusion of the research.

### Research Background

Regarding the presence of Simulacrum in staged photography, which was analyzed in this article, no independent source was found as the background of the research. However, articles and theses have been written considering this concept and focusing on Baudrillard's general ideas about Simulacrum and its traces in art. "Mansouryan" (2012), in the article entitled "Simulation: History and Concept. A look at the requirements of simulation for society and contemporary art from the perspective of Baudrillard", concludes that the current conditions and existing functions can be considered to increase the consumption and passivity of the subject. In this situation, all areas, including politics, art, and religion, are interwoven with non-referential codes beyond the concept of simulation. Also, he (2013), in his article entitled "Art and truth of media in the post-modern era: examining the media as a producer of representation from the perspective of Baudrillard", believes that the media, in terms of content, has undergone fundamental changes and has even moved towards the deconstruction of news. "Jamshidi" (2017), in his dissertation, "Semiotics of the concept of artistic superstar according to Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulacrum", has investigated the position of artistic superstar and its effects on human knowledge and cognition based

on Baudrillard's theory of Simulacrum. "Payandeh" (2012) in "The outbreak of copy over original" examines Baudrillard's views on media and postmodernism. Quoting Baudrillard states that in the post-modern world, all aspects of our lives, including politics, history, and culture, are full of unreal and Simulacrum elements. "Farahbakhshpour and Shayganfar" (2020), in "Investigating the symbolic system of simulacrum according to Baudrillard's view and its application to the scope of post-modern photography with an emphasis on the works of Sherry Levin", analyze Baudrillard's reasons for his argument on the invalidity of contemporary art and in post-modern photography. There is also an article in English by "Butler" (2005) entitled "Baudrillard's reflections on designing with light or photography", in which he studies Baudrillard's theoretical issues about photography. "Furqani" (2010), in "Media reality, creation of hyperreality: Review and criticism of Jean Baudrillard's communication thoughts", suggests that in post-modern philosophy, Hyperreality breaks the boundary between reality and imagination, and therefore, the recognition of the principle of reality is imperative. From the results of the study of the mentioned cases, it can be concluded that we are now living in a world where reality gradually disappears, and we deal with signs of reality every day that are made by our own minds and sometimes do not have the slightest connection with the essence of reality. Therefore, it seems that today, knowing the simulacrum theory helps in a better understanding of current issues, especially art and various types of arts and new arts. In the upcoming article, Baudrillard's simulacrum theory in the photos series is reviewed by choosing a series of photos prepared in the of staged photography style. Then, by analyzing three frames of the photo collection, the signs of Simulacrum in these photos are investigated, the artist's self-portraits in the photos are decoded, and the relationship between these elements and Baudrillard's Simulacrum is clarified.

### **Baudrillard**

In fact, Jean Baudrillard can be considered one of the most famous postmodernist thinkers, and his ideas of Simulacrum and Hyperreality are among the most controversial. One of the crucial arguments of postmodernists is the discussion of reality and Simulacrum. According to their interpretation, the Simulacrum is a kind of simulation: it is something that simulates reality (Mohammad Kashi, 1999, p. 72). Suppose a thinker is found and, for example, says that the September 11 incident did not happen. In that case, it is natural that not only a large number of ordinary people but also many thinkers accuse him of ignorance and misunderstanding. But those who are not hasty and listen carefully to this thinker's words understand that he is talking about one of the essential characteristics of the post-modern period: the agreement of media representations of reality. Whether we like it or not, we live in a post-modern world, so the ideas of post-modern thinkers like Baudrillard can be useful. In the modern period, two components were effective in social life: commodity production and class conflict. But according to Baudrillard's belief, in the post-modern period, these two components have given their place to the image and the game of signs. Technology in contemporary society has the same status as capital in the capitalist period. Baudrillard believes that postmodernity is a period in which command and information technology have led to very extensive simulations, especially visual simulations. The predominance of Simulacra and simulated images in a post-modern society is so much that it is impossible to distinguish the original from the fake. In his famous book entitled "Simulacra and Simulation", Baudrillard states: "It is no longer an imitation of reality or even a mocking imitation of reality. Rather, the issue is to replace the signs of the real thing instead of the real thing itself. It is no longer possible to create the illusion of reality [as stated in the

literary theories of the realism period, and literature was considered to create the illusion of reality]. Because the representation of the real thing has become impossible [since the real thing is copied instead of represented]" (Baudrillard, 1993, quoted by Payandeh, 2012, p. 283).

### Simulacrum

To better understand the word Simulacrum, the word "denial" is considered. Denial means simulating not having something right when we have it. Contrasted with denial is the simulation, which means pretending to have something when you do not; one refers to the presence and the other to absence. But the issue is more complicated than this because simulation is not the same as pretending: "A person who simulates being sick can lie in bed and admit to others that he is sick. A person who simulates being infected must show some symptoms. Simulation calls into question the difference between true and false, real and imaginary" (Baudrillard, 2019, p. 12). Baudrillard contrasts simulation with representation and considers representation to be derived from the principle of equivalence of sign and the real thing. However, he states that Simulacrum comes from the complete negation of the sign as a value, and the sign itself destroys its referent. He proves that images have had different functions throughout history. The image has gone from the stage of reflecting reality to the stage of concealing reality, and then to the stage of concealing the absence of reality, and finally, it has reached a stage that has nothing to do with any realities (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 6). However, even before he traced these stages, Baudrillard had pointed to the image's changing state in the book "Symbolic Exchange and Death" (1993). In the same book, he proposed the three levels of Simulacrum (meaning appearance or likeness) to describe the different ways of producing, circulating, and using images and our relationship with them. Later, the fourth order was added (Toffoletti, 2017, p. 37). According to Baudrillard, the successive stages of the image are as follows: "1. The image reflects a deep reality; 2. The image covers a deep reality and changes its nature; 3. The image covers the absence of deep reality; 4. The image has no relationship with reality, whatever it may be, and is a pure simulacrum. In the first case, the image is good; it represents the type of religious ritual. In the second case, the image is apparently bad, representing the type of evil deeds. In the third case, the image shows itself as an appearance of something, a representation of magic. In the fourth case, the image is apparently nothing at all; rather, it is a simulation" (Baudrillard, 2019, p. 17). Referring to this immersion in the visuals, Baudrillard believes that "we cannot speak about representations as if they are a reflection or a reaction to the world; they are the world itself" (Baudrillard, 2001, p. 45). Baudrillard considers Disneyland a perfect example of complex simulacra: "In the first place, it is a hallucinatory and imaginary game: pirates, borderland, future world, etc. It has been suspected that this world's fictionality has caused this operation's success. However, what attracts people is undoubtedly the microcosm of social and religious pleasures on a small scale in real America with all its limitations and amusements. You park your car outside its premises, stand in line inside, and when leaving, you are left alone. The only supernatural show in this imaginary world is the inherent love and intimacy of the people and a large enough number of gadgets that aim to create a crowd effect. This can be compared to the absolute solitude of the parking lot, which looks like a kind of detention center. A better interpretation is that inside, all kinds of gadgets<sup>1</sup> attract the crowd of people in a guided way, and outside, a person, alone and in solitude, is directed towards only one gadget: the car" (Baudrillard, 2019, p. 25). "Simulation hides the fact that everything is part of a single game; It gives a new life to the principle of reality, this time like a corpse rising

from the grave. One cannot get out of the simulation. Any attempt to penetrate its shell only makes it thicker. The battle with simulation is a kind of simulation" (Bauman, 2005, p. 265). In a review of his photographs entitled "The Parade of Shadows," Baudrillard calls human life golden before the emergence of the acute crisis of reality and relates the elements in his photographs to that era. He says: "All these theatrical images are like a reflection of the previous world; A world in which we were still pure shadows; the golden age in which humanity had not yet thrown itself into the brutal light of the real world, into this contemporary desert where all shadows surrender to artificial light and virtual reality" (Baudrillard, 2006, p. 16).

### Staged Photography

"Staged photography" refers to the design of an imaginary visual world and photography done by applying personal opinion in the scene and explicitly taking photos. Staged photography has become very important in contemporary photography since the late eighties, and its primary goal is to create narrative images. In this type of photography, the photographer utilizes many facilities and arts such as painting, sculpture, decor design, acting, and make-up to achieve his desired narrative. Sometimes the audience thinks that they are subjected to a news photo or a photo from a movie scene. Historically, the self-portrait of the drowned man (See Figure 1) by Hippolyte Bayard<sup>2</sup>, which was photographed in 1840 AD., is considered the first photograph in the style of staged photography. In the history of photography, it has been stated that Bayard created this photo as a protest against the authorities ignoring his efforts and new achievements in photography, and many photographers have continued this practice over time; For example: "Gustave Rejlander<sup>3</sup>" in the work of two ways of life, some of the works of "Peach Robinson<sup>4</sup>", the Italian mother (See Figure 2) by "Jacob Riis<sup>5</sup>", etc. Photography, which during the 20th century was focused on recording the definitive moment, has since opened a new path in the heart of fine arts. Photographer artists concluded that it is possible to produce a definitive moment artificially or take a moment from the history of painting and give it a physical and objective embodiment in a photo (Samadzadeghan, 2019, p. 81), which resulted in the photos of photographers such as "Joel-peter Witkin (1939)", "Sandy Skoglund (1946)", "Jeff Wall (1946)", "Thomas Struth (1954)", "Louise Lawler (1974)", "Eleanor Antin (2001)", and many others.



**Figure 1.** "The Drowned Man", 1840,  
Photographer: Hippolyte Bayard.  
Source: <https://Akkasee.com>.



**Figure 2.** "Italian mother and child", 1890,  
photographer: Jacob Riis.  
Source: <https://chiilick.com>.

## PAYKAREH

Journal of Art Faculty, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz

Reviewing Baudrillard's Simulacrum Theory in Azadeh Akhlaghi's Photographs

Volume 11 Issue 28. Page 45-55

50

Staged photography in Iran has been of great interest since ancient times and still is. The first examples of this genre of photography are related to the early years of the arrival of photography in Iran during the Qajar period. Naser al-Din Shah himself has taken many photos in this genre. There are also many others, including Sevruguin's group portrait of a family standing in front of a floral curtain and a painted background. In recent years, many collections of contemporary photographers in the field of staged photography have been observed, among which the following can be mentioned: Div o Dad collection by Kaveh Golestan; The Armenians collection and the Temptation collection (See Figure 3), by Sadegh Tirafkan; Ascention Collection, by Zahra Irani Sefat; Knot Collection, Jalal Sepehr; Look collection (See Figure 4), by Nyusha Tavakolyan; Qajar collection (See Figure 5), by Shadi Qadiryani; By an eyewitness, by Azadeh Akhlaghi.



**Figure 3.** "Temptation Collection", 2006, photographer: Sadegh Tirafkan. Source: <https://artchart.net>



**Figure 4.** "Look Collection", 2012, photographer: Nyusha Tavakolyan. Source: <https://Akkasee.com>.



**Figure 5.** "Qajar collection", 1377, photographer: Shadi Qadiryani. Source: <https://art-seven.ir>

Staged photography sometimes includes narration and storytelling, which in this case is close to news or film photography, or sometimes it is without a narrative theme, which may be similar to surreal photography. Staged photography serves art not as a document of reality but as a media possibility. In staged photography, the photographer does not seek to capture the scene and show the event that happened in reality. Rather, he seeks to photograph his personal impressions of the narratives. So, instead of depicting reality, he consciously creates it: "the creation of reality, as opposed to the presentation of reality, came from an awareness that placed it in a separate position compared to the previously created photos" (Manouchehar Zadeh, 2019, p. 46). Today, the world of images seems so prominent that it does not accept photographs, alone or in general, as simple proofs of a scientific fact. Instead, they display the confusing diversity of information in universal and interconnected systems (Grundberg, 2013, p. 329). In staged photography, the photographer gets out of passivity; he has the power to create a narrative and define it based on his personal perception; Therefore, photography no longer seems to be a simple representation of the world. Rather, photography somehow brings the world into its game and enters the arena of photographic action.

### Azadeh Akhlaghi

Azadeh Akhlaghi, born in 1357 in Shiraz, is a meta-conceptual artist focused on photography, video art, and making short films. He is a graduate of photography in Australia. "By an Eyewitness" is one of the great photography projects of Ms. Akhlaghi. She has done this project in Iran for three years, and the result is a photo collection with 17 frames, which is very artistic, precise, and detailed. This collection deals with the topic of

showing the moment of death of 17 famous people in the history of Iran: Deaths for which no photos are available. Akhlaghi, in this excellent photography project, has not been captured by repeating and photographing what exists. She has gone to photograph what does not exist but still is impressive or unforgettable. She says: "I am a detective who discovers history." In this collection, the moment of death of many people, such as "Mirzadeh Eshghi", "Mohammad Farrokhi Yazdi", "Forough Farrokhzad", "Mohammad Mosadegh", "Samad Behrangi", "Ali Shariati", etc. have been shown. This is one of the most outstanding photography projects in Iran; The three-year project, which included a lot of research, is the recording of seventeen frames, has a very good and accurate performance, and is full of details. In performing these photos, a large group has helped Ms. Akhlaghi, including "Sasan Tavakoli Farsani" (photographer and visual effects manager) and "Zhila Mehrjooi" (Scene and costume designer).

### Analysis of three frames of photos in the collection<sup>6</sup>

One of these frames is dedicated to the death scene of the Iranian poet Forough Farrokhzad<sup>7</sup> (See Figure 6). After the death of this poet in a traffic accident on February 13, 1967, descriptions of the scene of his death were recorded in newspapers. Using these descriptions and with the help of stage designers, Azadeh Akhlaghi recreated the death of Forough Farrokhzad.



**Figure 6.** Tehran, 13<sup>th</sup> February 1967, Forough Farrokhzad. Photographer: Azadeh Akhlaghi. Source: <https://blog.navaar.ir>.

Akhlaghi's effort in recreating this scene has brought this photo closer to the world of documentary photography; although everything is a recreation, the meticulousness and Akhlaghi's point of view in recording this moment and its design make this very believable photo happen to the viewer. Akhlaghi's photography technique in this series and the photograph of Forough's death scene is the technique of photographing a filming sequence, Like the frozen<sup>8</sup> moment from a movie. This technique has made this photo so alive, and the audience accepts the scene. Shooting in a frame that conveys information concisely and completely, along with the design of all the details, has caused a complete image. Using the principles of spatial architecture and the arrangement of existing elements has made the audience see themselves in the heart of the incident and believe that the photographer has seen this scene closely. However, all the presentation elements and the image frame depend on the artist's perspective on the incident (pulse of art). What is considered Akhlaghi's strength in these works and another interesting point that is regarded as a kind of Akhlaghi's signature is her presence as one of the scene elements in the photo. In the scene of Forough's

death, Akhlaghi plays the role of a worried woman who rushes towards Forough's body; in the farthest part, she is running towards Forough wearing a modern dress. Here, the photographer, as a sublime way of putting the ego at the service of reality, has used the representation of her presence in the frame to construct reality, according to her personal perception, "which photography shows us reality in a way that we have not seen before. (Sontag, 2013, p. 141). Therefore, by showing her presence in the frame, the photographer produces and constructs reality. In fact, the presence of the photographer, as a kind of observer of the event, an observer who we know was not present at the moment of the incident but now has a heavy and mesmerizing presence in its representation, obviously draws the attention of the audience with a kind of hypnotic mechanism. Another frame from this collection refers to the death of Dr. Mosadegh<sup>9</sup> (See Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** Ahmedabad, Iran, 4th March, 1968 - Mohammad Mossadegh. Photographer: Azadeh Akhlaghi. Source: <https://blog.navaar.ir>.

The photo shows an open view of an area with a mansion in the background and a humble wooden bed on which Mossadegh's shrouded body rests, with the tricolor flag of Iran on it; a photograph with a horizontal frame and wide view, which is more like a photo from a movie scene. History as an exploitable scenario is now on the verge of a redefinition every day and every moment. Historical reality has changed in a way beyond what was imagined. Adaptation of Simulacrum to the real has occurred, and now all that we know of history is limited to the Simulacrum that reproduces itself every day and every moment. According to Baudrillard, "Simulacra have taken control of history" (Kobourani, 2019, p. 127). This is what happened in the seemingly historical photos of this collection because these images are the product of the photographer's personal imagination, which has been exposed to the audience in the form of such images. In fact, the photographer of this collection, aware of the irreplaceable possibility of recording moments through the medium of photography, seems to have fought a battle with the continuous flow of time and tried to present the reality of his mind to the audience in the form of photography art. Again we see Akhlaghi standing in the frame of the mansion, somewhere close to one of the golden points of the frame, with a different color and type of cover, far away; However, wholly exposed to the attention of the viewer. They are so real that they seem unreal at the same time. It is so distant and yet so impressive that it subjects us to wonder at the apparent fundamental reality of the world or at what may lie beyond the absolute reality of this world. The sense of wonder caused by the eye-catching image turns it into an enchanted simulation. In another frame, we see the death scene of Mirzadeh Eshghi<sup>10</sup> (See Figure 8); a view of the mansion in the inner courtyard of the house, and people running in a hurry, maybe hoping for help.



## PAYKAREH

Journal of Art Faculty, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz

Reviewing Baudrillard's Simulacrum Theory in Azadeh Akhlaghi's Photographs

Volume 11 Issue 28. Page 45-55

53



**Figure 8.** Mashhad,  
3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1924-  
Mirzadeh Eshghi.  
Photographer:  
Azadeh Akhlaghi.  
Source:  
<https://blog.navaar.ir>.

The poet's body is lying on the pavement of the yard. Everyone is running, and again the photographer, in the form of an eye-catching image, on the stairs of the basement, as if in a frozen and calm moment, is the only witness to the story; a seductive image of the photographer who does not seek to confuse herself with the real thing. This image, consciously produced through play and trickery, presents itself as a simulacrum. By sarcastic imitation of the third dimension, the eye-deceiving image questions its reality, and by sarcastic imitation and exaggeration of the real thing, it radically challenges the principle of reality (Baudrillard, 1990, p. 63). In this collection, the occasional presence of the photographer creates the illusion of the observer's presence in those historical moments so that the illusion of the reality of the scene, based on the photographer's imagination, appears more real through it. As Baudrillard also believes about Disneyland, the imaginary reason for showing it is to convince us that compared to it, we think that the size of things is real. But the truth is that there is no real America anymore, and everything is Simulacrum and Hyperreality. Here too (according to Baudrillard's argument), the audience stares at all the details as if he wants to know the reality of what happened at that moment by seeing the presence of the photographer in the images (and knowing that she was not present there at that particular moment), considers the rest of the narrative in the photo to be true.

### Conclusion

According to the mentioned evidence, we can now consider the photos of this collection to be Simulacrum. Because according to Baudrillard's definitions, in Simulacrum, the definitive relationship between the copy and the original - as seen in the classical aesthetic model - will be canceled, and we will enter the independent realm of the copy, the same field that Baudrillard refers to as the priority of Simulacrum. What we know as a document in documentary photography loses its meaning when it enters staged photography and becomes a new object with its own rules. For example, in documentary photography and news photography, it is necessary to be faithful to show the exact reality, and any interference by the photographer can mean the publication of lies. However, in staged photography, with the formation of the mechanism of artistic Simulacrum, photography finds a new identity, and its direct relationships with concrete truth can be cut. Therefore, the photos of this collection are no longer a mirror in front of existence and its effects, and in no way do they merely show the historical events that happened. These photos will appear as a window that opens to the world of the photographer's mind and not necessarily to historical events. Baudrillard, who has always tried to get rid of the narrowness of the subject, considers dealing with the object as a solution to overcome this crisis. The photos

in this collection are full of simulacra that replace the original and make it impossible to distinguish between the original and the fake version, so they have no apparent reference to the real world and the events that actually happened. Therefore, they cannot be used as evidence for reading history. The presence of the photographer in the photos is the simulation of enchantment. Contemporary Simulacrum has come from a secondary position and has even gone beyond it in Baudrillard's interpretation. While independent from concrete reality, it has an irrational nature. This means that there is no obligation for it to be rational. Just like the photographer's presence in the collection's photos, it can be seen carefully in the pictures that Akhlaghi has faked her absence in the real-time incident. With a red shawl, she is somehow present in most of the collection's frames; in some photos, she is standing motionless in a corner, and in some scenes, she is also running. In fact, she not only fakes her own disappearance in the image but also presents this disappearance as a surreal document. The photographer's presence is actually an enchanted simulation of her absence; her absence at the moment when that death happened, and now the photographer has recreated its image using her imagination. There is an impossible exchange between reality and its image in these images. In fact, the photographer's absence at the time of the incident is recorded in these images by showing her inappropriate presence. A kind of transformation happens between subject and object; an object that is only a sign of the disappearance and absence of other things. Therefore, the photographer's presence in the collection of images can be considered a kind of illusion; an illusion that is real and enables us to understand what happened and the artist's imagination in recreating death scenes.

### Appendix

1. Gadget refers to small mechanical or electronic devices that are often small in size and have many and specific uses in life. In other words, tools that are useful and widely used to do things. Source: <https://vajehyab.com>.
2. Hippolyte Bayard (1801-1887), French Photographer
3. Oscar Gustave Rejlander (1813-1875), Swedish Photographer
4. Henry Peach Robinson (1830-1901), British Photographer
5. Jacob Riis (1849-1914), Danish-American photographer
6. To use the photos, permission has been obtained directly from the photographer of the collection, Ms. Azadeh Akhlaghi.
7. Famous Iranian poet. Date of death: 13<sup>th</sup> February 1967.
8. means to keep steady, stabilizing a moving object in photography.
9. Iranian politician. Date of death: 4<sup>th</sup> March, 1968.
10. Iranian Poet and Writer. Date of Death: 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1924

### References

- Baudrillard, J. (1990). *Seduction*. Basingstoke and London: Macmillan.
- Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation*. Michigan, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (2001). *Fragments* (Ch. Turner, Trans). London and New York: Routledge.
- Baudrillard, J. (2006). The writing of the shadows'. *C International Photo Magazine*, (2), pp. 14-16.
- Baudrillard, J. (2019). *Simulacra and simulation* (P. Yazidi, Trans.). Tehran: Sales.
- Bauman, Z. (2005). *Intimations of postmodernity* (H. Chavoshyan, Trans.). Tehran: Qoqnous.
- Butler, R. (2005). *Baudrillard's Light Writing or Photographic Thought, Victoria Grace, Heather Worth and Laurence Simmons*. Baudrillard: West of the Dateline. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.
- Farahbakhshpour, H. & Shayganfar, N. (2020). Examining the symbolic system of simulation from Baudrillard's point of view and applying it to the scope of post-modern photography with an emphasis on Sherrie Levine's works. *Art Guide/Visual Arts*, 3(4), pp. 87-94.

- Furqani, M. M. (2010). Media reality, creation of hyperreality, a review and critique of Jean Baudrillard's communication thoughts. *Media Studies*, 5(9), pp. 35-65.
- Grundberg, A. (2013). *Crisis of reality about contemporary photography* (M. Ebrahimi Moghadam and M. Ladani, Trans.). Tehran: Art Academy.
- Jamshidi, A. R. (2017). *Semiotics of the concept of artistic superstar according to Jean Baudrillard's theory of Simulacrum* (Master's thesis in art research). Faculty of Arts, Semnan University, Semnan, Iran.
- Kobourani, M. (2019). A look at the redefinition of history in directed photographs of war. *Photography Quarterly*, 4(5), pp. 124-129.
- Manouchehr Zadeh, R. (2019). Staged photography, a fake reality. *Photography Quarterly*, 4(5), pp. 43-61.
- Mansouryan, S. (2012). Simulation: History and Concept - A look at the imperatives of simulation for contemporary society and art from the perspective of Jean Baudrillard. *Kimiaye Honar Quarterly*, 2(2), pp. 109-120.
- Mansouryan, S. (2013). Media art and truth in the post-modern era: Examining the media as a producer of simulation from the perspective of Baudrillard. *Kimiaye Honar Quarterly*, 3(8), pp. 59-72.
- Mohammad Kashi, S. (1999). A comparative study of the theoretical foundations of postmodernism and post-modern cinema. *Farabi*, 10(34), pp. 70-89.
- Payandeh, H. (2012). The rise of copy over the original: An examination of Baudrillard's view on media and postmodernism. *Surah Andisheh Monthly*, 91(58), pp. 282-285.
- Samadzadeghan, B. (2019). Connecting staged photography to painting. *Photography Quarterly*, 4(5), pp. 77-92.
- Sontag, S. (2013). *About photography* (M. Akhgar, Trans.). Tehran: Nazar.
- Toffoletti, K. (2017). *Baudrillard in another frame*. (V. Mousavi, Trans.). Tehran: Institute of authoring, translating and publishing text artworks.

