

the popular activities and habitual usage that occur in and through them, and thus people mold or shape space by the way in which they use or abuse it.

### Legacy

Simmel's concern with the distinctive qualities that made the modern city a new phenomenon with consequences for the individual and for the organization, maintenance, and regulation of modern society was focused on everyday, microsociological phenomena. The city provided Simmel with the raw material for his theoretical analyses and investigations. In particular, Simmel's influence on American sociology (and the development of the Chicago School, biologically based metaphor of the human ecology model of urban development and competition in particular) is well documented. Simmel also explored the increasing reification, exchange, circulation, and consumption of social relations and interactions dominated by money, which is of continuing importance to contemporary urban and social analyses. The impersonality, cynicism, and blasé character of city life; the commodification and objectification of culture; fashion, style, and adornment as emblems or signs of identity and status; and social distance and spatial proximity to strangers are still important and relevant factors in the analysis of increasingly complex, mobile, and multicultural urban concentrations. Simmel's theory of modern society and of the city is therefore of continuing value and affinity not only to historical analyses of the development of cities of modernity but also to late or postmodern and contemporary studies of the consequences and experience of urban expansion throughout the world in an era of globalization.

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*See also* Urban Sociology; Urban Theory

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## SIMULACRA

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The word *simulacra*, or *simulacrum* in the singular, is often associated with the idea of the "fake." *To simulate* means to feign or to pretend; *simulation* refers to the practice of simulating; and *simulacrum* refers to something that has the appearance of another thing but supposedly not its "essence." The French philosopher Jean Baudrillard was the first to elevate "simulacra" to one of the central concepts of postmodern cultural analysis and contemporary urban studies. However, the simulacrum is a philosophical problem with a long history dating back to the ancient Greek philosophers. Plato (ca. 360 BC) argues—using the famous allegory of the cave—that the immediate sensory perception is an illusive reflection of the actual metaphysical reality. In the twentieth century, Gilles Deleuze explains that the essential difference between the copy and the simulacrum is that whereas the first is authorized by resemblance, the latter implies corruption by disguise and difference. He advocates that the simulation is not a copy of the second order; on the contrary, it possesses a productive power in and of itself. For example, an insect may use the strategy of camouflage to temporarily mimic the appearance of the surrounding environment in order to protect itself. Interpreted in this way, the power of

simulacrum lies in its capacity to transcend the duality of the original and the copy.

Baudrillard acknowledges, with pessimism, that simulation threatens the difference between the original and the copy. For example, he who simulates an illness may also suffer and display the symptoms of that illness. This may be interpreted as a “liquidation,” wherein it is no longer possible to tell the difference between an original and a copy to the point of rendering the very distinction irrelevant. As narrated in a famous short story by Jorge Luis Borges in 1935, the drive for exactitude in science results in the production of a map so detailed that it covers the territory it seeks to represent and becomes indistinguishable from it. At its extreme, the map becomes the territory, forcing a reversal of this traditional relationship into the new concept of hyperreality. Hyperreality, in this case, is the idea of simulating something that never really existed. Baudrillard defines a genealogy for the development of simulacra through successive phases of the image, from the reflection of a reality toward its masking, to its absence, and finally arriving at no relationship with reality at all. Disneyland masks the absence of a “real” country outside the boundaries of the theme park. The America outside this theme park is a simulacrum created by competing signs and simulations. This analysis provides a historical dimension to the philosophical issue and provides an opening that makes simulacra relevant to urban studies because it connects discussions of consumption, media (Marshall McLuhan), discipline (Michel Foucault), and urbanism (Edward Soja).

The concept of simulacra has emerged in recent practices as a fundamental aspect of contemporary urbanism. Film and advertising were the media through which people predominantly experienced and interacted with cities throughout the twentieth century. New media in the twenty-first century, such as computer role-playing games and the Internet, have joined the older twentieth-century “mass” media in shaping urban experience. Despite admonishments by Frankfurt School critics and later others, it is no longer possible to consider media simply as a panoptic system received by a passive mass audience. As McLuhan has argued, the medium and message are indistinguishable. Virtual, reel, or screen cities are not mere representations of the physical environment. One manifestation of this

is that urban governments are increasingly investing in the production of media images and manicuring their built environments to fit their popular virtual images. The examination of the relationship between urban space and “cinematic” form has spawned, in the past decade, a new area of scholarship—cinematic urbanism—that seeks to highlight and analyze the continuum between the real and the reel.

Physical environments around the world are increasingly produced as images. One may distinguish three types that have different relationships with the “real.” The first type is created as an image based on a material past with a documented history. America’s premier public-history site, Colonial Williamsburg, is a good example of this type. It is a highly edited and stylized version of history—one that celebrates the colonial elite of Virginia for patriotism-pitched consumption, without delivering the harshness of slavery, which might make tourists uncomfortable. The second type is dream landscapes that replicate historical settings reduced to their basic representations. Most typically, the Eiffel Tower stands in for Paris in many theme parks. The ultimate example of this type of environment is Disneyland. The third type of environment is produced as an image with much looser ties to history and looser claims and pretensions to the real. In Las Vegas, themed casino complexes do not pretend to have any authenticity. Some may argue that visitors need not see the real Paris because they have seen its simulacrum in Las Vegas. In this case, the copy is so faithfully reproduced within context to the point that allows it to supplant the original. Although it continues to derive its authority from its relationship to the original, the desire to experience the original becomes greatly reduced because of the power of the copy.

Urban geographers eagerly use the concept of simulacra to discuss contemporary urbanism in such sites as Orange County in southern California, which they label with names such as exopolis or postmetropolis. Orange County cannot be considered a suburb anymore because it features all the functions that were formerly associated with the city. This new kind of urbanization lacks history and a sense of place, which leads conservative architects, especially since the 1980s, to come up with nostalgic design

approaches that attempt to reinsert history, even if invented, into urbanism. New antiurban utopian visions, exemplified in new urbanism, encourage the creation of public spaces that resemble small town squares, but which are highly controlled and hence negate the possibility of public assembly. New urbanism is only one aspect of a trend toward nostalgic neotraditional environments. This trend often enlists actual restored environments that are a result of preservation movements. Postmodernism has created a new urban vision based on a populism of highly differentiated signs and symbols. In the production of such urban symbolism, vernacular traditions and the local history of any place can be readily mined and combined with other elements of emerging global forms to create a stylistic eclecticism. Thus the adapted traditions often became associated with media images to take on meanings beyond their former or immediate social or economic context. This is the reality of the simulated urbanism that accompanies the beginning of the twenty-first century.

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See also Cinematic Urbanism; Exopolis; Las Vegas, Nevada; New Urbanism; Soja, Edward W.; Themed Environments

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## SINGAPORE

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Located at the southern point of the Malay peninsula, Singapore is an island city-state, which gained independence as a sovereign nation-state in 1965. With a current population size of 4.5 million (of which only 70 percent are citizens) and a land area of about 700 square kilometers (of which 10 percent is derived from reclamation), Singapore—with a population density of over 6,000 people per square kilometer—is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Comprising a majority Chinese population (75.2 percent), the city-state is also home to substantial minority ethnic groups (Malays, 13.6 percent, and Indians, 8.8 percent) as well as a broad diversity of other ethnic, language, and nationality groups (officially classified as Others, 2.2 percent). In the postindependence years, Singapore has been rapidly transformed by processes of urbanization and industrialization under a state-led developmentalist regime, under which the urban built environment has been subjected to a high degree of central planning control.

### The Colonial City

A product of British mercantile capitalism, urban settlement in Singapore grew from small beginnings as a trading post established in 1819 by Stamford Raffles, an agent of the East India Company, to become the commercial capital of the British Far Eastern Empire and a clearinghouse for commodities and labor in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. The emergence of a world market and a system of trade oriented toward the needs of the industrializing West in the late nineteenth century confirmed Singapore's position as a premier transaction point for the east–west trade route and a base for trading agencies and merchant houses handling the financial, commercial, shipping, insurance, and other related services connected to the rapidly expanding import–export