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The Commodification of Childhood: Simulacra in *The Boss Baby* (2017)

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Abstract

One of the consequences of postmodernity is characterized by the rapid increase in materialistic needs. Materialism fuels the production and consumption of commodities, often exploited through marketing and advertising. The film The Boss Baby later became one of the films that discussed the theme of commodity in its narrative as it tries to present the simulated reality that commodifies childhood experience, depicted through the film. This study aims to examine the commodification of childhood and how Baudrillard's simulacra theory explains this phenomenon. This research is a qualitative study focusing on the phenomenon of commodification of childhood using the film The Boss Baby as the main subject for analysis. The results of this study show that the meaning of commodification found in The Boss Baby film is that it depicts how childhood is being commodified through Baby Corp., baby formula, parental love and affection, and toys. The analysis of Baudrillard's thoughts on simulacra in The Boss Baby film and commodification shows a match between the phenomenon that exists in the reality of a postmodern society depicted in The Boss Baby film, describing the simulated reality where babies are produced and managed as if they were products. It shows how modern society commodifies human life, relationships, and values.

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Introduction

In the postmodern era, which is marked by rapid technological advancements and an overwhelming flow of images and information. In this context, images function as commodities, objects of consumption that shape and are shaped by societal values and desires. The spread of images and animations through media creates a cycle where producing and consuming these images supports a culture based on simulations. The concept of simulation has created images as something that is not just a visual representation but also something that is both highly influential and essential to cultural experiences. In addition, Baudrillard stated the evolution of images and their relationship to reality can be understood through four distinct stages:

> *In the first case, the image is a good appearance–representation is of the sacramental order. In the second, it is an evil appearance–it is of the order of maleficence. In the third, it plays at being an appearance–it is of the order of sorcery. In the fourth, it is no longer of the order of appearances, but of simulation.* (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 6)

In the initial stage, images function as faithful representations of reality. They are seen as true reflections, characterized by a direct and transparent connection between the image and the real. In the second stage, images begin to distort reality. They no longer serve as representations but instead manipulate and alter perceptions, showing misrepresentations of reality. The third stage involves images that acknowledge their own artificiality. They play with the notion of representation, creating illusions and tricks that blur the line between reality and fiction. In the final stage, images break away entirely from the concept of representation. They no longer refer to any reality, they are creating a new one instead, which is known as simulacra or copies without originals. (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 6)

As it is separated from reality, perfection is an appropriate word for simulacra. Images are illusory because they present a perfect side that does not exist in real life. For example in advertising media, such as in a shampoo advertisement, it is depicted that the hair of the advertising model is shiny and looks very smooth, even though in reality a person's hair is not that amazing (Cempaka & Haryatmoko, 2018). Through that example, it can be said that the existence of advertisement is to influence and persuade consumers to make a purchase of a certain product by using exaggeration in the narration.

Jean Baudrillard first explicitly addressed the concept of the reality problematic in his significant 1976 work "Symbolic Exchange and Death", and expanded on it in his later essay "Precession of Simulacra". In these writings, Baudrillard contends that modern culture and society have reached a stage where the real has vanished, supplanted by models that are "more real than the real." This idea is central to his thesis on the current state of society, which he terms *hyperreality* (Mendoza, 2010) According to Baudrillard, media that contains a reality that is very different from the real world is called Simulacra. As explained earlier, simulacra are representation that has no connection to actual reality. Simulacra is also known as an imitation of an imitation (Magnarelli, 2006, p. 170). In other words, Simulacra is a concept that means "fake" or "inauthentic". Baudrillard (1994) uses this term to describe how modern society has undergone major changes in the way it thinks and interacts with the world.

In modern society, the concept of simulacra, also known as a copy without an original, closely relates to the commodification seen in postmodern culture. Simulacra create a hyperreal environment where the lines between reality and representation blur, making images and representations into commodities. Aligning with that, Frederic Jameson said in his writing that "culture" in postmodernism has become a product in its own right; the market has become a substitute for itself and fully as much a commodity as any of the items it includes within itself (Jameson, 1997). In postmodern culture, reality is shaped by these images, and consumer culture relies on the continuous creation and consumption of these hyperreal commodities. As for a commodity, it refers to anything that can be bought and sold (Magnarelli, 2006, p.170). As for what is bought is a "style of expression and sign, prestige, luxury, power and so on" (Ritzer, 2006, p. 139). In other words, products in the market are now commercialized to manifest luxury rather than the use of the product. Thus, the commodification of everyday life has become a defining feature in contemporary society.

The commodification of everyday life can be found through the works of literature and films. One of the classic examples is a science fiction film, *The Truman Show* (1998) directed by Peter Weir. It is a film that explores the concept of a reality TV show following the life of a man named Truman Burbank without his knowledge. In short, the film is about a man's life turned into a reality TV show that highlights the ways in which individuals can be

exploited for entertainment and profit. Aligning with the concept of simulacra, *The Truman Show* provides a compelling example by presenting a world through a simulated town of Seahaven which is entirely fabricated yet indistinguishable from reality. There is no "original" world that the town of Seahaven can be compared to, as it functions as a simulation of perceived reality, which is ultimately disconnected from any authentic grounding in reality.

According to Andreas (2020), the reality presented in films can influence people to see reality. Films are considered a reality that fulfils fantasies and expectations for the audience. This is not realized by the audience because visuals, storylines, and characters implicitly convey this. The audience is spoiled by the presentation of beautiful, funny, and interesting films, even though in fact the community unconsciously consumes commodities in their lives.

The Boss Baby, released in 2017, also became one of the contemporary films discussing the commodification theme in its narration. *The Boss Baby* by Tom McGrath is an adaptation based on the picture book by Marla Frazee, which provides a unique and humorous story with engaging family dynamics that resonates with both children and adults. *The Boss Baby* narrates the story of seven-year-old Tim Templeton, an only child who enjoys the undivided affection of his parents. Tim perceives his life as idyllic until the unexpected arrival of a baby named Theodore disrupts the family dynamic. This new baby, however, is not an ordinary infant but rather a 'boss baby' with a unique demeanor and purpose. In this film, babies are portrayed as objects born from a company. In the company, babies are able to speak like adults despite having small bodies like babies in general. Theodore's character in this film portrays an employee who is disguised as a baby to find out the problems faced by his company. From the synopsis, it can be seen that this film is very inversely proportional to reality in real life, as the film seems to have its own world.

The story of *The Boss Baby* is told from the perspective of a child, Tim. The way Tim views and interprets Theodore's birth into his family makes it important to examine. In Gerard Genette's theory of narratology, perspective is referred to as focalization. Genette divides it into three types: zero focalization, external focalization, and internal focalization. Zero focalization is a narrator who knows everything, both the characters and the plot. Internal focalization is a narrator who only discusses the perspective or a specific character. Internal focalization is further divided into three types: fixed, multiple, and variable. In fixed focalization, the story unfolds from the perspective of one character and remains that way until the end of the story. In multiple focalization, the perspectives of various characters appear alternately. Variable focalization is written like a letter, with the perspectives of various characters appearing alternately in the story. Finally, external focalization is where the narrator acts as an observer and narrates the characters' perspectives from the outside (Genette, 1983)

Previous research has also used *The Boss Baby* as its research object. First is a research done by Daniel and Baldwin (2023) entitled, which focuses on the relationship between the construction of childhood and popular narratives with a gender approach. From this research, it was found that this film ignores gender-based reproductive work and instead prioritizes industry and business. This is proven by the process of the child's birth coming from a company that is above the clouds. Following is a study by Bilal Yorulmaz, (2022), This study looks at the impact of the film *The Boss Baby* on children. It was found that the film shows a negative side towards animals, but it does not affect children's behavior towards animals, especially cats. The film effectively develops a positive impact on children. Furthermore, research that discusses a similar topic about simulacra is done by Rosana (2022) Focusing on romanticism, the researcher tries to uncover elements that are exaggerated and different from social reality by using Jean Baudrillard's approach. The result of this research is that the simulacra form of romanticism creates an ideal or utopian romanticism and succeeds in forming a new reality.

To limit and sharpen the focus of this research, the following problems are formulated. First, this study seeks to examine how the concept of simulacra is represented in the film The Boss Baby. Second, this study aims to explore how the phenomenon of childhood commodification is depicted in the film through the lens of simulacra theory. While prior analyses of *The Boss Baby* have examined its genre conventions or narrative tropes, this study diverges by interrogating the film's critique of postmodern consumer culture, specifically how childhood is transformed into a marketable commodity. By foregrounding Baudrillard's Simulacra, this research uncovers how the film portrays commodification in modern human society as part of everyday consumption, revealing how real human experiences are replaced by artificial ones under late capitalism.

Methodology

This article relies on two types of data; primary and secondary data. The primary data were taken from an infamous film entitled *The Boss Baby* (McGrath, 2017), analyzed through close readings of key scenes, dialogue, and visual motifs that exemplify the commodification of childhood (e.g., the corporate portrayal of parental love as a finite resource, as well as the use of baby formula to sustain artificial realities). The secondary data includes scholarly works on Baudrillard's simulacra, and postmodern commodification (Jameson, 1997) through books, journals, articles, online websites, and reports obtained from online sources. This article examines how childhood is commodified in the film, using Baudrillard's theory of Simulacra, which critiques hyperreality and the erotion of authentic human experiences under consumerism, alongside with Gerard Genette's narratological approach. The function of this approach is to describe the role of the narrator and perspective in shaping the narrative of commodification in childhood. The study highlights how media constructs artificial realities where even childhood becomes a marketable product.

Using a descriptive qualitative method, this study closely examines the film's themes and visuals to support its argument. To analyze how the commodification of childhood is shown in the film, this research began by watching *The Boss Baby* film to identify childhood commodification. The following step was applying Baudrillard's Simulacra theory to the obtained data. The final step was finding out the hidden message and uncover meaning, including that which is not explicitly stated in the film. All data that has been collected were selected in relevance to this topic and were put into detailed narrative. These supporting materials will be used simultaneously to explore a deeper understanding of the main research topic.

Results and Discussion

1. Simulacra in *The Boss Baby*

The concept of simulacra in *The Boss Baby* is depicted through various elements that blur the lines between reality and simulation. Simulacra is imitations that no longer reflect or correspond to any real object or truth, that has no connection to reality (Magnarelli, 2006, p. 170). In other words, the reality has been altered and becomes a new reality. The film *The Boss Baby* tells the story of Tim, a 7-year-old only child who suddenly has a younger brother named Theodore. In an earlier scene, Tim's father asked him if he wanted a younger brother, which made Tim think about where babies come from.

The reality in the film shows that babies are produced as if they're products by society, not actual babies that are born through a maternal process. Just like products in manufacturing, the success of babies is determined by machines that can differentiate sex, equip them with diapers, and perfect them through quality control measures. A baby will be considered a successful product when it meets the required criteria such as laughing when tickled and will later become part of the family. On the contrary, a baby that does not laugh is considered a product malfunction and will work in Baby Corp. management. In Theodore's case, he did not laugh when being tickled, therefore he was considered unqualified for the criteria of a successful baby to be in the management but an agent instead. Nevertheless, due to work duties as an agent,

he has to disguise himself in Tim's family and pretend to be a regular child.

Another evidence of the child being made as a product of commodity is shown when Tim asks Theodore, "*Aren't children born from-*" (McGrath, 2017)



Picture 1. Tim whispers Theo about how children are made

The next sentence is not shown explicitly and Tim only whispers. It is assumed that Tim is explaining exactly how children are made because Theodore has a shocked expression and a disgusting face when he hears Tim's words. Afterward, Theodore replied, "*No. Everything comes from the Baby Corp.*" (McGrath, 2017)



Picture 2. Theo's response about how children are made

Theodore's reaction proves the constructed ideology of the company, as well as his knowledge about how babies are produced. The process of his arrival in the family has also become evidence of how babies are produced. Instead of being born in the hospital, Theodore's presence in Tim's family is being delivered by a taxi like a product.



Picture 3. Baby just arrived by a taxi

Based on the data above, it can be understood that Tim and Theodore are part of the effort to maintain the illusion of the birth of a child. As described by Baudrillard (1994), the media creates a reality that is different from the actual reality, while engaging the audience to believe in the illusion by instilling ideas such as "You are concerned, you are the event." In other words, this event perfectly captures the concept of Baudrillard's hyperreality, showing a reality that obscures or replaces the real world. The audience is represented by Tim, who initially believes that the baby was born from human intercourse. However, the reality in the film is that the baby is not a natural result, but a product created by the company. This mirrors how audiences in the real world might slowly accept media narratives without questioning the authenticity of the narratives.

In relation to Genette's theory of focalization, *The Baby Boss* belongs to the type of fixed internal focalization. The story is told from Tim's point of view. The first-person perspective is used as the narrator's mode and as a sign that the narrator is an observer of the story and wants to tell the story of other characters based on his observations.

Furthermore, simulacra in the film are Theodore's adult-like behavior, including wearing a suit, carrying a briefcase, and using corporate jargon, which represents a simulacrum of adult identity. The baby mimics adult roles and behaviors, creating a humorous yet hyperreal depiction of a child acting beyond their age. For example, the depiction of corporate culture by using business terminology and practices in the interactions and behaviors of its characters, particularly Theodore. In addition, *The Boss Baby* film frequently uses business jargon in Theodore's interactions with other babies and adults, such

as "mission," "management," "market share," and "executive" are commonplace in his vocabulary. The usage of daily reports, which are typically used in corporate environments for updates and follow-ups, in the interactions among babies to monitor progress and performance. It shows that even the development and behavior of babies are treated as measurable and marketable metrics. This representation does not align with the actual reality of babies. In the real world, babies are only capable of doing simple activities, not the complexity of office activities. There are cases found in the real world, one of which is Isla McNabb, a 2-year-old from Crestwood, Kentucky, who has the world's largest high IQ, which shows an equivalent to a 4-year-old baby (Hooper, 2023). However, it doesn't quite represent the possibility of babies doing more complex activities, especially work-related activities. Thus, by integrating business practices into the world of childhood, *The Boss Baby* creates a hyperreal environment where the distinction between corporate and personal life is blurred. This aligns with Baudrillard's idea that contemporary culture is dominated by simulations that replace and distort reality.

The company in *The Boss Baby*, Puppy Co. commercializes love by selling dogs. Dogs are portrayed as adorable animals that are able to provide the same happiness as babies, therefore dogs begin to attract people's attention and seem to seize the love that was originally given to babies. This is shown in the part when Theodore is having a meeting and claims that

> "*babies aren't getting much love as we used to. [...] But all that changes as the puppies start coming out with new designs, modeling each one more adorable than the last*" (McGrath, 2017).

The film's central metaphor that is shown by babies manufactured like goods literalizes Baudrillard's simulacra, where copies (shown by Theodore) lack originals (natural birth). Irony pervades Theodore's character; his briedcase and suit as signifiers of adulthood, clash with his infant form, mirroring postmodernism's disjointed signs. As an allegory, the Baby Corp. and Puppy Co. war reflects late capitalism's commodification of emotional labor. Through this scene, it shows babies' anxiety as they are slowly being replaced by dogs that have a more adorable look. Puppy Co.'s CEO's confirmation of a new model release will be more adorable are welcomed by the public. Theodore even said, "*It's gonna crush the competition*" (McGrath, 2017)



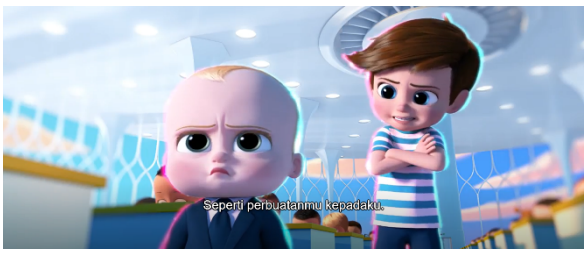
Picture 4. Baby Corp. anxiety being replaced

This has proven the babies' fears of being replaced and also a threat to baby companies as Theodore stated that puppies could bankrupt the baby business. This mirrors Baudrillard's simulacra in the second stage, where images distort reality.

In addition, in the scene where Theodore takes Tim to Baby Corp., they see a large chart that represents the love given there. It shows that puppies have the biggest share compared to babies. That is, the puppy company has more profit than the baby company in getting affection from parents. It is proven by Theodore's remarks, "*The point is the puppies' slice is getting bigger and bigger. They are stealing all our love!*" and Tim replies, "*Oh, just like you did to me*!" Theodore agreed (McGrath, 2017)



Picture 5. Large chart/graphic about puppies getting affection



Picture 6. Tim response toward chart

From the data above, it can be concluded that dogs and babies are portrayed as the same creatures and they are represented as competitors or rivals for each other. In this film, the companies Baby Corp. and Puppy Co. and the competition between the two are manifestations of dogs being as important as babies. Unlike reality, where babies and dogs are not viewed as direct business competitors, the film uses this metaphor to explore themes of affection and consumer appeal.

To win the competition or business rivalry between Baby Corp. and Puppy Co., the CEO of Puppy Co. created the Forever Puppy project. Unlike children who will grow up, he will make puppies remain adorable and not grow up. Similar to babies in Baby Corp who become babies forever when consuming the special baby formula, dogs are also given a similar formula to keep them as puppies forever. One of its aims is to create an everlasting puppy that never ages, creating the idea of a perfect and unchanging pet. With this aim, Puppy Co. tries to replace babies in the family. The film also shows a picture of the CEO of Puppy Co. standing on the earth, which can be assumed that the company can rule the world if its product, Forever Puppy, sells well in the market and the Baby Corp. company will go bankrupt.



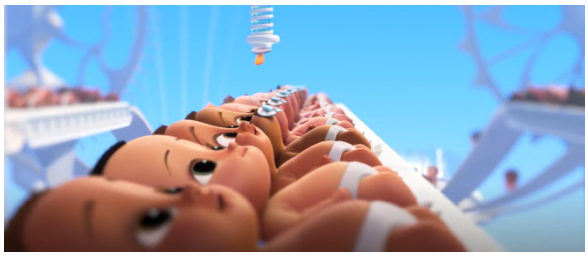
Picture 7. CEO of Puppy Co. rule the world by selling Forever Puppy

The motivation behind the CEO of Puppy Co.'s actions is rooted in personal discontentment and a sense of rejection. Having once been associated with Baby Corp., as Super Colossal Big Fat Boss Baby, he experiences a profound sense of disappointment when he is no longer recognized as part of that organization. This demotion forces him to live as an ordinary baby and to age in a manner typical of human development. His grudge against Baby Corp. thus drives his actions.

2. Commodity of Childhood in *The Boss Baby*

In the context of the films, portraying a newborn baby as a talking creature and an employee of a company is a form of simulacra where the depiction creates its own unique reality. This portrayal challenges conventional expectations of what babies are and how they behave, presenting a hyperreal scenario where infants take on adult roles. To fully grasp the significance of this phenomenon, it's essential to explore the deeper meaning conveyed by this imaginative portrayal. The phenomenon found in this research object is commodification. Baudrillard's concept of commodification involves turning objects, ideas, and even relationships into commodities that can be bought, sold, and traded. In other words, a commodity is anything that can be bought and sold. In *The Boss Baby,* commodification is depicted through these several representations.

The film starts with the depiction of how babies are created. It shows that children are considered objects of production, where babies are produced and managed just like products through the order and processes of companies, namely Baby Corps. This commodification of childhood satirizes the commercialization of human life, reflecting societal tendencies to treat people as marketable goods, especially in contemporary culture and economy.



Picture 8. Babies are created like objects of production

For example, since babies are treated as products rather than individuals, they are not familiar with feelings and emotions but rather tend to look at situations as something favorable or unfavorable. It shows in the scene where Theodore does not seem to pay attention and is rather dismissive towards Tim's feelings about his arrival, and only focuses on his mission to save Baby Corps.



Picture 9. Theodore pays attention to mission of save Baby Corps.

In addition to that, the film portrays parental love and attention as finite resources that can be competed for. The rivalry between Tim and Theodore for their parents' love and attention portrays these emotional bonds as finite resources that can be competed for, bought, and sold. It is shown at the beginning of the film when Tim feels jealous of the attention that Theodore receives. In the film, Tim embarks on a quest to uncover the truth about Theodore, motivated by a desire to reclaim his parents' love and attention, which he feels is unjustly monopolized by the new baby. During his investigation, Tim discovers that Theodore, unlike a typical baby, can speak and behave like an adult. This revelation is both strange and concerning to Tim. He attempts to share this information with his parents, hoping it will validate his feelings and help him regain their affection. Tim's actions reflect a child's struggle with sibling rivalry and the need for parental recognition and love in the face of change. This storyline illustrates the commodification of personal and emotional aspects of life, where personal things like one's emotions become the target for the success of a company.

The existence of special baby formula is also a sign of commodity in childhood, as the formula has the ability to keep Theodore intelligent and articulate, something which differentiates him from the baby in general. Baby formula is depicted in an exaggerated and symbolic manner, diverging significantly from its real-world purpose. Typically, milk is given to babies to provide essential nutrition and support healthy growth. However, in the film, the baby formula serves not just as nourishment but as a magical substance that can keep babies and dogs perpetually young. This transformation blurs the traditional meaning of milk and introduces a new, fantastical element that symbolizes a new, hyper realistic reality.

A new hyper realistic reality show in the film that the laughter of the tickled baby determines the rest of the baby's life. In the case of the boss baby, Theodore doesn't laugh when tickled, so his life is spent working at Baby Corp. Interestingly, when Theodore disguised himself as an ordinary baby in Tim's family, he could laugh when tickled by Tim. This is in contrast to the previous assumption that Theodore cannot be tickled,

Tim breaks the statement that "everyone has tickle spots" (McGrath, 2017).



Picture 10. Tim tickled Theodore

After that, Theodore said that he had never been tickled and had no parents. The previous assumption about Theodore being unable to laugh when being tickled by the company but is able to laugh when being tickled by Tim can be seen as a critique of deterministic systems. This moment reveals how individuality and human potential cannot

be determined only by a single event, such as the laughter of a tickled baby.

The film also depicts the moment when Theodore is losing his baby formula, he loses his ability to act in his adult-like persona along with his corporate thinking. It is also reflected in the film when the CEO of Puppy Co. is actually one of the former legendary babies, Super Colossal Big Fat Boss Baby, who grows up and becomes the villain as he loses access to the special baby formula. It shows that the special baby formula is treated as a commodity that enhances babies' capabilities which emphasizes the idea of commodifying natural traits in babies. In other words, the baby formula is the company's tool to sustain its workers. In addition to maintaining babies and dogs from aging, the formula is used as a commodity to launch the company's plan to commercialize Forever Puppy and keep Baby Corp. running. This reflects the hyperreal and corporate ideal where natural growth and development of living beings are prevented or even halted to favor the company.



Picture 11. Milk formula for maintaining babies from aging

Through the events in the film, it could be concluded that Theodore has the physique of a baby but has been constructed to act and think like an adult. His unusual experience did make him what children usually get and instead made him behave like an adult and a worker. This confirms Sombart's theory about capitalist society (1927) that humans are not free and their movements are controlled by commodities. His perspective suggests that individuals are not free agents, meaning that their actions and choices are heavily influenced by the commodification of life, including profit-driven enterprises. In this case, Theodore cannot choose to live normally as a baby who has a childhood because he has entered the capitalist system that makes babies an object of the market. In addition to that, capitalist society has created dependencies on artificial systems, which are symbolized by the baby formula, which prevents natural aging and makes the characters reliant on the product to maintain their roles.

3. Simulacra and Mass Media in *The Boss Baby*

The development of technology has made information easier to obtain, with various communication tools and media existence. The emergence of the media is treated as a shortcut controlled by a group of elites who have an interest in providing the public with information quickly and making it an alternative (Syuhada, 2018) The media, as explained before, creates an image of 'false reality' where truth is manipulated. This manipulation shapes a perception of reality that is constructed by media representations instead of experiencing it firsthand. The media in *The Boss Baby* plays a crucial role in constructing the hyperreal world.

In this film, the 'false reality' is depicted through the advertisement of Forever Puppy, where the puppies are presented as long-lived puppies. With a puppy and a baby that is not able to grow, it shows the constructed idealized version of childhood, family, and parenting. The representation of babies as intelligent and professional also portrays an idealization or distorted version of reality. Additionally, these representations might shape expectations of what childhood and family life should be. This constructed reality is advertised through media like posters, images, videos, and conferences whenever the company is ready to launch its products. The media's role is to spread the information to the whole nation regarding the news. Similar to reality, the advertisements in the film are also presented with exaggerated claims. This leads audiences to consume these advertisements or representations as if they were authentic, despite the fact that the reality might be untrue.

In *The Boss Baby*, Baby Corp. and Puppy Co. are depicted as competing companies, each employing distinct marketing strategies to

assert their dominance in the affection market. Baby Corp. positions itself as the greatest authority on babies, striving to maintain their status as the most lovable beings. To achieve this, Baby Corp. uses Theodore, the Boss Baby, as an agent tasked to ensure that babies maintain their appeal to families, especially parents. On the contrary, Puppy Co. markets itself as Baby Corp.'s main competitor, promoting its products as superior alternatives. The company's advertising emphasizes the everlasting puppy, an idealized pet that never ages, designed to capture the affection of families and challenge the dominance of babies. The rivalry between Baby Corp. and Puppy Co. in *The Boss Baby* illustrates how affection is commodified, with each company using corporate tactics and advertising strategies to market their products as the ultimate source of love and joy. This competition demonstrates the extremes that corporations will go to in order to capture consumer attention and affection. This reflects the pervasive influence of commercialism in everyday life, where even emotions and relationships are treated as marketable commodities.

According to Du Gay et al., (1997) in Khiyaroh (2021) the presence of emotional and relationship commodities is due to the selling value that refers to self-identity. Like the satisfaction of owning something unique and famous. In the context of The Baby Boss, Forever Puppy, puppies whose age does not increase have a unique value and are different from babies who can grow up. Baudrillard sees this phenomenon as complete control of the consumer lifestyle. The effort to spread this consumer lifestyle is spread through mass media, namely film.

As mentioned by Connor (2018) in deWaard (2024) the film industry or Hollywood shows its views on capitalism through the stories and stories in its work. Usually, the film will raise the story about money. Films that sell well in the market are seen as a form of the success of capitalism and not just entertainment. Even in terms of the story, there can be implied messages to imply, indirectly convey the state ideology to the public. As Evans (2020) said, film can be an effective propaganda medium that leads to the understanding of the community or audience. Thus, *The Boss Baby* is also likely to be propaganda for spreading capitalism. According to Fuchs (2020), language and communication are important for the spread of capitalism. According to him, a person's logic and perception are important in deciding to buy commodities, so propaganda is the best instrument. Forms of communication include streaming media and electronic devices.

The Boss Baby was released in media streaming such as Disney Hotstar after successfully playing in big cinemas. As explained in the previous paragraphs, this means every film must have a "hidden mission or message" and can be seen as capitalist propaganda. This is emphasized by Baudrillard in Poster (1989)that in a text, the reality or world presented does not always reflect reality, but it still needs to be understood, considered critically, and deeply what reality or meaning is conveyed. The film *The Boss Baby* tells of the competition between companies that produce children and animals for parental attention. It is mentioned in the film that families prefer to take care of animals rather than children. If looked at more deeply, the meaning that is tried to be conveyed is the cruel capitalist world that makes the cost of living expensive and the responsibility of parents to take care of and educate children. It is also shown that children will eventually turn into adults and are not always cute and playful. The reality depicted is that families are better off living with animals that can live and be adorable forever. The film does form its reality, and the meaning is blurred with the real world. However, 6 years later in the real world, specifically in Thailand, there is a decline in the population of people due to the sex recession and they choose to keep cats instead (CNN Indonesia, 2024). Hyperrealities that are separated from reality and tend to exaggerate also have the potential to predict real-world conditions.

Conclusion

The Boss Baby film talks about the competition between two companies named Baby Corp. and Puppy Co., with babies and puppies as their main products. The products are not only seen as objects or entities but also

as affection. This film showed that childhood has been made into a commodity to gain profit.

Jean Baudrillard's simulacra theory can be effectively applied to analyze the form of simulacra and the phenomenon of childhood commodities depicted in *The Boss Baby*. The film effectively satirizes contemporary culture by illustrating how reality is constructed and commodified through exaggerated representations of babies and corporate dynamics. By applying Baudrillard's concepts, we see how the film critiques societal trends where even childhood and familial relationships are subject to commercial manipulation and hyperreal simulations. *The Boss Baby* thus serves not only as entertainment but also as a critical commentary on the pervasive influence of consumerism and the blurred boundaries between reality and representation in modern society.

Drawing from these findings, researchers propose several recommendations for future studies. First, using Baudrillard's Simulacra theory for other *The Boss Baby*'s series and others corporate films. Following that, future research should explore the psychological undertones on the effect of Simulacra in children related to moral development. These approaches may deepen insights into Baudrillard's perspective.

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