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Fragments: Interviews With Jean Baudrillard



Synopsis

Jean Baudrillard is one of the most revered philosophers of the past century, and his work has helped define how we think about the post-modern. In this fascinating book of interviews conducted with Francois L'Yvonnet, Baudrillard is on sparkling form and explores his life in terms of his educational, political and literary experiences, as well as reflecting on his intellectual genesis and his position as outsider in the field of great French thinkers. Perhaps most interestingly, Baudrillard discusses his life's work in relationship to his contemporaries: thinkers such as Bataille and the Situationists, Barthes, Lyotard, and Deleuze, amongst others. *Fragments: Interviews with Jean Baudrillard* will be essential reading for any scholar of Baudrillard, but will also prove an attractive and informative starting point for any student trying to get to grips with his work for the first time.

Book Information

Paperback: 136 pages

Publisher: Routledge (December 11, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0415305489

ISBN-13: 978-0415305488

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 5 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #801,072 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #320 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Social Scientists & Psychologists #2368 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Political #4428 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Pop Culture > General

Customer Reviews

From *Fragments* by Jean Baudrillard, published by Routledge. To order a copy for £13.99 (free UK p&p), call the Guardian book service on 0870 066 7979.- *The Guardian* 23/3/04' ... this book will be of interest primarily to students of philosophy and the social sciences, but there is plenty for the general reader too ...' - *Leeds Weekly*

Jean Baudrillard, Professor Emeritus at the University of Paris, is one of the most important thinkers of the past hundred years. He is a leading critic of the postmodern culture, the economy of communication and the media system. A prolific writer, he is the author of such well-known works as

System of Objects; Consumer Society; Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign; The Mirror of Production; Symbolic Exchange and Death; On Seduction; Simulacra and Simulation; Fatal Strategies; America; The Transparency of Evil; and Cool Memories. Chris Turner, who has translated many of Baudrillard's most acclaimed works into English, has also translated works by Paul Virilio and Andre Gores.

i saw this book on my teacher's desk, so i bought it. i must say, as much as i like to philosophize, a lot of this was way over my head. but, on some pages, i found certain paragraphs that hit the spot.

If Jean Baudrillard wrote music it would indeed transcend the musical languages and styles of modernity to popular tex/mex forms, it would have the negativity of Schoenberg mixed with the traditional beauty of Mozart with the energy of Joanie Jett, the subversiveness of The Dead Kennedys and the directness of Sharon Crow; Baudrillard indeed has paid his dues writing from the late Sixties, he also became frustrated when the revolution didn't come as quickly as expected. His work today cuts across many genres. I know painters who don't paint until they read him first. Also philosophers wanting a good time, those who need to escape the stifling air of academia, and the interlocking complexity that can be a part of today's philosophic scene of intertextual interdiscipline without being committed in any one direction. But to call Baudrillard an compact anarchist would be too cruel his thought has too much discipline of it, although that's how his language comes across. Yet he has a deep-rooted feeling for humanity; he can't quite seem to find a place for its demise. He wants to see something happen, well people still make sex and art, and music. I think behind all the dark-edged pessimism that emanates from his sentence constructions there is a need to emote, Baudrillard is a new genre artist, there is no label yet for who he is like Hannibal Lecter. For instance on politics, "There is no need to attack politicians. They are engaged in spontaneous self-destruction. You simply have to be firm about not going to their aid." Baudrillard has seen and will see things going, jettisoning down the tubes for some time to come. And that's why we need him. He has a gift for picking the smallest nuance of reality, the tiniest particle of the life-world as a means toward whatever is larger. A political system and institution. We find value in the fragments, Wittgenstein said this of God: I always find other things in Baudrillard than what he means. Like danger zones, like tripping over a cliff, The beauty in a Chicago hot dog, yet it can kill you. "In fact, certain butterflies simulate the markings of their poisonous fellows to protect themselves. When you have the good fortune to be poisonous, you have to use deception." Since the world has long stood on its philosophic head (Hegel/Marx), we can find comfort in being "Other" or so it seems.

To be outcast is cool soemtimes, it doesn't help pay any bills,you need to be a Derridean for that to find a normative world. To Baudrillard all culture is worth the trip to understand it. Although you feel his European roots all the time, with the heavies he introduces us to Canetti,Pessoa. He always speaks within eye-shot of a monument. Years of theory does that to you. And he searches the mysteries of expression,from one fountain head one manifold source,culture going over Niagara Falls,expression teeming with amoeba,paramecium. He also is/was the first to speak on postmodernity,another stick in the side of art. In fact we owe a debt to him for taking the rigours of the postmodernist credo to a new level of cognition. Composers would never have been able to distinguish five strains of tango without it. He finds meaning in anything today,antique sales in Pennsylvania Even pornography has a double meaning. The skinny porno-queen blond who ran for the Italian Pariliament, (La Cicciolina),she married Jeff Koons who also accelerated the postmodern language to its head,carnal ectoplasm. Baudrillard speaks of the ends of things. And since we are at the end of languages,styles,meanings,subjects and objects,we are at the beginning of them as well. Too bad Baudrillard can't give us any third base guidance. Well who can? I hear he lectures at UCLA today. But I love Baudrillard because he looks for meaning anywhere. In Egyptian pyramids(ultimate space) inside,in a hermit's life,in boredom, in Andy Warhohl,in the scar on a womens face,which lends her all her charm. I think Baudrillard's next zone should be on the mystery of women throughout the ages. "Not to think any! more. To be like a dog. To be in one's head like a dog in a kennel." After you read Baudrillard you can get high from the Los Angeles Yellow Pages. He can also look beyond his own coffe-table, The French conceit that Chernobyl didn't cross to Paris,1,000 French impervious to Russian fission. Of course the dark side to all this is that Baudrillard sees us as all in a zoo,that we all have basic fatal attraction instincts that can put the rabbit into boiling water faster than the anyone.

"The fragment has its ideal" -- R. Barthes.It's a little expensive for such a slim book, but it's so dense you wouldn't really want it any longer. FRAGMENTS is a very overdetermined word, too, it makes you wonder why, after Kierkegaard and Barthes and all the other writers who used the word so precisely, if Baudrillard sanctions its use or is it a "clever" device of the translator?He's constantly fascinating, and quite a conversationalist, not a dull sentence in the book. Did you know that in Japanese there is no word for "the subject," nor for 'the universal,' nor again for "communication" itself? It makes you realize with a start that if one's vocabulary is shaped with some words and not others, than one's conceptual limits will be quite different than someone else with a different language, where perhaps there are three hundred words for rice--or love.Ha, it's funny how Jean

and Francois put down America for producing novels that last for manybe a thousand pages. This is hypertrophy they say, linking it to America's search for empire and planet glory. Well I have read some baggy monsters originated in France too. Then he (Jean) will turn around and praise something like Abbott's wonderful FLATLAND, and we see that nothing artificially determined sways his likes and dislikes, and that for Baudrillard, cities and cultures alike are controlled by language, borders, and the shock troops that keep us all from understanding one another. He follows Abbott in seeing God as an intuition, a vanishing point, very much as Antonioni found God in the American desert in Zabriskie Point. These European intellectuals with their quite touching view of the American West.

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