Gane

Jean Baudrillard

Jean Baudrillard is one of the most important and provocative writers in the contemporary era. Widely acclaimed as the prophet of postmodernism, he has famously announced the disappearance of the subject, meaning, truth, class and the notion of reality itself. Although he worked as a sociologist, his writing has enjoyed a wide interdisciplinary popularity and influence. He is read by students of sociology, cultural studies, philosophy, literature, French and geography. Organized into eight sections, the volumes provide the most complete guide to Baudrillard currently available: Section 1: Theoretical Issues In this section the central themes informing Baudrillard's work are defined and discussed. Baudrillard's place in contemporary social thought is examined through considerations of how his work has been received. The importance of signs and the sign economy in Baudrillard's analysis is highlighted. The case for treating Baudrillard as a seminal theorist in contemporary social thought is elucidated. Section 2: Postmodernism Baudrillard is reluctant to regard himself as a postmodernist. Nonetheless, it is as the leading theorist of postmodernism that he is widely celebrated and generally known. This section explores Baudrillard's relation to postmodernism and demonstrates his specific contribution. Questions of Baudrillards relation to capitalism, commodification, fatalism, Lyotard, Jameson and politics are explored. Section 3: Culture It is now commonplace to refer to the period since the late 1980s as `the cultural turn'. Baudrillard's work provided a leading exponent of the significance of culture in understanding contemporary life. Included here are reflections on Baudrillard and corporate culturalism, power, ideology, simulation, mass media, Disney, hyperreality and leisure. Section 4: War In the 1990s Baudrillard became famous for the thesis that `the gulf war did not happen'. For some critics, it revealed the poverty of Baudrillard's approach. For others it showed more profoundly why his thought is an indispensable tool in grappling with the complexities of contemporary society. At all events, Baudrillard's treatment of the war represented a climacteric in critical responses to Baudrillard. In this section the various range of responses to Baudrillard's intervention are precisely delineated, providing the reader with the essential data required to decide if Baudrillard's thesis is right or wrong. Section 5: America America dazzles and appalls Baudrillard. In America and of Cool Memories 1&2, he documents his violent responses to America as an idea; a physical space. Included here are reflections on Baudrillard, America and postmodernism; Baudrillard's significance as an ethnographer of US life; Baudrillard and American film; Baudrillard and Reagan's America; and Baudrillard, America and the politics of simulation. Section 6: Seduction Baudrillard's theory of seduction is, like much else in his work, controversial. This section examines how the theory has been interpreted and criticized. The relationship between Baudrillard and feminism is examined. Applications of his theory to art and work are explored. Section 7: Fiction and Art Baudrillard is an unusual contemporary thinker, in as much as his writing is taken seriously by artists. Baudrillard himself has responded to this, by becoming more interested in photography in the last ten years. This section aims to provide an essential guide to the relationship between Baudrillard and art. Included here are enquiries into Baudrillard and science fiction, the relationship between Baudrillard and J G Ballard's
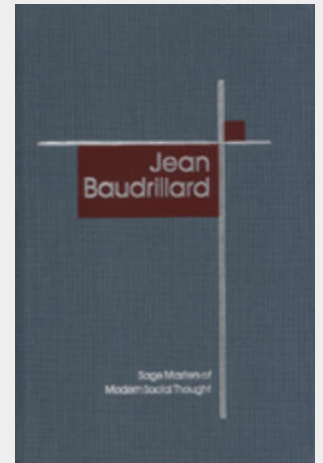
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