

Say Hello to
your very own book of
Quotes



QuotationsBook

Quotes by Baudrillard, Jean

from QuotationsBook.com

Jean Baudrillard (born July 29, 1929) is a cultural theorist and philosopher. His work is frequently associated with postmodernism and post-structuralism.

Democracy is the menopause of Western society, the Grand Climacteric of the body social. Fascism is its middle-aged lust.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Depression moods lead, almost invariably, to accidents. But, when they occur, our mood changes again, since the accident shows we can draw the world in our wake, and that we still retain some degree of power even when our spirits are low. A series of accidents creates a positively light-hearted state, out of consideration for this strange power.

- Baudrillard, Jean

A society which allows an abominable event to burgeon from its dung heap and grow on its surface is like a man who lets a fly crawl unheeded across his face or saliva dribble from his mouth -- either epileptic or dead.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Man has lost the basic skill of the ape, the ability to scratch its back. Which gave it extraordinary independence, and the liberty to associate for reasons other than the need for mutual back-scratching.

- Baudrillard, Jean

We are no longer in a state of growth; we are in a state of excess. We are living in a society of excrescence. The boil is growing out of control, recklessly at cross purposes with itself, its impacts multiplying as the causes disintegrate.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Terror is as much a part of the concept of truth as runniness is of the concept of jam. We wouldn't like jam if it didn't, by its very nature, ooze. We wouldn't like truth if it wasn't sticky, if, from time to time, it didn't ooze blood.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Cowardice and courage are never without a measure of affectation. Nor is love. Feelings are never true. They play with their mirrors.

- Baudrillard, Jean

There is nothing funny about Halloween. This sarcastic festival reflects, rather, an infernal demand for revenge by children on the adult world.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Fiction is not imagination. It is what anticipates imagination by giving it the form of reality. This is quite opposite to our own natural tendency which is to anticipate reality by imagining it, or to flee from it by idealizing it. That is why we shall never inhabit true fiction; we are condemned to the imaginary and nostalgia for the future.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Sadder than destitution, sadder than a beggar is the man who eats alone in public.

Nothing more contradicts the laws of man or beast, for animals always do each other the honor of sharing or disputing each other's food.

- Baudrillard, Jean

In days gone by, we were afraid of dying in dishonor or a state of sin. Nowadays, we are afraid of dying fools. Now the fact is that there is no Extreme Unction to absolve us of foolishness. We endure it here on earth as subjective eternity.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The liberated man is not the one who is freed in his ideal reality, his inner truth, or his transparency; he is the man who changes spaces, who circulates, who changes sex, clothes, and habits according to fashion, rather than morality, and who changes opinions not as his conscience dictates but in response to opinion polls.

- Baudrillard, Jean

As for freedom, it will soon cease to exist in any shape or form. Living will depend upon absolute obedience to a strict set of arrangements, which it will no longer be possible to transgress. The air traveler is not free. In the future, life's passengers will be even less so: they will travel through their lives fastened to their (corporate) seats.

- Baudrillard, Jean

One of life's primal situations; the game of hide and seek. Oh, the delicious thrill of hiding while the others come looking for you, the delicious terror of being discovered, but what panic when, after a long search, the others abandon you! You mustn't hide too well. You mustn't be too good at the game. The player must never be bigger than the game itself.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Genius is childhood recaptured.

- Baudrillard, Jean

What you have to do is enter the fiction of America, enter America as fiction. It is, indeed, on this fictive basis that it dominates the world.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Deep down, the US, with its space, its technological refinement, its bluff good conscience, even in those spaces which it opens up for simulation, is the only remaining primitive society.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Governing today means giving acceptable signs of credibility. It is like advertising and it is the same effect that is achieved -- commitment to a scenario.

- Baudrillard, Jean

We shall never resolve the enigma of the relation between the negative foundations of greatness and that greatness itself.

- Baudrillard, Jean

What is a society without a heroic dimension?

- Baudrillard, Jean

The sumptuous age of stars and images is reduced to a few artificial tornado effects, pathetic fake buildings, and childish tricks which the crowd pretends to be taken in by to avoid feeling too disappointed. Ghost towns, ghost people. The whole place has the same air of obsolescence about it as Sunset or Hollywood Boulevard.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Neither dead nor alive, the hostage is suspended by an incalculable outcome. It is not his destiny that awaits for him, nor his own death, but anonymous chance, which can only seem to him something absolutely arbitrary. He is in a state of radical emergency, of virtual extermination.

- Baudrillard, Jean

We are all hostages, and we are all terrorists. This circuit has replaced that other one of masters and slaves, the dominating and the dominated, the exploiters and the exploited. It is worse than the one it replaces, but at least it liberates us from liberal nostalgia and the ruses of history.

- Baudrillard, Jean

If we consider the superiority of the human species, the size of its brain, its powers of

thinking, language and organization, we can say this: were there the slightest possibility that another rival or superior species might appear, on earth or elsewhere, man would use every means at his disposal to destroy it.

- Baudrillard, Jean

It is always the same: once you are liberated, you are forced to ask who you are.

- Baudrillard, Jean

You need an infinite stretch of time ahead of you to start to think, infinite energy to make the smallest decision. The world is getting denser. The immense number of useless projects is bewildering. Too many things have to be put in to balance up an uncertain scale. You can't disappear anymore. You die in a state of total indecision.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Information can tell us everything. It has all the answers. But they are answers to questions we have not asked, and which doubtless don't even arise.

- Baudrillard, Jean

There is no aphrodisiac like innocence.

- Baudrillard, Jean

If everything is perfect, language is useless. This is true for animals. If animals don't speak, it's because everything's perfect for them. If one day they start to speak, it will be because the world has lost a certain sort of perfection.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Never resist a sentence you like, in which language takes its own pleasure and in which, after having abused it for so long, you are stupefied by its innocence.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Laughter on American television has taken the place of the chorus in Greek tragedy. In other countries, the business of laughing is left to the viewers. Here, their laughter is put on the screen, integrated into the show. It is the screen that is laughing and having a good time. You are simply left alone with your consternation.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Deep down, no one really believes they have a right to live. But this death sentence generally stays tucked away, hidden beneath the difficulty of living. If that difficulty is removed from time to time, death is suddenly there, unintelligibly.

- Baudrillard, Jean

To love someone is to isolate him from the world, wipe out every trace of him, dispossess him of his shadow, drag him into a murderous future. It is to circle around the other like a dead star and absorb him into a black light.

- Baudrillard, Jean

If you say, I love you, then you have already fallen in love with language, which is already a form of break up and infidelity.

- Baudrillard, Jean

There exists, between people in love, a kind of capital held by each. This is not just a stock of affects or pleasure, but also the possibility of playing double or quits with the share you hold in the other's heart.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Everywhere one seeks to produce meaning, to make the world signify, to render it visible. We are not, however, in danger of lacking meaning; quite the contrary, we are gorged with meaning and it is killing us.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The futility of everything that comes to us from the media is the inescapable consequence of the absolute inability of that particular stage to remain silent. Music, commercial breaks, news flashes, adverts, news broadcasts, movies, presenters -- there is no alternative but to fill the screen; otherwise there would be an irremediable void. That's why the slightest technical hitch, the slightest slip on the part of the presenter becomes so exciting, for it reveals the depth of the emptiness squinting out at us through this little window.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Every woman is like a time-zone. She is a nocturnal fragment of your journey. She brings you unflaggingly closer to the next night.

- Baudrillard, Jean

We are becoming like cats, slyly parasitic, enjoying an indifferent domesticity. Nice and snug in the social, our historic passions have withdrawn into the glow of an artificial coziness, and our half-closed eyes now seek little other than the peaceful parade of television pictures.

- Baudrillard, Jean

You are born modern, you do not become so.

- Baudrillard, Jean

If you are prepared to accept the consequences of your dreams then you must still regard America today with the same naive enthusiasm as the generations that discovered the New World.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The obese is in a total delirium. For he is not only large, of a size opposed to normal morphology: he is larger than large. He no longer makes sense in some distinctive opposition, but in his excess, his redundancy.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The world is not dialectical -- it is sworn to extremes, not to equilibrium, sworn to radical antagonism, not to reconciliation or synthesis. This is also the principle of evil.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Santa Barbara is a paradise; Disneyland is a paradise; the U.S. is a paradise. Paradise is

just paradise. Mournful, monotonous, and superficial though it may be, it is paradise.

There is no other.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The local is a shabby thing. There's nothing worse than bringing us back down to our own little corner, our own territory, the radiant promiscuity of the face to face. A culture which has taken the risk of the universal, must perish by the universal.

- Baudrillard, Jean

If there is a species which is more maltreated than children, then it must be their toys, which they handle in an incredibly off-hand manner. Toys are thus the end point in that long chain in which all the conditions of despotic high-handedness are in play which enchain beings one to another, from one species to another --cruel divinities to their sacrificial victims, from masters to slaves, from adults to children, and from children to their objects.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The era of the political was one of anomie: crisis, violence, madness and revolution. The era of the trans-political is that of anomaly: an aberration of no consequence, contemporaneous with the event of no consequence.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Politicians -- power itself -- are abject because they merely embody the profound contempt people have for their own lives. One should be grateful to the politicians for

accepting the abstractness of power, and ridding others of its burden. This inevitably kills them but they get their revenge by passing onto others the corpse of power.

- Baudrillard, Jean

It only takes a politician believing in what he says for the others to stop believing him.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The abjection of our political situation is the only true challenge today. Only facing up to this situation in all its desperation can help us get out of it.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Driving is a spectacular form of amnesia. Everything is to be discovered, everything to be obliterated.

- Baudrillard, Jean

I hesitate to deposit money in a bank. I am afraid I shall never dare to take it out again.

When you go to confession and entrust your sins to the safe-keeping of the priest, do you ever come back for them?

- Baudrillard, Jean

At male strip shows, it is still the women that we watch, the audience of women and their eager faces. They are more obscene than if they were dancing naked themselves.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Pornography is the quadraphonics of sex. It adds a third and fourth track to the sexual act. It is the hallucination of detail that rules. Science has already habituated us to this microscopics, this excess of the real in its microscopic detail, this voyeurism of exactitude.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Contact with men who wield power and authority still leaves an intangible sense of repulsion. It's very like being in close proximity to fecal matter, the fecal embodiment of something unmentionable, and you wonder what it is made of and when it acquired its historically sacred character.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The very definition of the real becomes: that of which it is possible to give an equivalent reproduction. The real is not only what can be reproduced, but that which is always already reproduced. The hyper real.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Mistakes, scandals, and failures no longer signal catastrophe. The crucial thing is that they be made credible, and that the public be made aware of the efforts being expended in that direction. The marketing immunity of governments is similar to that of the major brands of washing powder.

- Baudrillard, Jean

In the same way that we need statesmen to spare us the abjection of exercising power,

we need scholars to spare us the abjection of learning.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The price we pay for the complexity of life is too high. When you think of all the effort you have to put in --telephonic, technological and relational --to alter even the slightest bit of behavior in this strange world we call social life, you are left pining for the straightforwardness of primitive peoples and their physical work.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Smile and others will smile back. Smile to show how transparent, how candid you are. Smile if you have nothing to say. Most of all, do not hide the fact you have nothing to say nor your total indifference to others. Let this emptiness, this profound indifference shine out spontaneously in your smile.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Like dreams, statistics are a form of wish fulfillment.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The order of the world is always right -- such is the judgment of God. For God has departed, but he has left his judgment behind, the way the Cheshire Cat left his grin.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Boredom is like a pitiless zooming in on the epidermis of time. Every instant is dilated and magnified like the pores of the face.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Executives are like joggers. If you stop a jogger, he goes on running on the spot. If you drag an executive away from his business, he goes on running on the spot, pawing the ground, talking business. He never stops hurtling onwards, making decisions and executing them.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The great person is ahead of their time, the smart make something out of it, and the blockhead, sets themselves against it.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Television knows no night. It is perpetual day. TV embodies our fear of the dark, of night, of the other side of things.

- Baudrillard, Jean

There is nothing more mysterious than a TV set left on in an empty room. It is even stranger than a man talking to himself or a woman standing dreaming at her stove. It is as if another planet is communicating with you.

- Baudrillard, Jean

It is not enough for theory to describe and analyze, it must itself be an event in the universe it describes. In order to do this theory must partake of and become the acceleration of this logic. It must tear itself from all referents and take pride only in the

future. Theory must operate on time at the cost of a deliberate distortion of present reality.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The surprises of thought are like those of love: they wear out. But here too you can carry on for a long time doing your conjugal duty.

- Baudrillard, Jean

With the truth, you need to get rid of it as soon as possible and pass it on to someone else. As with illness, this is the only way to be cured of it. The person who keeps truth in his hands has lost.

- Baudrillard, Jean

As the end of the century approaches, all our culture is like the culture of flies at the beginning of winter. Having lost their agility, dreamy and demented, they turn slowly about the window in the first icy mists of morning. They give themselves a last wash and brush-up, their oscillated eyes roll, and they fall down the curtains.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Holidays are in no sense an alternative to the congestion and bustle of cities and work. Quite the contrary. People look to escape into an intensification of the conditions of ordinary life, into a deliberate aggravation of those conditions: further from nature, nearer to artifice, to abstraction, to total pollution, to well above average levels of stress, pressure, concentration and monotony -- this is the ideal of popular entertainment. No one is interested in overcoming alienation; the point is to plunge into it to the point of ecstasy.

That is what holidays are for.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Perhaps our eyes are merely a blank film which is taken from us after our deaths to be developed elsewhere and screened as our life story in some infernal cinema or dispatched as microfilm into the sidereal void.

- Baudrillard, Jean

We have dreamt of every woman there is, and dreamt too of the miracle that would bring us the pleasure of being a woman, for women have all the qualities -- courage, passion, the capacity to love, cunning -- whereas all our imagination can do is naively pile up the illusion of courage.

- Baudrillard, Jean

A woman spent all Christmas Day in a telephone box without ringing anyone. If someone comes to phone, she leaves the box, then resumes her place afterwards. No one calls her either, but from a window in the street, someone watched her all day, no doubt since they had nothing better to do. The Christmas syndrome.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Cities are distinguished by the catastrophic forms they presuppose and which are a vital part of their essential charm. New York is King Kong, or the blackout, or vertical bombardment: Towering Inferno. Los Angeles is the horizontal fault, California breaking off and sliding into the Pacific: Earthquake.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The cities of the world are concentric, isomorphic, synchronic. Only one exists and you are always in the same one. It's the effect of their permanent revolution, their intense circulation, their instantaneous magnetism.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The skylines lit up at dead of night, the air-conditioning systems cooling empty hotels in the desert and artificial light in the middle of the day all have something both demented and admirable about them. The mindless luxury of a rich civilization, and yet of a civilization perhaps as scared to see the lights go out as was the hunter in his primitive night.

- Baudrillard, Jean

The sad thing about artificial intelligence is that it lacks artifice and therefore intelligence.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Computer science only indicates the retrospective omnipotence of our technologies. In other words, an infinite capacity to process data (but only data -- i.e. the already given) and in no sense a new vision. With that science, we are entering an era of exhaustivity, which is also an era of exhaustion.

- Baudrillard, Jean

A negative judgment gives you more satisfaction than praise, provided it smacks of

jealousy.

- Baudrillard, Jean

Here in the U.S., culture is not that delicious panacea which we Europeans consume in a sacramental mental space and which has its own special columns in the newspapers -- and in people's minds. Culture is space, speed, cinema, technology. This culture is authentic, if anything can be said to be authentic.

- Baudrillard, Jean



QuotationsBook