Jean Beaudrillard  
**Born: 27 July 1929**

French sociologist, a disillusioned Marxist who studied semiotics and language, later becoming so-called high priest of postmodernism. Argued that in contemporary societies, consumers inhabit a world full of signs that refer to nothing but other signs — a 'hyper-reality' of 'simulations'. Baudrillard's serious engagement with media and consumer culture means he can seem thrilled by this, but his work despairs at the emptiness of it all.

**Selected Works:**
The Spirit of Terrorism / Requiem for the Twin Towers (Verso, 2002)  
The Illusion of the End (Stanford, 1995) America (Verso, 1988)