

Heterology and the Postmodern: Bataille, Baudrillard, and Lyotard (Post-Contemporary Interventions)

Julian Pefanis

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In Heterology and the Postmodern, Julian Pefanis presents a new view of the history of poststructuralism (heterology) and the origins of postmodernism by analyzing three important French theorists, Georges Bataille, Jean Baudrillard, and Jean-François Lyotard.

Beginning with the introduction of Hegel in French postmodernist thought—largely but not exclusively through the thought of Georges Bataille—Pefanis argues that the core problematics of postmodern aesthetics—history, exchange, representation, and writing—are related to Bataille's reconceptualization of the Hegelian framework. Pefanis explores how Bataille was influenced by Hegel, Marcel Mauss, Freud, and Nietzsche, and traces the effects of this influence on the analyses and critiques of later postmodernists, most notably Lyotard and Baudrillard. Finally, employing these postmodernists along with Freud and Jacques Lacan, Pefanis discusses discourse on postmodernism and its relation to Freud's concept of the death drive. This intellectual history makes valuable contributions to the debates over what the "postmodern" may mean for intellectual and political activity.



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