

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I examine the philosophical views of John Searle, Guy Debord, and Jean Baudrillard. These thinkers have radically different methodologies and theoretical alignments, but they are not entirely dissimilar. John Searle argues that there are two types of facts—those independent of human observation and those whose meaning depends on agreement. Guy Debord posits that modern society has replaced authentic social life with mere representation. The “spectacle” has replaced real interactions with others so that meaning itself is no longer authentic; it is treated as a commodity or currency. Jean Baudrillard argues that society has replaced reality with signs and symbols. Thus, human experience consists only of simulations, not reality itself. Each of these figures maintains that meaning is socially constructed. After examining the key assumptions of their respective theories, I demonstrate that their accounts are compatible and argue that their accounts are most cohesive when considered together.