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## **The Actuality of the Hyperreal**

What is hyperreality? How does it influence our daily life? How can one make a distinction between the real and the hyperreal? Jean Baudrillard, the "father" of hyperreality, has dedicated his life to answer these questions. Another great writer that has dedicated part of his life to unlocking the mysteries of hyperreality is Umberto Eco. Since Eco's essay "Travels in Hyperreality", Disneyland has never been the same for the hyperrealists. This example, along with many others are used to prove the existence of the hyperreal, by both Eco and Baudrillard. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the theories proposed by Umberto Eco and Jean Baudrillard regarding hyperreality, make a comparison between these theories and decide about their actuality in the modern world.

Hyperreality is a concept referring to the inability of distinguishing the real from the fictional; they are so well intertwined that one cannot tell where fiction ends and reality begins. We are surrounded and flooded by the hyperreal: TV commercials, 3D movies, virtual reality devices, unrealistic video games. As Baudrillard would say, "nothing is real". The most important example that sustains this theory of hyperreality, used by both Baudrillard and Eco, is that of Disneyland. Baudrillard considers Disneyland to be "a fantasy that is absolutely reproduced", while Eco thinks of it as a "commercial reality". For Eco, people are easily led into hyperreality, due to the fact that they are easy to manipulate. Baudrillard sees Disneyland as being designed to fake reality in order for the society to "enjoy and relate closely". As it is easily seen, this example shows how present hyperreality is in our lives.

How can one determine if something is real or not? This subject is actively debated by Baudrillard and Eco: they both feel that saying something is real is subject of debate. Baudrillard goes further to ask himself "What is it to say that what we call the real was always based on hyperreality and ideology of the previous consumer society?". This statement raises a lot of questions, due to the fact that it assumes that what we are living right now might not be real. We may as well be projections of another society, or we might be copies of copies, which have lost the original meaning. Eco is somewhat lenient towards hyperreality, considering it to be fine for humans, as long as it is not inflicted upon the nature. His enjoyment of seeing Disneyland is clear, as Disneyland wants you to "admire the perfection of the fake and its obedience to the program." All in all, we must conclude that hyperreality is more present than ever in our lives, and that it will become increasingly difficult to tell the real from fiction.