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THE PORTRAYAL OF HYPERREALITY IN JAMES DASHNER'S THE EYE OF MINDS

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ABSTRACT:
Purpose of this study: The research aims to analyze the character of Michael as a leader in the virtual and real world. The Coffin gives a real sensation during the game.
Methods: This study used descriptive qualitative method. The writer applied postmodernist approach to analyze the hyperreality in the novel. It has been explained before that hyperreality comes as a result of postmodern era. The theory used is the theory of hyperreality by Jean Baudrillard along with the process of simulation and simulakra.
Main findings: The results showed that the Coffin as an intermediary between the players against the game world is a simulation. The intermediary processes how reality and creation are blurred. Simulakra is the game itself. This virtual reality game is no longer a representation, but rather a duplicate without the original reference. Hyperreality is when Michael's character as a leader in the game world is brought into the real world. Michael could not distinguish between reality and artificial.
Applications of this study: This study discusses how hyperreality is depicted in the novel The Eye of Minds by James Dashner. This novel tells the story of Michael who is addicted to virtual reality games. Michael prefers to spend time in Coffin, which is a sophisticated intermediary that connects the real world and the game.
Novelty/ Originality of this study: Conclusion this research is everything that happens in the virtual reality game does not relate to any object in reality.

Keywords: The Portrayal, Hyperreality, James Dashner, The Eye of Minds

INTRODUCTION

Hyperreality is a condition where people can hardly distinguish between the real and the fake, the copy and the original, the truth and the lie, the past and the present(Nursamsami, 2017). This condition happens because the boundary between these two things is getting blurred. Hyperreality can be explained as a copy or imitation that comes from the past then rebuilt with the latest content as a form of nostalgia (Halensiana & Pramonojati, 2019).

Umberto finds out that hyperreality is an obsession that brings the forgotten or lost memories(Arcana, 2007). The memories are kept alive by presenting an imitation, copy or replica. Based on Umberto, the problem of bringing back the old memories is when the old is represented with the present time. In the end, the representation lost the contact with reality. The replica of the past is more alive than the reality itself. Therefore, it creates a condition where the copy and the original merge into one (Andrian, 2017)

The establishment of hyperreality from technology is supported by Jean Baudrillard. He discovers that simulation and simulacra produce a phenomenon named hyperreality(Jauhari, 2019).(Baudrillard, 1994) argues that hyperreality is a condition where people live in a real space, but the differences between reality and fantasy, copy and original's layer are thin (Zepp, n.d.). This thin boundary makes it hard for people to differentiate between what is artificial and what is real. His argument was established because of higher technology.

Hyperrealityhappens through games. Games create virtual characters that make people feel interested to play (Syamsudin, Murtiningsih, & Joko Siswanto, n.d.). In a digital game entitled *World War II*, there are characters from mythology. These characters arebelieved to exist in that time. People get addicted with the game and believe that the characters are real. The way they believe the myth characters on the game is classified as hyperreality(Changestu, 2017). Moreover, the game brings the history back and makes it like in the process of occurring. Both of the characters and the history are just objects that combine the artificial and real. The game has blurred the difference between the copy and the original. This is because what is happening in the game has nothing to do with reality(Kingsepp, 2007).

The hyperreality phenomenon through game is also portrayed in James Dashner's*The Eye of Minds*. *The Eye of Minds* was published on 2013. It is his first and latest book series from *The Mortality Doctrine*. Through his great *The Maze Runner* book series.He is known for young adults genre. He even has his official web page on internet. James Smith Dashner provides his readers with scienfic adventure. This American novelist, who got a master's degree in accounting, won at least ten awards from his works. They are New York State Charlotte, Kentucky Bluegrass, Ilionies Abraham Lincoln,

Whitney Award, and ALA Best Fiction for Young Adults(Roberts et al., 2012).

Dashner was born on November 26th, has been working since 2003 and written 5 books series. Dashner is known for his works series.*The Eye of Minds* is inspired by *The Matrix* and *Inception* (RT Book Reviews 2013). Dashner's interest in all the probabilities inspires him to write a story andtake a virtual world as his concept (RT Book Reviews 2013). *The Eye of Minds* tells about *virtual reality* (VR) game(Sani, 2014). The game that immerses the readers by making them feel like they are experiencing the simulated reality firsthand, primarily by stimulating their vision and hearing(Ritara & Esfandari, 2017).

Michael as the main character, is not the only one who likes to spend the day by laying in The Coffin. He assumes that people living in two worlds, The Sleep (game) and The Wake (reality). Along with his friends, they meet some players who got trapped in The Game. The sensation when playing the game surely feels real because technological sophistication, The Coffin. The Coffin is a medium between the players and the virtual reality game. If players are eating in the game, The Coffin will inject such nutrition to the body. This is also valid to the players who get bitten, crash or just run. The Coffin's effect will be felt even after playing.

The writer is interested to make depth analyze about hyperreality. The first interest is about the medium of the virtual reality game(Kusumadewi, Nurizki, Pratama, & Zukhaira, 2019). Dashner draws a super high technology through the medium, which is shaped as box. While lying in the medium, the players get more by the presence of the Sleep(Roberts et al., 2012). This point is supported by the statement, which says about the players who spend more time lying inside of the box than doing real activity, got trapped in the Sleep because they are too obsessed with the game. The writer becomes curious about how fascinating the Sleep.

The second is how Michael brings his character in the Sleep as a leader, to the real world. Before know the virtual reality game Michael is just a student, who is not confident with himself. In virtual reality game, he plays a leader character and become addicted to complete the mission. Somehow, he brings his character in the virtual reality game to the reality. He becomes more confident to face with other people.The Sleep, the Coffin and the character's life in *The Eye of Minds* are interesting to be observed. Moreover, the author of this novel is known with the writing skill in fantasy and science fiction. Young teens are the author's main audiences. His writing is commonly about adventure and survival that connect with science fiction genres. He has been receiving awards from his work. There reasons are considered for the writer to choose *The Eye of Minds* as the object of the study.

Previous research on games as a virtual world has been done by several researchers. Crawford (2019) who often conducts research on the game titled

"A Feel For The Game: Exploring Gaming" Experience "Through The Case Of Sports Themed Video Games"(Crawford, Muriel, & Conway, 2019).Video games are often understood and narrated as 'experiences.' It starts with arguments relating to video games, leading, broader social trends, and understanding social reality as a series of designed experiences. What is clear is increasingly becoming a storehouse of technology-mediated experience. Crawford (2009) argues that sportsthemed games provide illustrative examples of how media texts are used in the construction of identity, performance, and social narrative. Crawford's research results are similar to my research that considers games with technological sophistication to be real(Crawford et al., 2019).

Kingsep (2007) writes a journal entitled "Fighting Hyperreality With Hyperreality: History and Death in World War II Digital Games. Describing the virtual world of digital games as hyperreal and simulacra has become almost a cliché(Kingsepp, 2007). A perfect copy without originals, complete and even flowing with signs that add to the original appearance, but at the same time disguising the loss of reference-many games can be seen as a substitute for the real world. The theory used by Kingsep (2007) is the same as my research, namely the simulakra theory from Jean Baudrillard(Kingsepp, 2007).

The writer analyzes about the portrayal of hyperreality in James Dashner's novel *The Eye of Minds*. The research questionis howhyperreality portrayed in James Dashner's*The Eye of Minds*.The goal of the analysis of the study is identifying and elaborate about how the portrayal of hyperreality in James Dashner's*The Eye of Minds*.

METHOD

The writer applied postmodernist approach to analyze the hyperreality in the novel. It has been explained before that hyperreality comes as a result of postmodern era. According to Jean Baudrillad, postmodern is a bleak description of current condition, which shows a lost contact toward reality(Gozali, 2018). The focus key areas of postmodernist approach are mediatization as a result of technological development, simulation and simulacra (Anwar, 2018). Postmodernism also discovers an identity crisis in human being and their struggle during their stand in society(Umanailo, 2017). This reserach contain primary and secondary sources. The novel is as the primary source of this study. The secondary source derived from journals, articles, thesis and electronic sources. The data that are selected by the writer relate to hyperreality by Jean (Baudrillard, 1994)or other theorist.

The writer must found first the hyperreality's processes. There are four orders in the simulation and simulacra's process. In first order, the writer focused on how reality was represented in the game. The writer identified the representations that were looked from the virtual reality game, the Coffin, and the reality itself through Michael. The secondorder is deeper than

previous step. The analysis specified how the representation was getting blurred. This step specified how Michael was made to believe with the blurry representation through the Coffin, Sleep and Wake. In the third order, the writer examined about Michael's behaviour toward the blurry representation.This examination is needed to prove that the connection between Michael's reality and virtual game has lost the connection.

The fourth order is simulacrum. The analysis focused on how the representation became new image(Hatija, 2018). The writer gathered the data from the first until third orders. The purpose of gathering the orders is to identify that the representations in the Coffin and the Sleep are different with reality. In analyzing the orders of simulation and simulacra, the writer took the data from secondary sources to elaborate the analysis. The writer also gave arguments to deliberate the discussion. The last step, the writer re-collected simulation and simulacra's four orders to found the hyerreality in the novel. The hyerreality was looked from Michael's character as a team leader in the virtual reality game toward the real world. He became a leader and addicted to accomplish the virtual reality game'smission.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Eye of Minds tells a story about a virtual reality game that becomes an addiction for the players. The story began with a young man, Michaelwho is playing in the virtual world then he gets addicted to the game so much. His addiction to the virtual reality game makes him becomes his virtual character. The way Michael is addicted to the virtual reality game made he forget about the reality. The game has changed their real activity but they do not realize it. What the writer sees here that there is a hyperreality inside a virtual reality game(Dashner, 2014).

The Representation of Reality

According to (Baudrillard, 1994)the first stage of simulation analyzes representation. The representation comes from a basic reality (Ashari, 2018). There are representations of reality in the novel. In reality, people know how it feels of being freezing, overheating, hungry, full, and injured. In this novel, the sensation is represented through the Coffin. Before entered to the virtual world, players need to lay in the Coffin first. The Coffin here has a function as a medium between reality and virtual reality world. It is shaped like a box and has a human size. The box itself can be entered only by one player. So if another player wants to get in the game, they have to own their Coffins. The nerve box or the Coffin is served with very high technology. It consists of LiquiGels, AirPuffs and NerveWire. Players have to lie and sleep in the Coffin and the gel will wrap their body. The gel is considered as thin and icy and wrapped along player's body over neck, back and arms(Dashner, 2014). If there is no one inside of the Coffin, it will be disappeared into a little hidey-hole.

People in reality have New York City and so does in the virtual reality game.

New York City is taken as one of the simulations. Like in reality, New York City is the most visited place both in reality and the Sleep(Dashner, 2014). Michael, Sarah and Bryson like to hang out in this simulated city. There is another simulated city in the Sleep, San Francisco. Michael is in San Francisco when he meets Tanya. He is talking with Tanya at Golden Gate Bridge (Dashner, 2014). ThisprovesthattheSleeppicturescitiesinrealitytobesimulatedinthevirtualworld. In spite of prestigious places like New York and San Francisco, the Sleep can make representation of battlefield. Michael and his friends spend their time to play in *Devils of Destruction*. This game is a war game. The Sleep has simulated the battle area that happens in 2022 and named it as *Devils of Destruction* (Dashner, 2014)

The quotation above shows about a person who needs haircuts in the Sleep. Michael, Sarah, and Bryson are visiting a barbershop in the Sleep. The Sleep is built as real as the original. Players who want to have haircut can go to the barbershop. People in real life go to the barbershop to change their haircut, and so do them in the Sleep. If they want to have haircut they can go to the barbershop or code the program. The barbershop where Michael and his friends visit shows two identities, a barber and its user. A barber and its user are identities which exist in reality. Player's virtual identity is based on where they in the Sleep. When Michael and his friends go to a game named *Devils of Destruction*, they have to act as a soldier (Dashner, 2013: 127). Similar to a barber, a soldier is an identity that can be seen in reality. It has a meaning that players virtual identities are the representation of reality. This point describes that reality is standing as the original model. People create the Sleep as the mirror of reality (Dashner, 2014).

The Blurry Representation of Reality
The next stage is blurry effect. Argue to Baudrillard (1983) explanation, this phase is described as masking process. The copy image is masked with reality (Yazid, n.d.). At the beginning, the image is only as a representation of reality. But then, the image tries to blur the difference between fake and reality(Ernawati, 2017). It masks the false reality with the real to misleading the people. In this phase, the copy of the image becomes more real but people still can make the difference (Zepp, n.d.).

Michael and Tanya fell toward the harsh gray waters of the bay. Wind tore at their clothes, and Michael's heart felt like it was creeping along the inside of his chest, up his throat. He screamed again. On some level he knew he would hit the water, feel the pain; then he'd Lifted and wake up back home, safe and sound in his Coffin (Dashner, 2014).

The first discussion in this part is the Coffin. The Coffin is described as the box, which provides the players with real sensation during playing in the Sleep. When the players eat in the Sleep, they get nutrition from the Coffin. Michael and his friends are eating Groucho Nachos in a virtual restaurant.

They feel that they eat the real food, but the fact is just a copy image of Groucho Nachos. The players can taste the feeling of eating the food because the Coffin feed them with healthy nutrients intravenously (Dashner, 2014). The feel and nutrition that is gotten from the Coffin are not the same as eating the real Groucho Nachos, but Nerve Box has successfully masked the copy with the original. The Coffin masks the taste of GrouchoNachos and the way eating in theSleep.

The Coffin also gives a heat sensation(Puspitasari, 2019). This time, the Sleep simulates a cave inside of an active volcano. The lava makes Michael and Sarah can feel their sweat on their bodies, which put a belief that it may happen to them. Michael and Sarah are inside the cave and both feeling burn of bright orange magma. He can feel the heat through his shoes and gets worried if its soles will melt (Dashner, 2014). Here the Coffin masks the lava and makes it feel like real. They do notfeelcomfortablewiththeheatthatcomesfromthelava.Michaelevenbecomes worried if the heat can burn his shoes. They are sweating hard in the Sleep. However, their real bodies are sleeping in reality.

Michael hated the uncomfortable period of twenty to thirty seconds after he'd died within a self-contained game like *Devils of Destruction*. There was a disturbing dark vacuum of nothingness before you started your next life. It was done on purpose, to give people more of a real sense of death-to give them a moment to ponder what had happened and what it might be like if it had been for real. Timeto think, What if I had really kicked the bucket? What if this was it? Finally, a light appeared before him and grew until it pulled him back into the full world of the VirtNet(Dashner, 2014)

The Second is the Sleep. The places in the Sleep are simulations toward reality. In the beginning, Old Towne is described as a simulation from New York City. Old Towne is portrayed with entertainment stores(Saragih, 2018). The simulation is built as real as possible. New York City in real life is surrounded by entertainment stores and full of the people who want buy their happiness(Hussey, 2014). The Sleep here tries to masks Old Towne by brings out the things that can be seen in the real New York City. Because of the completeness of simulated the original, players become misleading with the masking process.

Old Towne is believed by the players as a simulation of New York City because there are many entertainments that can be found at the place like in reality. Players indirectly think that a place, where is full of good things, is assumed as New York City. In fact, Old Towne is just a copy of New York City's image. The copy feels like original because it is masked with the real. The Sleep takes what inside of the city that is being simulated. This stage of simulation and simulacra is aimed to make people realized that it is real (Islam, 2017)

Losing the Connection withReality

The third stage of simulation is when the copy becomes a copy without an original (Islam, 2017). In the first stage of simulation, the image is copied that refers to reality. Then the second phase is followed by the masking process. At the third, the image is no longer as a representation. In this stage the copy has not referred to the real image, it starts to lose the connection. The image is fully covered by the false and makes it lost the connection with the original. The aim of this phase to makes people think that the copy is original. The environment that has been built by the simulation makes people believe that it is real and also happens in reality(Islam, 2017).

The first losing connection that is analyzed is Nerve Box. The first explanation has explained thatNerve Box or the Coffin gives sensations during playing inside of the Sleep. One of the Coffin's effects is heat. The heat's effect from the Coffin happens to Michael and Sarah in a virtual game inside the Sleep. The heat that is caused by lava makes Michael can feel burning through the shoes. The way he feels the melted shoes is because Michael thinks that the lava is real. The Sleep masks the original lava and makes the players become to believe that it is real. Because of the lava's heat, Michael and Sarah trying hard to escape from that bright color. Their escape from lava goes on has a meaning that the heat is too real to be felt. They need to escape or they will be burn and die. Sarah expects that they will die from dehydration because too long being inside of the cave and hoping her body and Michael will be healed up by the drinking fountain nearby (Dashner, 2014).Eventhoughthemomenttheyfeeltheburninglavaistakenin the Sleep, they can think about die and dehydration. The way the Coffin simulates the lava produces a fear because of the after effect of the burning lava. The heat of the lava is too real to be felt and however, they need to escape from thecave.

Second is the Sleep. The Sleep, as the second world for the players here, has three points that are explained. The points are place, activity and identity which are related to one another. The Sleep that is analyzed in this part takes at the game called *Devils of Destruction*. Burning, freezing, bleeding, and killing in *Devils Destruction* are reflected through the Coffin. The screams, blood, sounds of machine gun and real situation that contribute are begging other players to join in the field. Whenever the players get inside the game, they need to take part of the mission. The place where the war occurs is equipped with the black trenches, a small mound of packed snow, hills and the things that can make up a real war situation. But what can be taken from the two stages before are all false*Devils ofDestruction* starts to lose the relation with any war. The game tries to be realistic by reflecting the War of Greenland over a group of mercenaries who fight during the battle (Dashner, 2013: 95). The game may represent the icy weather as well, but it is just created to put a faith in the battle to the players same like the battle itself. Blowing up a grenade, gun shooting and hard fighting until bleeding are made up actions that built up to bereal(Syamsudin et al., n.d.).

The Virtual Reality Game asSimulacrum

Simulacrum is the fourth order in simulation process. Simulacrum means a copy without original (Nursamsami, 2017). The originality of the copy is the simulacrum itself. Simulacrum creates a copy that has no any relationship with the real (Nursamsami, 2017). This phase becomes the last stage because the image is no longer as a representation. The copy of the image has masked the original and produces a replica that is no longer using reality as itssource.The simulacrum in *The Eye of Minds* is the virtual reality game itself. In the beginning, the Coffin just represents the real sensation to the player's body. Players can feel the feeling of pain, hungry, full, hot and cold.

Players can sense the kick by lying inside of the NerveBox and it will serve that person with high technology such as Lique Gels and AirPuffs. No worry if one gets hungry during playing in the Sleep, the Coffin will feed the players with healthy nutrition. The Coffin's effect that is represented to the players is felt because of eating, crashed, burned, frosty, killed, stabbed, and another injury. But then the representation of the real effect builds an unfaithful copy. Michael can feel full in the Wake because he has eaten in the Sleep and the Coffin feeds him with healthy nutrition. When Michael eats Groucho Nachos in the Sleep, the Coffin simulates the taste and the nutrition. In the end, Groucho Nachos is not the same food as in the Wake because the LiqueGels and AirPuffs have masked and misled it with falsity.

The Hyperreality in Virtual RealityGame

Game is the hyperreality of the contemporary world. Hyperreality is a real that is more than real (Giddings, 2007). This real is created because the real is being exaggerated. This thing builds a condition where the original and the copy are hard to be differentiated. Hyperreality is a world which consists of two parts, real and artificial. This condition happens because of a phantasm (Giddings, 2007). The phantasm is a product of imaginary. Within the imaginary and the real becomes blur, people hardly distinguish what is the original and what is the copy. The copy is masked with the original, which makes it looks like real. In short, hyperreality is real but false or a real that tries to be more real.

"I'll open the door," he whispered to the others. "You guys run for it." The words came out before he realized that the plan meant he'd be the last one to leave the room. And most likely the first to be attacked. "Let's do it," Bryson answered.

Michael nodded. "Now" (Dashner, 2014)

Michael's character as a leader does not only see in the intuition but also fearlessness. Fearlessness is a characteristic of a leader. A leader does not afraid to take risks just because of mistakes can be made (Markwell, 2013:30). Michael'sleader character in fearlessness also happens in the excerpt above. He tells his friends to run from the hidden room first, and he will be the last. It means Michael will receive higher risk than his other friends because Kill Sim can easily attacked him. Michael knows about the

risk but however he takes it. He puts aside his fear of being attacked even though it may go wrong. All he wants just go out from the Ronika's club and brings his friends back safely.

Everything that happens on the Sleep feels like real.Gosling (2011) said that how to play games and narratives related to the game lies in the daily lives of gamers, but has greater meaning in certain physical locations(Gosling &Crawford, 2011). In the Sleep, Michael acts as team leader. His character as a leader in the virtual reality game is brought to the reality. As a leader, he knows that something dangerous will come to him. He may not have a team in the reality, but he takes the leader's character to the real world. In intuition, a leader needs to be confident and trust self to make a decision in hard moment. Michael believes himself as a leader and applies it to his real life. When he meets people in the reality, he presents his leader character.

Michael's leader character in reality creates hyperreality He acts as a leader, as if he is in the virtual reality game. This is the point of hyperreality. All that happens in that period becomes exaggerated(Baudrillard, 1994). Michael is unconsciously acting up as his character in the Sleep. He cannot distinguish between reality and artificial. The boundary between them is blurred. It makes Michael ends up being a leader because his addiction to complete the game's mission likes Gunner Skale feels likereal.

CONCLUSION
The writer finds the portrayal of this phenomenon in the novel. The simulation is in the Coffin. The Coffin processes the representation of reality to become false reality. For the simulacrum is the virtual reality game itself. It is designed as a representation of reality but then it becomes a copy without originality. Everything that happens in the virtual reality game does not relate with any object in reality.The hyperreality is seen when Michael brings his character in the virtual reality game to reality. His character on reality is not as confident as in the Sleep. But then he idolizes Gunner Skale and becomes excited whenever he gets a mission. He acts as a team leader between his friends in the game. His addiction to finish the game as like Gunner Skale,is carried by Michael to reality. He becomes the character that he has been played.

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