

**THE PHENOMENON OF HYPERREALITY IN AVATAR : *THE WAY OF*
*WATER***

A THESIS

*To fulfill a Partial Requirements for The Award of Sarjana
Degree at the Faculty of Humanities
University of Lancang Kuning*



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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research discusses the hyperreality and simulations in the *Avatar: The Way of Water* film. For the main theory, this research only uses Baudrillard's hyperreality theory, which also consists simulacrum. The data in this research is dialogue, scenes, and images from *Avatar: The Way of Water* film which describes hyperreality and the simulations. In obtaining the data, this research uses observation by watching the scenes and dialogue related to the hyperreality, simulations, and making documentation by saving the dialogue and scene from the film. The data in this research is repeatedly analyzed by the interactive technique which consist of three steps: data reduction in selecting the representative data, data display in creating the table, and data conclusion in concluding the data analysis. This research shows that how hyperreality and simulations can be seen in the film by using high technology to create unnatural phenomenon, replaces the reality with its representations, the act of imitating to deceive such as a fake appearance, an imitation of something, or something similar.

Keywords: *Hyperreality, Simulations, Postmodernism*

INTISARI

Penelitian kualitatif ini membahas tentang hiperrealitas dan simulasi dalam film Avatar: The Way of Water. Untuk teori utamanya, penelitian ini hanya menggunakan teori hiperrealitas Baudrillard yang juga terdiri dari simulacrum. Data dalam penelitian ini berupa dialog, adegan, dan gambar dari film Avatar: The Way of Water yang menggambarkan hiperrealitas dan simulasi. Dalam memperoleh data, penelitian ini menggunakan observasi dengan cara menonton adegan dan dialog yang berkaitan dengan hiperrealitas, simulasi, dan membuat dokumentasi dengan menyimpan dialog dan adegan dari film. Data dalam penelitian ini dianalisis secara berulang dengan teknik interaktif yang terdiri dari tiga langkah: reduksi data untuk memilih data yang representatif, display data untuk membuat tabel, dan kesimpulan data untuk menyimpulkan analisis data. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bagaimana hiperrealitas dan simulasi dapat dilihat dalam film dengan menggunakan teknologi tinggi untuk menciptakan fenomena yang tidak wajar, menggantikan realitas dengan representasinya, tindakan meniru untuk menipu seperti penampilan palsu, tiruan sesuatu, atau sesuatu yang serupa.

Kata Kunci : *Hyperrealita, Simulasi, Postmodernism*

PREFACE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Research

In the past, works were only enjoyed by readers through printed media. As time goes by, works go through a very rapid development process, especially through technological developments. Technology is a need that must be met and owned by everyone. The more sophisticated this technology becomes, the more it is used by humans. Technological developments are not only useful in the field of technology but are also very useful in the fields of health, transportation, education, and information. The development of sophisticated technology makes information very easy to access. One form of information that people enjoy is work. One of the works that this technology is very easy to enjoy is because it can enable us to enjoy various works, both literary and popular works. One of the popular works that is currently very advanced in development is a film.

Technological developments in the film industry have resulted in forming visual images that are close to reality. The development of high technology that filmmakers use make the films more spectacular, moreover, when the film is meant to make reality and fantasy blur so that audiences cannot differentiate between reality and fantasy. The condition where reality and fantasy mix is called hyperreality.

We often find hyperreality in films nowadays. One of the interesting things about hyperreality is that conditions are created where falsehood is mixed

with `actual reality. A form of hyperreality is virtual reality. Virtual reality is an artificial environment through sensory simulation provided by sophisticated computer technology where connected actions can determine what happens in the real environment. In this case, virtual reality is for practice to make the simulation more effective. The works of these filmmakers not only create some imagination or fantasy but also have a clear basis, namely the reality of life.

There are many films that used hyperreality in it, especially in this era. One of the films that highlights the hyperreality is *Avatar*. Compared to the other films that use hyperreality, *Avatar: The Way of Water* is the only one of a science fiction genre that took 13 years of works to produce after the first *Avatar* film appeared. This film uses a lot of technology and efforts to support the quality of the animation that will be shown in cinemas. Another thing that make this film is so special is that it was shot using a new type of 3D camera that was specially designed for the film. The technology used in the film was so advanced that it had to be specially created for the movie, giving it a more immersive and realistic feel.

Therefore, this film is interesting to study considering that the concept of hyperreality creates a false reality mixed with the original reality. So, the writer is interested in knowing what phenomena are related to hyperreality and certain simulations conveyed in the film *Avatar The Way of Water*.

There are some researches that discuss about hyperreality that the writer can use as references. The first analysis is written by Dalimu et al in 2020, from the Faculty of Humanities University of Halu Oeo, Southeast Sulawesi with the

title "*The Portrayal and the Effects of Hyperreality in Ready Player One Movie by Steven Spielberg (The Application of Jean Baudrillard's Theory)*". The second is written by Harahap and Kusumalestari in 2023 from the University of Islam Bandung with the title "*Postmodernisme dalam Film Avatar: The Way Of Water*". The last is written by Astuti in 2022 from the University of Indonesia, with the title "*Reality and Hyperreality Behind the Kidfluencer Phenomenon*".

The writer is interested to write about hyperreality as the topic in this research, because the film is a perfect example of using modelling and visualization technology that takes over the world of natural reality. The topic also related and appropriate for the current situation. In addition, the discussion about hyperreality has been in a limited discussion and not many are conducted. So that through this topic, the writer can add an insight for reader's research in the future.

1.2 Formulation of The Problem

Based on the explanation from the background above, several points emerge where these points can be used for problem formulation. The formulation of the problem is as follows:

1. How the hyperreality is presented in *Avatar: The Way of Water*?
2. How the phenomenon of simulation is presented in *Avatar: The Way of Water*?

1.3 Objective of The Study

Related to the formulation of the problem above, the objective of the study are:

1. to describe the phenomenon of hyperreality and simulation in the film *Avatar: The Way of Water*.
2. to analyze the phenomenon of hyperreality and simulation in the film *Avatar: The Way of Water*.

1.4 Significance of The Study

This research has theoretical and practical benefits, especially for future researchers. Practically, the analysis of this research will give information and knowledge for the future readers. The writer hopes that by exploring this research, the readers will understand how the hyperreality aspects represented in a popular work. The writer also hopes that the current study will help the readers explore how hyperreality in the simulation of the world is. By this study of hyperreality, information and self-awareness can be understood that reality can be formed and influence the mind so that the readers can distinguish between reality and fantasy. Then, the readers know which one the fake reality that becomes a new living space to actualize its existence. For future writers and readers this research can be used as references in the development of scientific and cultural studies, and this research can help for further research.

Theoretically, this research is expected to show the application of hyperreality, the phenomenon, and the simulation in *Avatar: The Way of Water* film related to the hyperreality and the simulation in the film. This film is a perfect choice knowing that the cinematic is too perfect and almost seems real for the viewer, especially in this digital era the study of hyperreality may give benefit to readers to comprehend the concept better.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Conclusion

This research aims to examine the phenomenon of hyperreality and simulations in the *Avatar: The Way of Water* film. Based on the analysis, it was found that the film contained nine elements of the phenomenon of hyperreality and the phenomenon of simulations that were indicated in the scenes and the dialogues of these films.

There were seven phenomena in the film *Hyperreality*. First, it showed the Pandora planet as home to sentient humanoid races, which made people hard to differ the reality of living on another planet. Second, it showed the technology changing human form and ability, which made people assume the possibility to make people alive from their death by the advanced technology. Third, it showed making another planet a new home for humanity, which showed that technology could make humans live on another planet by using their technology. Fourth, it showed the war between humans and aliens, which showed the sophisticated war equipments between humans and aliens. Fifth, it showed big spaceships that carried lots of humans in robot costumes, which indicated the advancement of technology could make people feel amazed, trapped, and believed in such things in the film. Sixth, it showed making a building with the help of robots, which made the people believed that with the advance technology, such as robots would make the building progress faster. Seventh, it showed stopping the human aging

process, which indicated the existence of powerful substances that stopped the aging process, such as Amrita, made the Earth's reality went to beyond.

Meanwhile, in the phenomenon of Simulations, there were two scenes that showed the phenomenon of simulation. First, when Colonel was changed into an Avatar to live more capable, this showed the phenomenon of simulations because humans imitate the form of the aliens in order to match their strength and ability. Second, the floating islands and the planet animals, which exaggerates everything based on what exists in the earth, such as trees, plants, atmosphere, and terrains.

As the ideology, this film shows the audience that the nature of Earth were on the crisis such as deforestation,

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the results of this analysis, there are several suggestions that can be given for the future researchers as well as the film industry and the public.

For the Future researcher, it is appropriate to deepen the analysis with different theoretical approach, such as semiotic analysis or the psychoanalysis approach to reveal other meaning in the film. Besides, it is also important to do comparative research with other hyperreality film that has similar themes which can provide greater insight on how hyperreality is used as a tool of cultural criticism in various contexts. Lastly, the readers is needed by conducting a study on how audiences receive and interpret the hyperreality in this film can provide insight into the effectiveness of hyperreality as means of delivering the act of simulations

For the film industry, Filmmakers can continue to use hyperreality as a tool to convey important simulations effects, as hyperreality has the ability to reach a wider audience and make serious issues easier to understand. Besides, It is important to ensure diverse and inclusive representation in films, so that the stories and characters reflect the experiences and perspectives of different groups of people.

For the public, People are expected to be more critical in watching films and identifying the messages, as well as understanding the simulations context behind the hyperreality shown. Besides, media literacy education is important to improve individuals' ability to critically analyze and interpret media content so that they do not just passively receive messages but are also able to develop a deeper understanding. With the conclusion and suggestions, it is hoped that this research can make a meaningful contribution to understanding the simulations in film as a tool of hyperreality, as well as provide direction for future reseach and filmmaking practices.

There are still much more of the readers could get from the movie, researchers can analyze the film from any different perspective and this research can be a reference for the next researchers who interested in analyzing hyperreality and simulations.

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