

# Cyberspace and Hyperreality in the Novel of *Kerumunan Terakhir* by Okky Madasari

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**Abstract**—Social media is currently one of the most important communication media in the interaction between individuals and groups. By sending messages through social media, such as WhatsApp group or Facebook group with two hundred or more members, at the same time an information can be received by a group of people from different places. Furthermore, the message can be forwarded by members to the other WhatsApp group, so that more people receive the same message. The illustration shows how communication in society is no longer built by face-to-face communication, which is bound by space and real time, but communication through a new space known as cyberspace. This paper discusses the phenomenon of cyberspace that has succeeded in shaping a new reality in the lives of the characters in Okky Madasari's novel "*Kerumunan Terakhir*". The new reality that is formed is known as virtual reality or hiperreality. Using the method of hypersemiotics, it will be understood that the sign system used in the novel of the final revelation moves toward virtual signs, transcending the reality (hypersign) to represent the hyperrealities experienced by the characters in the novel. The results show that social media is not only a cyberspace where the characters interact, but also has shaped the identity of the characters as the digital generation, who live in two overlapping worlds. The two worlds are the real world (reality) and the virtual world (hyperreality). The *Kerumunan Terakhir* novel is thus written as part of a discourse that represents a change of Indonesian human identity in the digital age, which moves in cyberspace different from the previous era.

**Keywords**—*cyberspace, hiperreality, digital generation, novel, social media*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology today has created a new public space known as cyberspace. As a new public space, cyberspace has diverted various human (political, social, economic, cultural and spiritual) activities from the real world into its various artificial substitutions [1] Cyberspace creates a life built on a model of life that is fundamentally mediated by technology, so that the various functions of nature are now taken over by its technological substitution, called artificial life. In cyberspace people can interconnect across continents and across countries, then can interact and interact with each other [2] in a virtual communities [3].

One of the cyberspace that has changed the life order of society today is social media. By sending messages through one social media, such as whatsapp group or Facebook group with two hundred or more members, at the same time an information can be received by a group of people from different places. Furthermore, the message can be forwarded by members to other social media, until it becomes viral information that affects the attitudes and actions of a group of people. Research conducted by Budiyo [4] shows how the role of social media effectively has built public opinion in the electoral process of Jakarta Capital City Special Region 2017. With the social media, campaign to introduce and win the candidate of regional kapala not only done in real life, but also through various social media networks.

Changes in mediascape in Indonesia are not separate from what is happening around the world. Media has intervened and reshaped social life around the world [5]. The generation born into a new era begins to form an identity completely different from the identity of previous generations. The new generation born in the world that is connected to one another is constantly changing because of constantly exposed information network [6]. Attitudes and lifestyles, even one's identity is shaped and influenced by accessible digital social networks. Thus, cyberspace not only changes one's communication patterns, but also shapes their new identities and attitudes.

Social change in the digital age, which is directly or indirectly related to the pattern of communication through social media, can not only be examined from empirical reality, but also can be studied from cultural works, as well as works of literature. One of the literary works that try to represent the change of Indonesian society towards the digital era and cyber era is novel *Kerumunan Terakhir* by Okky Madasari [7]. This novel presents a different theme from previous Madasari novels. Madasari's previous novels, such as Entrok [8], 86 [9], Maryam [10], and Pasung Jiwa [11] raise issues surrounding social conflicts that occur in societies that cannot be separated from justice issues. *Kerumunan Terakhir* illustrates the influence of information technology and media for human life today. In a talk show at the Mutiara Indonesia show DAAI TV in year 2017 Madasari stated that to write the novel she has done research related to the development of information technology and the

use of social media for months. This means that the novel was written by its author to respond to the change of Indonesian society in the digital age.

Through her novel, Madasari tries to represent that human life of Indonesia in the last decade is not only active in the real spaces, but also began to occur in virtual public spaces or cyberspace. In the room people can communicate, discuss, and transact with each other. The process does not have to happen through direct physical encounters (face-to-face), but meet in a new space called cyberspace.

The portrayal of the characters' activities in virtual public spaces in the cyber era is already visible in the first sentence of the *Kerumunan Terakhir* novel. "Aku hidup di dunia yang sama sekali tak pernah dialami dan terpikirkan oleh simbahku saat seusiaku—bahkan ketika ia sekarang masih hidup di usianya yang hampir 90 tahun. Jangankan simbah, sepuluh tahun lalu pun aku tak pernah membayangkan dunia akan jadi seperti ini dan aku akan hidup dengan cara seperti ini. Orang-orang bilang aku ini adalah generasi milenium, generasi tahun 2000-an, generasi internet, generasi digital..." (p.1). ["I live in a world I have never experienced and thought of by my waste at my age—even when he is still alive at almost 90. Never mind, ten years ago I never imagined the world would be like this and I would live in this way. These people say I am a generation of milenium, a generation of the 2000s, the generation of the internet, the digital generation ... "(p.1).] The quote of the novel describes so rapidly changing times in the digital age My character, using the first person's perspective, tells how he and the people around him live in the digital age, only by uploading information and pictures via mobile phones, the whole world will receive the information immediately.

This article aims to discuss how Okky Madasari's *Kerumunan Terakhir*, as a cultural work and symbolic discourse, represents the digital age of man who lives his life in two overlapping worlds, the real world and the virtual world (hyperrealitas). The story depicted in the novel is a representation of Indonesian human life that has undergone a transformation from the modern era to the postmodern. Social phenomenon is a consequence of the development of Internet-based information technology in Indonesia.

The rest of this paper is organized as follow: Section II describes the proposed method. Section III presents the obtained finding and following by discussion. Finally Section IV concludes this conclusion.

## II. PROPOSED METHOD

This research uses hypersemiotics method, which is applied to read data source and interpret sign codes (decoding) that move toward virtual signals [12]. These virtual signs are used to represent the identity and life of the characters in the novel of *Kerumunan Terakhir*. This method is chosen because it is considered appropriate to understand the life narrative of characters in novels that move in cyberspace space and hyperrealitas. Through the reading of hypersemiotics, hypersign will be expressed in the novel of the Last Crow which represents the identity and life of the novel characters moving between reality and hyperreality in the cyberspace space.

## III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

From the novel *Kerumunan Terakhir*, it is found that a number of data depicting the identity and life of the characters moving in the space of cyberspace and hyperreality. This novel describes the stage of socio-cultural change from the traditional era to the modern era, and further into the postmodern era through the characters across generations, such as figures, father, and me. *Simbah (Jaitun)*, described as a character who maintains a tradition without caring for social dynamics outside his world, including technological developments. Simbah Jaitun is a caretaker of Suralaya Peak, Samigaluh, Kulonprogo. He is a guardian of the tradition who became famous for his story uploaded through social media by his grandson (p. 12, 7). Simbah Jaitun is the first generation to bring down the main character (Jayanegara). Bapak (Jayanegara's father) is the second generation. He is a university professor who is beginning to adapt to the internet and its supporting tools. Jayanegara (Matajaya) and his friends (Maera, Akardewa, and Nura) are the third generation, the digital generation, who have become part of netizens. They are the new generation that interacts actively in cyberspace.

By taking the time back in the 2000s, this novel represents the lives of digital figures, which in the novel is called millennium generation, generation internet, or digital generation. They are digital who live in two worlds, real world and virtual world in cyberspace. They live and stay in Indonesia, as Indonesian citizens, but in virtual reality they become netizens who mingle and interact with a number of people across countries and nations. They are interconnected and connected into the virtual world boldly (online) and real time (6). Citizenship relationships between internet users (netizenship), mixed in a global context, cannot be described in homeland or blood ties (ius soli and ius sanguinis), but based on thoughts of interests and issues [13].

The diction *kerumunan* (crowd) used in this novel refers to the netizen-ship meaning. The following quote shows it.

*Hari itu dua minggu setelah aku menapaki dunia yang serba asing ini hanya karena dipaksa oleh Maera. Jari-jariku sudah lincah bergerak, matak sudah biasa melihat banyak orang berlalu-lalang, sudah kudatangi pada berbagai tempat di dunia, dari Amerika hingga Ethiopia, dari pantai-pantai di Karibia hingga Pegunungan Himalaya. Aku juga mulai berani masuk ke satu kerumunan, pindah ke kerumunan lainnya. Aku mulai banyak mendengar apa yang dibicarakan orang-orang... [7], 93).*

That day two weeks after I walked this alien world just because it was pulled by Maera. My fingers are already agile, my eyes are used to seeing many passers-by, I've been in many places in the world, from America to Ethiopia, from the beaches of the Caribbean to the Himalayas. I also started getting into a crowd, moving to the other crowd. I began to hear much of what people were saying ... [7], 93.

In the virtual world, in the interaction of netizens, they generally use a new identity, which is different from reality. This is because the cyberspace structure has opened up a wide space for everyone to create artificially the concept of self and identity [1]. Representation of the digital generation

that lives in virtual reality in cyberspace in this novel is illustrated through the character of Jayanegara, who when the netizen chose the name Matajaya [7]. The name change is one of the characteristics of social change from cyberspace. Piliang [1] states that cyberspace has caused fundamental social change at three levels, ie individual, interindividual, and community levels.

According to Piliang [1] at the individual level cyberspace has led to a fundamental change towards understanding of self and identity. This is because the cyberspace structure opens space for everyone to create artificially the concept of self and its identity, a new, false, and dual identity, which in psychoanalysis is known as a divided self. At the level of interaction between individuals, cyberspace leads to interconnectedness and virtual interdependency. In such relationships allows the occurrence of various forms of fraud, forgery, and reality simulation [1]. At the community level, cyberspace can create an imaginary community. In this community leaders, rules of play, and social control are not institutional [1].

In the novel is described that Jayanegara began to know the internet because forced by her lover, who works as a journalist in Jakarta. Starting from the goal of searching for jobs online, Jayanegara eventually became an active internet user. Unattached to a job, his days are spent in front of a laptop screen with an internet network. In the virtual world, he chose a new name, Matajaya. He began to get acquainted with many people and communities from different parts of the world.

*Teknologi memberiku hidup baru. Aku lahir kembali sebagai pencerita ulung, sebagai tokoh baru di dunia baru. Dari seorang yang bukan siapa-siapa aku bisa menjadi seseorang yang didengar dan diikuti banyak orang.*

*Aku mulai hidup baruku dengan nama baru: Matajaya, sebagai Matajaya, aku bisa bebas bercerita tentang apa saja dan melakukan apa saja. Termasuk membalas dendamku pada Bapak [7], p. 13.*

[Technology gives me new life. I was reborn as a master storyteller, as a new figure in a new world. From a nobody I can be heard and followed by many people. I started my new life with a new name: Matajaya, as Matajaya, I can be free to talk about anything and do anything. Including my revenge on Bapak [7], p. 13.

*Aku harus lahir kembali. Lebih dari sekedar dengan berganti nama menjadi Matajaya. Lagi pula aku kan di sini bukan untuk bersembunyi. Aku adalah Matajaya yang ingin membangun hidup baru di sini. Dunia baru dibangun dengan kata-kata dan sekarang aku salah satu pemilik kata-kata itu... [7], p. 145.*

I must be born again. More than just renaming Matajaya. Besides I'm not here to hide. I'm Matajaya who wants to build a new life here. The new world is built with words and now I am one of the owners of those words ... [7] p. 145.

By transforming his identity into Matajaya, Jayanegara becomes an individual involved in new identity games, false identities, and even multiple identities. An identity that Piliang [1] referred to as a divided self. Individuality of the

characters is seen in the use of different dual identities, between real-world identity and identity in cyberspace. In real reality, Jayanegara is a young man who does not finish college, unemployed, and lives in the place of his lover. However, in the virtual world with a new identity as Matajaya, he claims to be a photographer living in New York and interacting with others virtually (p. 309) [7]. In a virtual world, Jayanegara really tries to hide his identity. Maera, who lived with him was not allowed to know his identity in cyberspace.

*Matajaya adalah manusia masa depan itu. Ia hadir tanpa sejarah dan ingatan. Tak kubiarkan satu pun orang dari duniaku sebelumnya mengenalnya, terasuk Maera. Biarlah Maera hanya kenal Jayanegara, dan biarlah Maera hanya berpikir satu-satunya hal yang kulakukan di sini adalah mencari lowongan pekerja-an... [7], p. 94.*

Matajaya is the man of the future. It comes without history and memory. I did not let anybody from my world ever know him, including Maera. Let Maera know only Jayanegara, and let Maera just think the only thing I do here is look for job vacancy ... [7], p. 94.

In the postmodernist perspective Jayanegara and his friends are known as cyberpeople [3]. They interact in cyberspace and create a virtual reality known as hyperreality that is full of identity games. One of Jayanegara's friends in cyberspace is Akardewa who in social media is known as a wise man figure, his words regarded as truth and followed by others. But is it true in Akardewa's real reality? Akardewa's identity was revealed by Nura's character, one of Matajaya's friends on Facebook. To Matajaya Nura recounts that after half a year of friends with Akardewa on Facebook, they promise to meet in real life. It turns out that the image of Akardewa in the virtual world is not the same as in reality. In fact, due to the meeting, Nura who is still a high school student is raped by Akardewa.

*Tak sampai enam bulan kami berkenalan, ia mengajak ketemu. Awalnya tentu seperti ajakan tak serius. Rasanya semua orang bisa saling melempar ajakan bertemu di dunia baru ini, tapi hanya sedikit orang yang benar-benar mewujudkan-nya. Kami salah satunya...*

*Saat pertama kali bertemu dengannya, aku jelas kecewa. Akardewa sama sekali tidak setampian yang aku bayangkan. Dia memang jarang mengunggah foto-fotonya...*

*Aku makin menyadari sosok yang sekarang ada di hadapanku ini. Akardewa yang selalu kuangankan sebagai laki-laki perkasa itu sesungguhnya hanya pria setengah baya yang cacat, lunglai, nyaris tak mampu menopang tubuhnya sendiri. Sebuah kruk tergeletak di lantai tepat di samping kursinya... [7], p. 128.*

Less than six months we met, he invited to meet. Initially certainly like a solemn invitation. It seems that everyone can throw a call to meet in this new world, but few people make it happen. We are one of them ...

When I first met him, I was clearly disappointed. Akardewa is not as handsome as I imagine. He rarely uploads his photographs ...

I am increasingly aware of the figure that is now in front of me this. Akardewa who always poured as a mighty man was in fact only a middle-aged man who was handicapped, limp, barely able to support his own body. A crutch lying on the floor right next to his chair ... [7], p. 128.

From the quote, it appears that Akardewa's character in the real world is different from the existing image in cyberspace. In real life there are many cases of sexual violence against teenagers due to friendship on Facebook, as experienced by Nura figures. This is one of the negative impacts of interaction through social media.

Almost simultaneously with the publication of the *Kerumunan Terakhir* novel, <https://news.okezone.com> [14] reported that a teenager with initials FR [15] was raped by two newly known male friends on Facebook in Gorowong Village, Parung Panjang Sub- District, Bogor, West Java. This reality is represented in the novel of *Kerumunan Terakhir*. Cyberspace negative excesses, one of which is sexual violence, becomes a phenomenon raised in the novel. Apparently, not only Nura figures who became victims of sexual violence from Akardewa. The Maera character, Jayanegara's lover, was also raped by Akardewa, even his photographs were distributed to cyberspace. Cyberspace is not only bringing progress, but it also opens up wide space for crime.

The tragic fate experienced by Nura and Maera characters in the novel shows not only the negative influence of social media, but also shows the stuttering of people in dealing with the "reality" of the virtual world. Internet users who build interactions through cyberspace have not been fully aware that virtual reality is full of games. They have not all realized that cyberspace is a hyperreal world, a coffee of a decodified reality [1].

The novel also illustrates the dangers of the internet when used by children and adolescents who do not yet have technological literacy. Unaware of the consequences and dangers of activity in social media, Juwita (Jayanegara's sister) writes a status on Facebook that tells a teacher in his classroom beating a student using a ruler, complete with photos of the incident. As a result of that status several mass media (TV and newspaper) reported the case. Because he felt his good name and school were defiled, the teacher reported the matter to the police. To save Juwita from a legal case, Jayanegara uploaded photos when Juwita checked police to Facebook. As a result, the case received public attention. Netizen's support for Juwita extends the message "Save Juwi", until finally the case is stopped (p.p. 185-188) [7].

From a number of data found in the novel *Kerumunan Terakhir*, it appears that the story raised in the novel represents the power of internet-based social media in the life of Indonesian society, especially from the middle class. The Internet entered Indonesia in the 1990s when B. J. Habibie served as Minister of Research and Technology (1978 - 1998). Habibie is also the first minister to have a website on the internet [15]). In 1986 the National Research Council led by Habibie recommended that the development of science and information technology services in the country, which then crystallized with the establishment of

IPTEKnet internet information network in 1989 which is managed under the Agency for Assessment and Application of Technology. In 1998-1999, internet cafes began popping up near the campus of Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta State University, and Atma Jaya University of Yogyakarta [15].

By depicting the negative impact of the internet for children and adolescents, as seen in the figures of Juwita and Nura, *Kerumunan Terakhir* novel intends to show the reader that the development of information technology, especially internet-based, has the potential to harm its users. In the context of the Indonesian constitution, disseminating information about student beatings done by teachers in the classroom, as Juwita did to the public through social media, can ensnare the uploader himself. The perpetrator of the beating may utilize Law No. 19/2016 on Electronic Information and Transactions, Article 40, concerning the misuse of electronic information and electronic transactions that disrupt public order, so that the disseminator (with good intentions) may be considered in violation of the law.

The novel also illustrates that the internet has touched everyone, all ages and layers. Based on data collected by APJII (Association of Internet Service Providers) in 2013-2014 in Indonesia there are 71.19 million internet users with most urban middle-class users (83.4%), compared with 6% in rural areas. The profile of internet users is dominated by workers (55%), followed by students (18%), and housewives (16%) (Simarmata, 2014: 28). The purpose of internet use is dominated by the need for leisure and pleasure to socialize (71%), information (65.3%), follow the times (51.2%), and have fun (32.6%). Matajaya, Maera, Akardewa, and his friends belong to an urban middle group who use the internet to socialize, search for information, and have fun. They use more social media Facebook, either individually or in groups.

The symbolic diction of the (*kerumunan*) crowd used in the novel refers to the meaning of the community, a social media network. The last crowd raised as the title of the novel shows the awareness of several characters in the novel who want to leave the virtual world of cyberspace because, in addition to providing some benefits, the new world is not friendly, creating identity alienation, even dangerous. There are many changes caused by the information technology revolution and the emergence of cyberspace. It brings advances in many areas, but at the same time brings negative impacts such as crime, drugs, human trafficking, and other crimes that fall into the category of Deep Net (dark net, hidden web) [6]. The virtual world also creates disruption (disruption) that shifts the old players in the business field and replaces it with new players with new business patterns.

One of the symptoms of the shift is the threat of mass media is threatened by the presence of online mass media. Several print media even declared no longer published. An online site <http://cb-newspaper.blogspot.co.id/> announces that in 2015 there are 16 printed media in Indonesia that went bankrupt as a result of the development of online media. The media include Sinar Harapan, Harian Bola, Koran Tempo Minggu, dan Jakarta Globe. Nurkinan [16] argued that the development of online media to print media

is felt. During 2016 the growth of online media in Indonesia reached about 43 thousand sites. About 40,000 of them are unverified because only 230 are verified in the Press Council.

The phenomenon is also expressed in the novel of the *Kerumunan Terakhir*. After Maera's office was closed, Maera lost her job. Together with Matajaya, Maera finally left his life in Jakarta and chose to stay at Mbah Jaitun's house at Puncak Suralaya. The place is considered untouched by mobile phone technology, television, and internet. However, the assumption was wrong. A few minutes after Mbah Jaitun married Jayanegara with Maera customarily in Puncak Suralaya, several tourists came to the place. With their cameras and mobile phones scrambling to photograph Mbah Jaitun and invite him to take selfie. In fact, one of them there who felt familiar with Maera's face.

*"Kok kayaknya pernah lihat mbak ini ya," kata salah satu dari mereka sambil berjalan mendekati kami. Aku melirik Maera. "Lho ini kan mbak yang itu...!" teriak yang lain...Maera tak menunggu jawaban. Ia lari meninggalkan kami semua. Aku segera mengikutinya... [7], p. 356.*

["How come I i ever see you," said one of them while walking toward us. I glanced at Maera. "Why, isn't this that girl ...!" Shouted the other ... Maera did not wait for an answer. She ran away from us all. I immediately followed him ... [7], p. 356.

The tourists come to Puncak Suralaya not only for travel, but also want to take selfie and video, to then upload and disseminate it through social networking. Suralaya Peak, which was originally not publicly known, suddenly became one of the bustling destinations. The first person to upload Suralaya Peak information and the story of his interpreter, Mbah Jaitun, to social media is Jayanegara himself. Due to Jayanegara status on public Facebook start coming to Puncak Suralaya to travel and meet with Mbah Jaitun.

Based on research conducted by Umami [17] that social media was indeed able to become a means of tourism promotion in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. With the existence of social media, life originally in a remote place can be known to the public because of information about it into the cyberspace. Nothing else can be free from the impact of cyberspace in the digital era as it is today. This novel describes the powerful influence of cyberspace in the dynamics of society in Indonesia. By using the flashback flow, this novel describes the transformation process from the traditional era that has not been touched by technology, especially the internet when the character Jayanegara lived with Mbah Jaitun in Puncak Suralaya, then followed the era of mobile phones that can be regarded as one of the icon of the modernist era, followed by postmodernist era, when the internet and cyberspace play the role of cyberpeople who live in hyperreality, but cannot escape the realm of reality.

Referring to the view of De Meuse [18] who divided the workforce into four generations, the character of Mbah Jaitun in the novel of the *Kerumunan Terakhir*, it can be categorized as the generation of matures, born between 1920 and 1939. However, it is also possible that he is a baby boomers generation born between 1940 to 1959. This is the generation that has not been formed by internet

connectivity. Meanwhile, Bapak's figure is a generation X representation born between 1960 and 1979. In their interaction with the internet, they are digital migrants or newcomers to the computer after entering the world of work and a little late to learn the internet. Digital migrants can adapt to the digital world but with somewhat different and slightly more fragile foundations [6]. Jayanegara's (Matajaya), Maera, Akardewa and his companions clearly represent the Y-generation or millennials born between 1980 and the end of 2000. This is a generation called native digital.

In this process of intergenerational social transformation, the novel of the *Kerumunan Terakhir* was built. According to Piliang [1] the complex world transformation is symbolically called the folded world, which includes time-space compression, time-action condensation, time-space miniaturation, symbolic time-space, and psychical time-space. This complexity is faced by figures Jayanegara (Matajaya), Maera, Akardewa, and his friends. The digital generation that has new characters, as always living in the construction of hyperreality, happy to be alone in the world, tends to be narcissistic, multitasking, and participatory.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

From the results of research on the novel *Kerumunan Terakhir*, it can be concluded that this novel represents a change in the identity of Indonesian human beings in connectivity with the internet into three periods. First, the traditional era, which is characterized by the absence of internet connectivity. Patterns of interaction and community communication in this era tend to be conventional. The Mbah Jaitun figure is a representation of this era. Second, the modernist era, which is marked by the opening of internet access. People began to get acquainted and adapt to the internet. This community typology is commonly known as digital migrants. The father of the novel represents this typology. Third, the digital era, an era inhabited by cyberpeople in cyberspace. People born in this era are commonly referred to as native digital. They begin to integrate their lives into mobile phones and smartphones. The process of social transformation in relation to internet connectivity has given rise to significant social changes in society, especially in the way they interact.

In addition, the novel of *Kerumunan Terakhir*, it also shows the tendency that social media is not only a cyberspace where the characters interact, but also has become a space for the construction of the identity of the characters as the digital generation. This tendency is evident in the characters Jayanegara (Matajaya), Maera, Akardewa, and his friends who represent themselves as native digital. They live in two overlapping worlds, the realm of reality and the world of hyperreality. This novel also shows the emergence of new characters in the digital community who tend to be happy to be alone in the world, tend to be narcissistic, multitasking, and participatory. Narcissistic tendency is seen in the emergence of the habit of taking selfie photos. Advocacy through social media given to the Juwita figure is an example of a massive participatory character given by the public.

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