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## Simulacra in *Webtoon Virgo* and *The Sparkling* by Anisha Nisfihani

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### Abstract

This study aims to identify forms of simulacra, including signs, images, and codes, in the Webtoon *Virgo* and *The Sparkling* by Anisha Nisfihani. The research applies Jean Baudrillard's simulacra theory, which explains that representations and technological simulations have replaced contemporary reality. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method with a narrative analysis approach, utilizing data in the form of text and images from the Webtoon. The analysis reveals 71 forms of simulacra, consisting of 29 signs, such as guitars and costumes, 28 codes, such as "rental" and "synesthesia," and 14 images, such as the cool blue color or the smell of burning. Where each element conveys profound meanings that vary according to individual interpretation. The research demonstrates that Webtoons, as a form of cyber literature, are not merely entertaining but also encompass diverse meanings that illustrate how digital culture and media technology shape the understanding of reality. This study is expected to contribute to broadening insights into the application of simulacra theory in popular literature, particularly in understanding the role of Webtoons as an innovative platform in contemporary literature.

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## INTRODUCTION

Magical powers have become essential in various mythologies, legends, and fictional stories from different cultures worldwide. Magical is often described as an extraordinary ability that transcends the boundaries of logic and science, allowing its users to control the elements of nature, space, time, or even the human mind (Mansur et al., 2023; Sunan & Yogyakarta, 2021). Magical presence is often associated with supernatural entities, mythical creatures, or unique individuals, creating an attraction and aura of profound mystery. In addition to being an alluring element of the story, magical powers symbolize inner strength, moral dilemmas, and the impact of unbridled power. In modern works of fiction, magic is used to build conflicts or resolve stories and as a metaphor representing human potential, emotional journeys, or wonders hidden in the real world (Pamungkas et al., 2022). It aims to explore the meaning, role, and magical appeal that continues to captivate the human imagination from the past to the modern era.

Humans must be imaginative, aesthetic, and even creative in this coexistence with things that cannot be explained scientifically (Irmawati, 2018). This is a component that enters literature; popular literature is one example of literature that appears because of culture, tradition, and even smells of ancient things that have much appeal because they are easy to understand and even easy to digest in all circles (Budijanto & Dewi, 2022; Fathiyatul et al., 2022). The development of this literature is inseparable from postmodernism and modernism, this popular literature leads to the era of progress of the times because of the many media influences that encourage this literature to become superior, for example in cyber literature.

Cyber literature is no longer written on print media but on the internet or other information technology (Dhian Pratamanti, 2018; Fitriani Laily, 2022). Cyber literature and popular literature cannot be separated because cyber literature is a medium or container that accommodates all the author's ideas, and the use of the internet or information technology is an added value in publishing the author's works. Cyber literature positively impacts young writers who have creativity (Alifah Septiani et al., 2022; Setiyowati et al., 2022). Making cyber literature a forum for cultivating potential so that the literary community can touch the work at large and an easy and affordable forum does not extend high or special skills.

*Webtoons* are works that young authors mostly make as part of digital literature (Khotimah & Wati, 2021; Tanjung & Darmansa, 2020).

Webtoon was first introduced globally in 2014 and became available in Indonesia in 2015. This platform is a place for creators to pour their ideas into the form of comics, which are often called manga.

Like many other forms of literature, Webtoon offers many diverse genres, including romance, fantasy, comedy, and horror. Each genre has its appeal, designed to cater to readers' interests from different backgrounds. The fantasy genre attracts attention from the many works produced because it often presents magical powers, imaginative worlds, and fascinating adventure stories.

*Virgo and The Sparkling* is a *webtoon* by a national child named Anisha Nisfihani, whom Art Ellie Goh and Original creator Jan Mintaraga assisted. *The Virgo and The Sparkling webtoon* is a *webtoon* that was published in 2017 and has reached 198.4 million readers with a rating of 9.8. This fantasy *webtoon* tells Riani as the main character who has magical powers, things that many people are unaware of. However, that power has existed since she was a child. The strange power turns out to be a miracle that she has even a few chosen people around her; this power has a positive role because her three friends use Riani's power as a helper for someone who needs and eradicates many evils. The power to see the color of the voice and the aura of a person's mood is an advantage given to Riani because it can help her see situations and conditions. After participating in the singing audition, it turns out that Riani was trained by her mentor to control her powers so that she can transform into a superhero who uses her powers to eradicate evil.

Regarding some events that occur in daily life and are in harmony with the webtoon, there is a simulacra theory that explains that human beings are not always in objective reality but always think in imagination and in delusions that can see a reality in the space of simulacra mechanisms taking place (Rifki Pribadi et al., 2023; Saumantri et al., 2020a). This public consumption occurs in the community; whatever is heard as consumption is an imagination that does not seem authentic, so the community is trapped in this reality. This concept is related to the creation of reality through a model related to "Myth," which cannot be seen in reality or has a truth.

Simulacra is a contemporary society where we have entered the era of simulation, where reality has been entirely replaced by representations and simulations produced by technology, media, and consumer culture (Masut, 2023; Oktavianingtyas et al., 2021). Jean Baudrillard introduced this concept with a thing

that has no boundaries between the pseudo-and the real, even suggesting that a collectivity that emerges is a pseudo-thing, a group of carefree people who enjoy togetherness, in the end, they are divided into individuals who do the routine only. (Ekasiswanto Rudi, 2024; Fitriani Laily, 2022)

In a contemporary society like this, simulacrum is determined by relationships such as signs, images, and codes. Signs are everything that contains meaning, and an image is visible to the senses but does not have a substantial existence. At the same time, code is a socially agreed way of combining signs to allow a message to reach from one person to another (Setia Bakti & Nirzalin, 2019a).

This study aims to look for simulacra forms in the form of signs, images, and codes in the *Virgo and The Sparkling Webtoon* based on these problems. So, this research will use simulacra theory. This theory proposes that in contemporary society, we have entered an era of simulation where reality has been entirely replaced by representation and simulation produced by technology, media, and consumer culture. Before this research took place, there was a research that discussed simulacra, based on relevant research conducted by Wahyuni Qori, David Setiadi, and Tantri Agustiani (2019), students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Muhammadiyah Sukabumi in their article entitled *Analysis of Mystical Elements in the Webtoon Sarimin by Flying Dragons* in 2019. The problem that Wahyuni Qori Sri researched aims to find out how the intrinsic elements of comics (characterization, plot, theme and morals, images and language) and the representation of mystical elements in the Webtoon "Sarimin" by the Flying Dragon. It also describes the intrinsic elements of comics and mystical elements, especially magical mystics, in terms of their nature, namely the type of magical mysticism contained in the Webtoon "Sarimin" by the Flying Dragon.

Previous research, such as that conducted by (Sri Wahyuni et al., 2019), has discussed mystical elements in the "Sarimin" Webtoon, including magical, mystical representations such as witchcraft. However, no research has explicitly examined *simulacra* (signs, images, and codes). The webtoon "*Virgo and The Sparkling*" raises the fantasy genre with elements of magical powers, especially in the context of the digital era and contemporary popular culture. No research has explored how the elements of signs, imagery, and code in *the "Virgo and The Sparkling" Webtoon* affect readers, particularly in shaping their perceptions of mystical concepts, magical powers, and reality mediated by technology.

## METHOD

This study uses the Simak method as the primary approach to data collection. This method is supported by data obtained through the Silak Recording or Watch Free Engagement Talk (SBLC) technique, which allows researchers to observe directly without being involved in the observed interactions. The method used in implementing this method is the recording technique, which systematically records relevant data during the observation process to produce accurate and in-depth information per the research objectives. (Lintang et al., 2024; Wiryandanu et al., 2024). This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach; qualitative research seeks to reveal the symptoms comprehensively, according to the context of the problem solved through data collection (Abdu Rajab, 2015; Al Asy'ary & Sundari, 2022). aims to understand the phenomenon in depth with a focus on data quality. The data analysis techniques used involve several stages. (1) Data is collected through related literature, which includes books, journals, articles, and previous research (2) The collected data is then collected and sorted so that only relevant data remains. (3) Relevant data is classified by theme or topic to facilitate further analysis. (4) After the data is grouped, the searcher interprets and concludes to understand the data thoroughly (Subagiya Bahrum, 2023). The results of the data analysis are then compiled in the form of a descriptive narrative that describes the research findings using relevant theories as the basis for analysis.

The research process begins with the initial step of identifying the problem that is the main focus and formulating the research objectives to be achieved, namely looking for simulacra forms in the *Virgo and The Sparkling* webtoon. The next stage is data collection through various methods, such as reading, direct observation (listening), in-depth observation of the research object, and review of relevant literature to add insight and context. The data obtained is then grouped into specific categories to be more organized. After that, the data that has been grouped is analyzed in depth using an approach appropriate to the research method. The final step of this process is to formulate a conclusion based on the results of the analysis, which is then presented in the form of a structured narrative to answer the research question and achieve the goals that have been formulated. The study ended with a conclusion and discussion of findings that included the implications of the research results. Thus, this study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the data studied in the relevant context.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Simulacra**

Simulacra explains that humans are not always in objective reality but always think in imagination and in delusions that can see a reality in the space of the simulacra mechanism taking place (Asharudin et al., 2023; Saumantri et al., 2020b). Public consumption often occurs in the community; whatever is heard is consumed. Consumption here is an imagination that has not yet seemed genuine; people are trapped in this reality. This concept is related to "Magical," which cannot be seen in reality or has a truth. Baudrillard argues that in contemporary society, we have entered an era of simulations in which reality has been entirely replaced by representations and simulations produced by technology, media, and consumer culture. In a simulated society like this, everything is determined by the relationship of signs, images, and codes (Aginta Hidayat, 2019). Signs are everything that contains meaning, which follows Saussurean's semiological theory. It has two elements: signs (forms) and signs (meaning). Images are everything that is received by the senses but does not have a substantial existence. At the same time, code is a socially agreed way of combining signs to allow a single message to be relayed from one person to another (Setia Bakti & Nirzalin, 2019b).

This study found 71 analysis data on the *Virgo and The Sparkling* webtoon. The simulacra form found in this study was 29 signs, 14 images, and 28 codes.

**Table 1.** Simulacra Forms in the *Virgo and The Sparkling Webtoon* by Anisha Nisfihani

Simulacra form	Data	Frequency
Sign	Guitar, piano, drummer, electric wave, costume, candy	29
Image	Sight, hearing, motion, smell, touch	14
Code	Ngerental, Message, super mak, cabe, loetube, Fansclub, Virgorgeous, Synesthesia	28

**Tanda dalam Webtoon *Virgo and The Sparkling* Karya Anisha Nisfihani**

The marks in Nisfihani's *Virgo and The Sparkling Webtoon* include everything that contains meaning in a narrative and visual context. In Ferdinand de Saussure's semiological theory, signs consist of two main elements: markers (shapes) and signifiers (meanings). A marker refers to a physical form or symbol used to convey a message, while a sign represents the meaning or concept the marker represents. This concept of signs allows for a deeper and more complex understanding than just using language in everyday communication. In literature and art, signs refer to symbolic elements writers or artists use to convey more profound and complex meanings to readers or viewers (Muhammad et al., 2023). Signs in this context serve as a literal communication tool and a medium to convey implicit messages, themes, and deeper emotions.

Signs can also be interpreted as pronouns for things or people. For example, the guitar as a marker has a favorite meaning in the following quote.

"Cool, you can play the guitar."

"There is an idle guitar" (Nisfiani, Eps 1)

The quote above explains that the guitar as a marker has a sign or meaning that is Riani's favorite. Riani's character likes music, and even the voice that is sung is very melodious and harmonious with the rhythm. This condition was when Riani plucked the guitar with her curling hands while in the room and the BEM room; when Riani sang a song, her friend came and praised her. His friend praised him because his friend named Monic likes music, and it happens that Monic has been a drummer until now. Monic was fascinated to see Riani momentarily glued to her smooth voice, and Riani emitted a pink color; this power called Synesthesia is the advantage of seeing the voice, which can be seen with people with the same abilities as Riani.

"I am also stunned, thugs! It is outrageous." (Nisfiani: Eps 36)

The quote tells of an incident in which Riani and Kak Leo argued with a group of thugs. This conflict begins when Riani accidentally turns around and spills a drink on a thug's shirt. Although Riani had apologized, the thug did not accept the apology and instead demanded compensation. Tensions escalate when the thug strikes Kak Leo, knocking him unconscious. Riani felt very

depressed and angry because of this incident. He could not hold back his emotions anymore and felt that the actions of the thugs had crossed the line. In her anger, Riani decides to take revenge by electrocuting the thugs, causing them to bounce away. This action is considered an extreme step because the actions of thugs are considered unforgivable. Overall, the text depicts Riani's frustration and anger in the face of a violent situation.

"The costume is significant in supporting security and looks fashionable."  
(Nisfiani: Eps 118)

This conversation occurred in an atmosphere full of enthusiasm and cheerfulness when the three women, Riani, Ussy, and Monic, decided to transform themselves into superheroes. In this scenario, Riani is set as the leading superhero who will act in front of the screen, while Ussy and Monic will play the role of backstage support. Although not directly involved in the heroic act, their role is equally important in supporting Riani to achieve their goals. The first idea that came up from Ussy was something that many considered "crazy." She is excited to design a spectacular and unique superhero costume for Riani. Ussy has a wild imagination and creative ideas that seem to know no bounds. He envisioned a costume that was striking and reflected Riani's strength and personality as a superhero.

On the other hand, Riani could only resign and nod her head as Ussy poured out her infinite ideas. He often feels trapped in the whirlpool of his friends' creativity and prefers to follow the flow of these ideas rather than be actively involved in his design. Even so, he cannot escape Ussy's infectious enthusiasm and is very confident in his designs.

Monic, their other friend, also plays an important role in this process. She pays special attention to the costume that Riani will wear. For Monic, not only is the costume design important, but it must also ensure that the costume is comfortable and reflects Riani's personality and abilities as a superhero. Monic often discusses various materials, colors, and designs that can support Riani's appearance effectively and attractively. When the three women got together to discuss the costume design, their conversation was full of conflicting ideas but also fun. They talk about various details, from the costume function that can support Riani's superpowers to the aesthetic aspects that will make her stand out and be charismatic. Although Riani seems resigned to constantly changing ideas, she realizes how important the support and creativity of her friends are in her new role as a superhero.

"Ordinary candy; why is the mint flavor in the stall?"

(Nisfiani: Eps 136)

The above conversation explains the situation when Riani and Monic talk. Monic sees that Riani is eating candy and asks Riani what candy she ate. The conversation above describes a simple but intimate moment between Riani and Monic. In a relaxed atmosphere, Riani and Monic sat together, enjoying their time with a small chat. At that time, Riani was enjoying a piece of candy that seemed very delicious and alluring.

Monic, who was watching Riani with interest, was curious about the candy that her friend was enjoying. Seeing Riani's enthusiasm in chewing the candy, Monic could not help but be curious and decided to ask. In a cheerful and curious tone, Monic asked Riani, "What candy are you eating, Riani? It looks so good!" Riani instantly woke up from her daydream and smiled at Monic. She replied happily, explaining the type of candy she was eating; Riani could have mentioned that the candy was one of her favorites.



"Duh, my electricity is out of control!"  
(Nisfiani: Eps 28)

The above quote describes an event full of tension. This incident occurred when Leo was behind Riani in a seemingly ordinary situation. However, Leo deliberately took an action that surprised Riani by pushing her shoulder suddenly. This surprised Riani, and Riani's spontaneous reaction was to electrocute Kak Leo's hand with quite strong energy. When Riani electrocutes Kak Leo, she does not immediately realize who has shocked her. Only after the moment of surprise passed did Riani realize that the person behind her

and the cause of the incident was Kak Leo. This awareness adds an element of surprise and confusion in an already tense situation.

Meanwhile, Leo felt something from the incident very intensely. After the incident, Leo felt that his left hand was numb as if affected by the shock given by Riani. This numbing sensation made Leo start to reflect on what happened. He began to think hard, trying to recall what happened before and after the surprise moment. Leo wondered if the numbness in her hand directly resulted from Riani's actions or if other factors affected her condition. Leo felt confused and unsure about what to do next. He might consider talking to Riani about the incident, expecting an explanation or clarification from his friend.

This study interprets the sign in *the Virgo and The Sparkling Webtoon* as a narrative and visual element loaded with symbolism based on Ferdinand de Saussure's semiological theory. In this case, signs consist of two main elements, namely markers (physical forms or symbols) and signifiers (meanings or concepts) (Fitri Syarif, 2017). For example, the guitar in the story is not just an object but also represents Riani's love of music, which shows her character and emotional side. This research confirms that each element in a *Webtoon* has a dual function as a literal and symbolic communication tool. Riani's electrical power and the phenomenon of *synesthesia* also play a role in depicting emotional conflicts and relationships between characters. The study's main finding is how symbolic elements such as the guitar, superhero costume, and Riani's electric powers are interconnected to enrich the narrative. For example, Riani's costume has a practical function and symbolizes her strength and identity as a hero. In addition, the study also revealed new findings that show that minor signs such as guitars and candies strengthen emotional connections between characters, giving more dimension to stories that have not been widely discussed in semiotics studies.

#### **Kode Webtoon *Virgo and The Sparkling* Karya Anisha Nisfihani**

A code is a system of signs created based on an agreement between the source and receiver to describe or convey a situation. This code includes a collection of symbols found in text and context, understood through code principles and specific symbols, letters, words, or signs. In analyzing literary works that use the code system, three main types of codes are important: language, literary, and cultural (Setiawan, 2017).

Codes enable effective communication by providing structures and conventions understood in a specific social context. This means that codes are not just symbols or signs but are also the result of a social agreement that allows people to interpret and understand the message conveyed consistently (Seha et al., 2023). This code serves as a framework that allows individuals to express ideas, concepts, or information in a standardized way (Puspita Ilham et al., 2023). As part of the communication system, codes play an important role in ensuring that messages sent and received can be understood in the same way by all parties involved.

"There is no message to join the group."  
(Nisfiani: Eps 1)

The above quote describes a tense moment in the story where Riani is experiencing intense anger. In a state of heightened anger, Riani loses control of the power of the electricity she possesses. The electrical energy he released was so powerful that it caused significant damage to his home. The lights around him shattered, adding to the chaotic and devastating atmosphere.

Seeing the damage caused, Riani looked at her hand, confused and worried. He muttered to himself, realizing how mighty the power he had unleashed and how difficult it was to control it when anger overwhelmed him. This realization adds to Riani's fear and sadness, as she knows uncontrollable anger can lead to more significant and damaging consequences.

"Until he created a *fan club*."  
(Nisfiani: Eps 8)

The quote above occurred when the atmosphere of *Virgo and The Sparkling* was on the rise, or we call it viral; this situation occurred when many optimistic supporters were happy with the music performed by the three beautiful women. However, Riani thinks negatively and is afraid that she will be scolded by Nitizen, who does not like the band. Monika enthusiastically shows positive comments to encourage Riani, who is thinking negatively. Ussy loudly shouted at Riani, saying that their fans had created a group that liked *Virgo and The Sparkling*, which they called the fans club.

"Chairman of the *virgorgeous grub*"  
(Nisfiani: Eps 8)

The above quote describes an important moment in the social life of Sasmi and her friends when Sasmi was appointed as the fan club chairman

for their favorite band, *Virgo and The Sparkling*. Sasmi is a loyal fan who has been supporting the band for a long time since its inception. His interest and love for *Virgo and The Sparkling* did not just make him his first fan. With complete happiness and enthusiasm, Sasmi accepted the offer to become the chairman of the fans club. He feels honored and excited for this opportunity to take the band to new heights. Not only that, but Sasmi has thought of the perfect name for their fan club. He came up with the name "Virgorgeous," a combination of the band's name, Virgo, and the word "gorgeous," which means beautiful or charming. This name reflects their admiration for the band and adds an elegant and catchy touch. Sasmi feels that this name will be a strong and memorable identity for their fan club, and he is excited to see how this name will be received by the members of the fan club and the wider fan community.



"You have *synesthesia*. Can you also be like this?"

(Nisfiani: Eps 8)

The quote above describes a deep conversation between Riani and Sasmi at Sasmi's house. At that time, the atmosphere in Sasmi's house felt comfortable and familiar, creating an environment conducive to discussing personal and introspective topics. Riani felt that something

unusual and strange had been wrong since yesterday and felt compelled to discuss the matter with Sasmi. In the conversation, Riani asked carefully what Sasmi really experienced, specifically about her ability to see colors associated with sound. Riani might ask, "Sasmi, I felt something strange yesterday. I noticed that you seem to be able to see colors when you hear a sound. What exactly do you feel? Is it really what I think?" In fact, Sasmi is only happy to learn about synesthesia. They are more familiar to talk to.

"Just like the synesthesia you talked about."  
(Nisfiani: Eps 22)

The above quote continues the story when Riani visits Sasmi's house. During the visit, Riani found a book on the table or bookshelf that caught her attention. The book discusses a topic that is very relevant to what has just been discussed between Riani and Sasmi, namely synesthesia. At the same time, Sasmi, a student very interested in psychology and related topics, sees that Riani is reading a book about synesthesia. Sasmi, who has a more profound knowledge of psychology and synesthesia, decides to explain more to Riani. He clarified that the synesthesia discussed in the book is not the same power Riani has.

"Cewe cabe cabean begini"  
(Nisfiani: Eps 2)

The quote above explains the atmosphere of ongoing tension because Ussy's character is upset with Riani and even underestimates Riani's musical skills; judging from the way Riani dresses differently from Ussy's cool and elegant way of dressing, Ussy mocks Riani as a chili girl who means a group of teenage girls or in slang often called alay. Monika, who is in this situation, tries to break up Ussy and Riani, who are in a state of high emotions with each other.

"Debut on loetube"  
(Nisfiani: Eps 5)

The quote above describes a situation where Riani and her two friends are preparing a music cover video that they made. They plan to upload the cover video to online platforms or social media to get more involved in the music world and showcase their talents. This video results from their hard work in arranging and recording their version of a popular song. Riani and her two friends felt inspired but depressed because they did not have their original songs yet. They only cover existing songs, making them feel dissatisfied or hampered in

their efforts to gain attention and recognition in the music industry. They realize that while their cover videos may be interesting and show off their singing or playing music skills, having an original song is the primary key to standing out in the music world and getting greater attention. In addition, they may also consider leveraging the experience of creating a cover video as a first step in their creative process. They can use feedback from their audience and friends to improve and develop their work further.

"Virgous and I also want to watch the same thing."  
(Nisfiani: Eps 103)

The quote above explains that Sasmi is excited to watch *Virgo and The Sparkling*, a band that will perform outside the Got Talent audition. This is very important for Sasmi because the band is the runner-up under the auspices of Pak Gerendra, who has promoted them intensively from one stage to another. As the head of the band's fan club, Sasmi felt a deep pride. He has supported the band for a long time, from the early stages when they only made cover videos to finally achieving their star position. Sasmi's support and commitment to *Virgo and The Sparkling* has been immense, and she is excited to see their performance, which is now widely known thanks to their hard work and support.

Code is understood as a mutually agreed upon system of social signs, being a framework that allows readers to understand the various complex messages in a story (Hidayat, 2014; Jurnal Seni Rupa et al., 2024). Narasi yang menggambarkan konflik emosi, seperti pergulatan Riani dengan kemarahannya atau sinestesia yang dialami Riani memberikan dimensi psikologis yang mendalam dan mempererat keterhubungan antara pembaca dan karakter. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya kode sosial sebagai alat interpretasi utama dalam cerita. Selain itu, emosi memainkan peran sentral dalam menggerakkan alur, seperti yang terlihat dari tantangan emosional Riani dalam menghadapi kritik atau penerimaan komunitas penggemar melalui pembentukan fansclub *Virgorgeous*. Elemen-elemen ini menyoroti bagaimana hubungan sosial dan penerimaan komunitas menjadi fondasi penting dalam popularitas karya seni.

Key findings from the study include the use of the concept of synesthesia that enriches the narrative by linking unique sensory experiences to artistic expression, as well as the depiction of the characters' journeys, *Virgo and The Sparkling's*

development from the creator *of the cover* video to becoming a recognized music star. It depicts the story's process of growth, struggle, and achievement. In addition, the study revealed new findings, such as incorporating complex visual and narrative elements that amplify the emotional impact on readers. The synesthesia theme also became an important symbol that connected psychology with art, giving philosophical depth to the story. Thus, *webtoons* serve as entertainment media and a tool for creative exploration of social, psychological, and artistic issues.

### Citra Webtoon *Virgo and The Sparkling* Karya Anisha Nisfihani

Images are everything that is received by the senses but does not have a substantial existence (Hamid, 2022). Imagery can describe a story's atmosphere, emotions, characters, or settings in more depth than just using ordinary words (Hutabalian et al., 2022; Khomarudin, 2022). For example, in descriptive poetry or prose, imagery can make the reader feel and see what the author is telling more clearly. In general, imagery in literature is not just a visual depiction. However, it can also include the imaginative use of language to express feelings, abstract concepts, or even describe the characters' inner state in the story. In the image, there are five senses, namely sight, hearing, movement, touch, and smell; this is stated in the data found as follows:

#### Vision (visual)

"Cool blue, yes I can see the blue of Ussy's soft piano playing."  
(Nisfiani: Eps 5)

In the quote above, it is explained that the blue color that looked cool in Rani's eyes when she experienced the phenomenon of Synesthesia reflects the same impression of blue as seen when Ussy plays the piano instrument gently. Synesthesia is a rare neurological condition in which stimulation of one sense can lead to an automatic, irrepressible experience of the other. In this case, the blue color that Rani perceives is influenced by visual light and the emotional and sensory associations evoked by Ussy's piano playing. The soft sound of the piano, produced by Ussy, combined with the blue color, creates a deep and harmonious multisensory experience for Rani. This shows how closely the relationship between visual and auditory perception is in the context of Synesthesia, where one type of stimulation can stimulate diverse sensory experiences simultaneously.

"Wait! That beautiful body, slim calves with a combination of stockings and sweet lips."  
(Nisfiani: Eps 11)

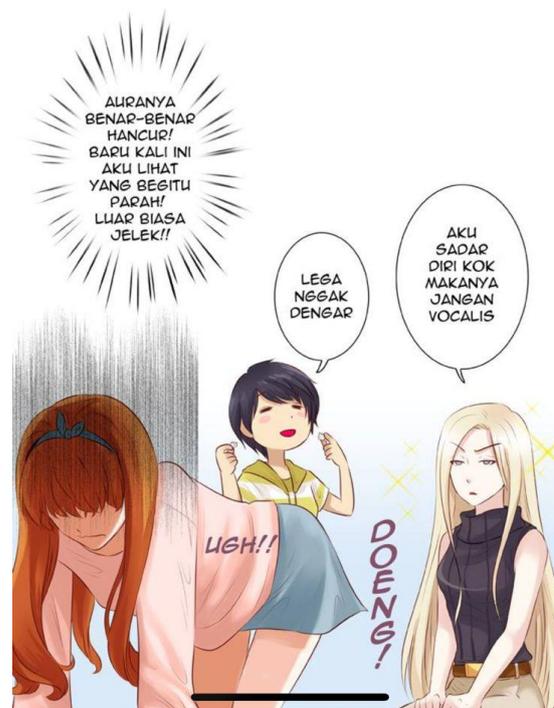
The quote above explains that when Andy collaborated with *Virgo and The Sparkling's* personalities, he experienced strong feelings when he saw Riani. In this situation, Andy notices Riani's curves and distinctive features, and he feels that Riani is very similar to a woman he had met before in the band's studio. Riani's beautiful face, which looks bright and charming, immediately reminds Andy of the woman he saw when he passed by in the studio. Andy felt a sensation as if he had seen Riani before, and it was further strengthened when he realized that Riani was wearing a mask and costume that made him look like the woman he met a few days ago. This feeling gave the impression that there was a striking similarity between Riani and the woman he had seen before.

### Listeners

"Your voice is so beautiful; perfect music is playing."  
(Nisfiani: Eps 1)

In the quote above, it is explained that Monic entered a BEM (Student Executive Board) room, which happened to be the location where Riani was being punished for cleaning up after making a mistake. Although the punishment was not directly related to Monic, he felt responsible and guilty for the situation faced by Riani. Therefore, Monic decided to accompany Riani during the cleaning process, hoping to ease the burden and provide moral support to her friend.

When Monic entered the room, he was surprised to hear Riani's melodious singing. Riani's voice chanting beautiful notes filled the room with a soothing and captivating melody. Monic, who had initially come to just help, felt fascinated and moved by the beauty of Riani's voice. Full of admiration, Monic sincerely complimented Riani, revealing how impressive Riani's singing talent was. The praise serves as a recognition of Riani's abilities and a form of encouragement that Riani may desperately need at that time. Monic felt that in this unpleasant atmosphere, Riani's voice gave a glimmer of precious beauty and happiness, further strengthening their friendship and mutual support.



"His aura was destroyed; I saw it was so bad; his voice was hideous."  
(Nisfiani: Eps 3)

In the quote above, it is explained that when Riani heard Ussy's voice, she immediately felt that Ussy's voice was not pleasant to hear. This reaction was seen because Riani's two friends immediately closed their ears in response to Ussy's voice quality, which was not up to expectations. In her opinion, Riani, who was quite vocal, and Monic, who was there, felt uncomfortable with the situation and may have felt awkward at the sharp criticism. Meanwhile, Ussy, who seems to understand the criticism delivered by Riani, tries to calm the situation by saying that her vocal voice is not as good as Riani's. Ussy explained that she was aware of her limitations when it came to vocals; hence, she decided not to take on the vocalist role. Ussy wants to make sure that even though his voice may not be optimal, he remains committed to contributing in other ways that can support their group.

### Motion

"Wait, do not play without me."  
(Nisfiani: Eps 4)

The quote above explains that when there was a movement to move places, Ussy quickly rushed to the piano to join his friends in playing music. With his fingers curly and skillfully, Ussy began to play the piano enthusiastically. His agile and skillful movements reflect his expertise and dedication to music.

His friends, also known for their energy and passion, play their instruments with passion. The

collaboration between Ussy and his friends creates a very stunning harmony. The melody produced by Ussy's piano playing blends perfectly with other instruments' music, resulting in a beautiful and touching composition. The atmosphere is stunning, creating memorable moments for all who witness it. Their performance is a clear example of how the synergy between different elements of music can create incredible beauty and harmony.

"How dare you comment? Let me see."  
(Nisfiani: Eps 8)

The quote above explains that Ussy quickly rushed towards the nearby mobile phone after seeing many malicious comments that filled the screen. The comments appeared as an adverse reaction to the cover video they made, where many people criticized the costumes they were wearing. The criticism led to the assessment that the costumes chosen looked less attractive, even considered similar to children's costumes or cosplays from an anime that did not fit their theme. Ussy, who felt very angry and upset by the negative comments, seemed unable to contain his emotions. He felt that the criticism received was too harsh and unfair, mainly because they had put much effort into the production of the video. Feeling frustrated, Ussy immediately grabbed the phone carried by Monic, most likely to check the comments more profoundly or to take further action. This reaction reflects how important it is for Ussy to stand up for the fruits of their work and how she is deeply influenced by the judgment of others of the efforts they have made.

### Smell

"There is a burning smell."  
(Nisfiani: Eps 1)

The above quote describes a burning smell that arose due to Riani's uncontrollable emotions. When Riani is angry or frustrated, it seems that her emotional reaction can produce quite a noticeable physical impact. In an extreme emotional state, Riani not only feels emotional instability but also seems to experience physical manifestations of her anger. The smell of burnt smell indicates that something is burning or damaged, which could result from Riani's uncontrollable body reaction. Since a long time ago, Riani has been known to experience often similar problems, where her emotional instability seems to be.

(Apriliya Nuansa et al., 2022; Rahayu et al., 2024) *webtoon Virgo and The Sparkling*

sebagai elemen yang tidak hanya menggambarkan aspek visual tetapi juga memperkaya narasi melalui pengalaman multisensorik. Citra digunakan untuk menggambarkan suasana, emosi, karakter, dan latar cerita secara mendalam, dengan memanfaatkan berbagai indra seperti penglihatan, pendengaran, gerakan, dan penciuman. Sebagai contoh, fenomena synesthesia yang dialami Riani, di mana ia mengaitkan warna biru dengan suara piano yang lembut, mencerminkan bagaimana persepsi lintas indra dapat memperkuat dimensi emosional dalam cerita. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa citra tidak hanya terbatas pada deskripsi visual, tetapi juga berfungsi sebagai medium untuk mengungkap hubungan emosional dan persepsi karakter. Hubungan antara emosi dan pengalaman sensorik menjadi kunci dalam membangun narasi, seperti suara merdu Riani yang menciptakan suasana damai atau kritik tajam yang memengaruhi emosi karakter lainnya. Selain itu, citra juga menggambarkan reaksi karakter terhadap tantangan sosial, seperti komentar negatif yang menciptakan konflik internal dan eksternal. (Apriliya Nuansa et al., 2022; Rahayu et al., 2024)

Notable findings suggest that using synesthesia as a narrative tool is an innovation that connects sensory experience with emotional expression, providing a new perspective on character development. In addition, the imagery also serves to depict the character's reaction to conflict, such as criticism of the costume worn, which strengthens the narrative dimension. The new findings from the study are how sensory interactions, such as the smell of burnt odors due to Riani's anger or Ussy's quick movements when responding to negative comments, create rich narrative experiences. Imagery is also used to explore the characters' inner state, deepening the reader's understanding of the dynamics of the story. Overall, the study shows that imagery in *webtoons* is an aesthetic element and a complex narrative tool, incorporating emotional, sensory, and psychological experiences in a story.

### Practical and Theoretical Implications

The simulacra form that includes signs, images, and codes can comprehensively explain how simulacra theory can be implemented in the *Virgo and The Sparkling Webtoon*. Minor signs like guitars and candies may look simple but have an important role in strengthening the emotional

connection between the characters. This gives a new dimension to the story that has not been discussed much in the simulation. These signs reinforce the narrative and create a richer and more touching experience for the reader. In addition, the findings on Riani's use of synesthesia imagery as a narrative tool suggest an innovation that connects sensory experiences with emotional expression. This synesthesia becomes a unique element that deepens characterization and provides a new perspective in building complex character personalities.

Not stopping there, the code findings in this *webtoon*, such as the formation of *the Virgorgeous fan club*, show how code elements can create a solid fan community. The existence of this community is not only a complement to the story but an integral part of the narrative that expands the influence of *webtoons* in the real world. This emphasizes how simulacra theory builds a fictional world that not only lives within the story but also touches audiences outside of that world. With the theme of magical powers, *Virgo and The Sparkling* are in harmony with the concept of simulacra, where the world created in the story forms a hyperreality of reality that feels "more real than real."

In this context, the people involved as readers often find it difficult to distinguish between reality and the representation displayed in *the webtoon* (Hutabalian et al., 2022; Widyasari et al., 2022). The implications of this analysis are wide-ranging, especially in the context of story creation. Webtoon creators can be inspired to create rich narratives with minor signs, innovative imagery, and code that deepens readers' emotional engagement. Elements such as synesthesia can be used to present more unique and complex characters so that readers can feel more emotionally connected to the story. In addition, the formation of fan communities such as *the Virgorgeous Fanclub* shows excellent potential in supporting the sustainability of the work through the active participation of the audience. Using simulacra, content creators can create engaging narrative elements and expand their fan base.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and previous discussions about the *Virgo and The Sparkling* webtoon, 71 different forms of simulacra included 29 signs, 14 images, and 28 codes. Signs such as guitars, costumes, and electric waves convey symbolic meaning in the story, where the guitar, for example, is not only a musical instrument but also reflects the main character's love for music. The images in this webtoon strengthen the narrative by presenting sensory experiences, such as the blue

color associated with the soft piano sound, the charred scent arising from anger, and the dynamic movements of the characters in facing certain situations. These elements work harmoniously to create an emotional atmosphere, deepening the story. Additionally, codes such as the terms "Fansclub," "Virgorgeous," and "Synesthesia" reflect a social consensus that helps readers understand the context of the story while connecting fictional elements with real life, including the formation of a solid fan community.

The results of this study also show that *Virgo and The Sparkling* succeeded in presenting hyperreality, which is a situation where the representation of the story replaces the actual reality. This aligns with Baudrillard's concept that modern society is often trapped in a reality shaped by media and technology. For example, *the synesthesia element* depicted in the story highlights the uniqueness of the main character and becomes a deep narrative tool to strengthen the emotional connection between the reader and the character. Simple signs such as guitars or candies also play an important role in building character relationships and enriching the story's meaning. In addition, the formation of fan communities like *Virgorgeous* shows how social codes can extend the influence of stories in narrative and the real world so that readers can connect more personally with this work.

Overall, this study confirms that the *Virgo and The Sparkling* Webtoon is an entertainment medium and a space for exploring social, psychological, and artistic issues. The collaboration between signs, imagery, and code creates a more immersive reading experience, allowing readers to interpret the story according to their point of view. With a simulacra theory approach, this study provides new insights into how digital media, such as webtoons, can shape a perspective on reality and enrich narratives in contemporary works. In addition, this research opens up opportunities for authors to be more creative in utilizing digital technology and popular culture to produce innovative and meaningful works.

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