

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

**HEROIC ACT IN VIDEO GAME: A RECEPTION ANALYSIS ON
SURABAYA'S GRAND THEFT AUTO V PLAYERS**



By

DERRYL HARISTIANTO

NIM 121411231099

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Bachelor's Degree of
English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Airlangga
Surabaya

BY:

DERRYL HARISTIANTO
121411231099

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS AIRLANGGA
SURABAYA**

2019

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DECLARATION

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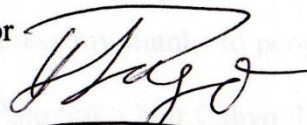
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For those endless love and support.**

APPROVAL SHEET

Title : Heroism Act in Video Game: A Reception Analysis On
Surabaya's Grand Theft Auto V Players
Name : Derryl Haristiano
Student's Number : 121411231099
Department : English

Approved to be submitted on 18 January 2019

Advisor



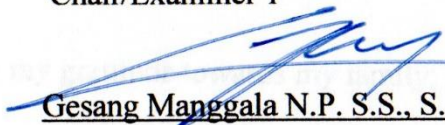
Pujio Sakti Nur Cahyo S.Hum., M.Hum.

NIP. 198509232015041003

And has been examined and accepted by the Board of Examiners:

Surabaya, 18 January 2019

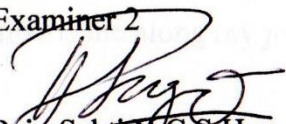
Chair/Examiner 1



Gesang Manggala N.P. S.S., S.A., M.Hum

NIP.198502142015041002

Examiner 2



Pujio Sakti N/C S.Hum., M.Hum.

NIP. 198509232015041003

Examiner 3

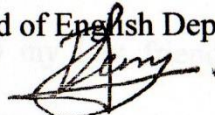


Titien Diah Soelistyarini S.S., M.Si.

NIP. 197509252006042001

Acknowledged by

Head of English Department



Deny Arnos Kwary, Ph.D.

NIP. 197501011999031001

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NIM 121411231099

“Nulla è reale, tutto è lecito”

- Assassin's Creed

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ABSTRACT

Video game nowadays is not only for entertainment, but also consists of an interesting narrative to further entertain its player. Grand Theft Auto V by Rockstar Game is the latest installment of the series. They are featuring three characters portrayed as a criminal. It is later revealed that these characters have heroic act coded within its narrative. Thus, as media, audiences have a role to play for interpreting meaning from text. This study use Reception Analysis by Stuart Hall to finds how the player perceives the protagonists in this video game. The writer conducts an interview to Grand Theft Auto V players. Purposive sampling is used to determine eligible participants to ensure the best possible outcome. This study reveals that the audience perceives the characters in Grand Theft Auto V as a hero rather than a common criminal.

Keywords: *video game, heroic act, reception analysis, protagonist*

ABSTRAK

Video game kini bukan hanya menjadi media untuk bersenang-senang, tapi juga kini memuat narasi yang menarik. *Grand Theft Auto V* yang di produksi Rockstar Game adalah seri terbaru dari *franchise* Grand Theft Auto. Menampilkan tiga karakter protagonist yang berperan sebagai kriminal. Meskipun begitu, ketiga karakter ini pada akhirnya menunjukkan sikap kepahlawanan mereka. Penonton pun kini berperan aktif dalam pemaknaan teks dalam media. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori penerimaan khalayak oleh Stuart Hall untuk mencari tahu bagaimana pemain game GTA V memaknai tokoh protagonist dalam game ini. Menggunakan teknik Purposive sampling untuk menentukan partisipan yang memenuhi kriteria, supaya hasil yang di terima memuaskan. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa karakter pada game *Grand Theft Auto V* dapat di kategorikan sebagai pahlawan, bukan hanya sebatas kriminal pada umumnya.

Kata Kunci: permainan video, sikap kepahlawanan, penerimaan khalayak, protagonis

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Popular culture product that is distributed by the media such as movies, television serials, books, and video games, contain recurring aspect that appears in every lore. If there is a story involved, there is a person that serves as the character, thus, creating a term called protagonist and antagonist. According to Vogler (2007) in his book entitled "*The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*," the protagonist is the center of the story, and that every protagonist is the hero of their own story (Vogler 2007). Thus, the counterpart of protagonist that always appear is antagonist, which is the main objective is to destroy the hero's goal. Antagonist does not have to be the protagonist enemy, Vogler also stated that antagonist might also the protagonist allies that have a different agreement and perspective with the protagonist. Protagonist, or the Hero as the central of the story makes the narrative unfold around them. As the hero struggle from the starting point of his journey until the end, the hero will face many hard challenges, meeting a new friend that helped him along the journey, and meet his enemy, or the antagonist that will keep the hero achieving his goal.

While there are many characters depicted as the protagonist or the hero, an image that is recurring in many stories around the world, an archetype is developed. Archetype is the same image that people can recognize as a universal symbol. Hero archetype is a common archetype that appears in every story; it symbolizes a person

that doing great deeds, facing tough challenges and achieving his goal. From this archetype, and a lot of hero characters that are portrayed in the mythological story, which is basically a pattern that is often occurred in heroic portrayal (Vogler 2007).

Heroes are usually associated with the strong and smart figure. Following a moral code that they have to obey like a good role model. Hero's quest is all about saving the world or saving the girl. A video game created for entertainment means, which is eventually lead people to take an interest in playing a video game just like people having fun with watching television. Playing a game proves to be entertaining yet intrigue people to keep playing it. In the early developments of the game, people understand the objectives of playing an arcade game such as pinball or sports. The core of the game is to be fun to play with. Thus, creating a similar entertainment needs for people in a digitalized form of the game. The very first video game created by Steve Russell entitled *Spacewar!* (Bellis 2017), this game engages a countless hour spends in the journey of a spaceship shooting enemies. Game's difficulties should increase as the level is going farther. This is the basic pattern of Arcade games in the early days of video game development. *Spacewar!*'s popularity is growing as it gives the player a sense of achievement after reaching certain levels or stages.

As a media, video games have a unique selling point that stands out from any other entertainment media. Unlike radio or television shows that only gives us a one-way entertainment and us the audiences as the receiver, video games allowed us to be partially involved with the video game itself. Video games, according to

Elichner (2014) in many levels, could be considered as paradigmatic interactive media, having a spot-on from any other 'traditional' media classified by interactivity, thus providing the positive pleasure of agency for their players (p. 25). As if the audiences watch a certain movie and pretend that they are inside one of the worlds of that show, video game proposes some direct approach to the interactivity. The players are to be involved in the decision-making process. This takes interactivity to the whole new level. As Mayra (2008) stated in his book, the interactivity is the nature of video games. Video game gives us the new experience that none other media could give to the audiences.

Immersion is the key for a player to enjoy the interactivity of the game, the more interactivity proposed by the video game, the merrier and richer the immersion. Proper game world building will drastically enhance the experience of playing video games. Thus, compelling research of how the world of video games should be is necessary. A world that player can relate is the world where the immersive gameplay experience takes place as Elichner (2014) stated in her book, that Immersion is often used to describe the general attachment of a recipient to a text. (p. 98). Immersion plays a big part to audience perspective towards the object inside the game or the game itself. Any interaction that involves the player decision-making process virtually enhanced the immersion.

As the year passing by, Video game nowadays becoming one of the popular culture product that is rapidly growing. Video game objectives now are not only matching tiles like *Tetris*, or saving a princess that is kidnapped by an ugly monster like in *Super Mario series*. A video game might become one of the popular media

for delivering a narrative (Ostenson 2013). For this reason, when a story is created and published for some people, it is important to note that there is a message that is implicitly delivered.

It is designed with a grand visual graphic and interesting gameplay mechanic. Grand Theft Auto V is the newest game of GTA Franchise that is developed and published by Rockstar Games in 2013 for consoles, and in 2014 Rockstar Games published the game for the PC platform. It is distributed both in retail version and digital service like Steam. With a good marketing strategy, Grand Theft Auto V becomes the most anticipated game by people all over the world. Hold a record as the fastest-selling entertainment product in history. Grand Theft Auto V earn roughly US\$800 million since the first day. Grand Theft Auto V has sold over 90 million units worldwide which are a great number of selling in the history of game marketing (Tassi 2018). People astonished by its character design, the game system and the gameplay offered that featuring the system of changing main characters in the story mode, and doing a mission from different approaches.

Back in 2004, Rockstar developed *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* which receive highly critical acclaim. Carl Johnson is the protagonist of this *GTA series*; he is one of the legendary characters that is well-known for gamer all around the world. With the 27.5 million copies sold, holding the Guinness world record as the best-selling game in 2005. This character breakthrough the majority of white characters as the protagonist. The stereotypes persist, Carl Johnson is a second-in-command of a gangster called Grove Street. He runs away from his hometown to escape the gang wars. He is forced to back in town because of his mother funeral.

He is back to Grove Street to take back the street from his enemy. CJ is arrested just a second after his landing in Los Santos, a fictional city that resembles Los Angeles. The cops seem to like targeting CJ ever since his arrival. In the game, as what gangsters do, they kill each other, having a drug problem, illegal racing, and another kind of violence throughout the game.

For Indonesian player, Grand Theft Auto V is accessed by buying the retail from a retail store or the digital version from steam. Grand Theft Auto V received various of achievement from the day it published. GTA V also win the most anticipated game in 2012, a year before its release date. There were also numerous another achievement that achieved by Grand Theft Auto V, such as The Most Immersive Game at the Inside Gaming Awards, and Game of the Year awards. Grand Theft Auto V is a new action-packed sandbox game that tells us the story about a retired bank-heister that undergo a change to a more civilized life in Los Santos named Michael Townley. Franklin Clinton, an African-American street thug that involved in petty and *low-key* crimes. The last but not the least, Trevor Phillips, a wild psychopath that seems to wreak havoc anything nears him. The three of them are put together, creating a team of professional criminal and Heister. Grand Theft Auto V set in a fictional world that resembles America.

The immersion of Grand Theft Auto V video game proposes a whole lot of opportunity for the player to be involved in the narrative change that actually leads to a different outcome. This immersion affects how the player perceives the message encoded to the player. Players tend to receive a different meaning and acts a different action in the game world. Thus, the concept of the hero has a slightly

different meaning to people who already play the video game and finishing the narrative. The interactivity in video game nature assumed makes the player identify a closer relationship with the characters from a video game rather than other media (Shaw 2010). A player might have an intimacy from the human to the character in video games, this intimacy affects the understanding of the characters and the traits, and learn more to a different level of relationship. As the player immerses to the game world, they feel how the situation is — projecting themselves and their idea to the characters. Players must face the consequences if they do something in the game. They are giving the players an opportunity to consider about.

As society growth in number and variety. It is possible that society also shapes a different paradigm about how hero actually is. People have a different view about what aspects that hero should have to be actually called a hero. Society argues that Batman is not a real hero, that he is a rogue person that plays justice into his own hands. Some argue that Batman is incapable of killing someone because of his moral compass, but letting a criminal who actually did a crime and letting them rot in jail, but escape later on could also mean Batman is letting the criminal to do another crime. Campbell (2004) in his book *a thousand faces* defines that hero is someone that doing a good deed, fight through countless phases of Hero's Journey, and have the hero characteristics. The rapid development of culture in society might have a different impact on our perception of heroes. There was a saying about "hero of my story," which means being a hero or not, it really depends on how you actually perceive it.

Meanwhile, the video game as a media means that the producers initially have a message to surpass to the audience, hence, creating a relatable visual and narrative is expected to be a means in delivering the message. The part of identity that is reflected upon the visualization of the characters may or may not mirror the actual condition (Shaw 2010). Identifying the player's idea regarding the message of the game that they played is necessary for this research. As a media, video game can be interpreted as text, while the producer's message is indeed intended as proposed, the audience response may vary. It assumes that mutual interaction between sources and audiences is more effective than a source-dominated communication process (Baran and Davis 2008). Thus, the reception analysis is conducted for this research. Stuart Hall stated that there are three readings that occurred in the audience's perspective, dominant-hegemonic reading, negotiated reading, and oppositional reading.

Similarly, Mafia III is the newest game of Mafia series. Featuring Lincoln Clay, an ex-military and returning home to the mob family of black people in New Bordeaux. Clay is an African-American character, with his military background, he planned his revenge after his enemy killed his family and burned his house. He started an organized crime on his own. He was facing a white archenemy of his own. This game released in 2016. Lincoln should take over the family and gaining respect from another mob family to regain his power and take revenge to people who wronged him.

Upon analyzing this research, the writer cannot help but notice that there are previous studies that are also analyzing similar topics. These previous study is

necessary for the writer to give him insight upon analyzing this research, and also drawing a different line between this study and the previous. After giving these previous study a hard and thorough reading, it is indicated that there are very few studies that related to analyzing video game narrative and hero's journey altogether. Thus, the selected studies are expected to complement each approach together. The first study is a dissertation studied by Adrienne Shaw (2010) entitled "Identity, Identification, and Media Representation in Video Game Play: An audience reception study". The second study is an article by Guylain Delmas, Ronan Champagnat and Michel Augeraud (2007) entitled "Bringing Interactivity into Campbell's Hero's Journey". Each studies have similarities and difference to this study. Their studies also give a different perspectives to complete this study from many point of view.

By the reasons above, the writer then decides to analyze the Grand Theft Auto V video games by Reception Analysis and also by using Hero's journey by Christopher Vogler to learn how the audiences' perceive the heroic act within the video game.

1.2 Statement of The Problem

Based on the issue that briefly described in the background, the player as video game's audience will perceive a different meaning towards the heroic act coded within the game. Therefore, the statement of the problem of this study is:

1. How is audience perception towards the portrayal of heroes in characters of Grand Theft Auto V?

1.3 Objectives of The Study

Based on the question stated above, the objective of this study is:

1. To learn how the audience perceives heroic act from the players' perspective

1.4 Significance of The Study

Due to the fact that Grand Theft Auto V is a popular game among the gamers all over the world, the significance of the study is to learn that audiences perceive heroic act in the portrayal of a criminal in some different ways. In addition, the writer also expects that this study would be a reliable and worthy reference for students and researchers, especially from English Department Universitas Airlangga, who will conduct future studies about representations of hero in the media.

1.5 Definitions of Key Terms

There are several terms that may be not familiar and not common to be used in daily life. To help the readers understand the research better, the definitions of those terms are provided below:

Video Game : A videogame is a game which we play thanks to an audiovisual apparatus and which can be based on a story (Esposito 2005).

Heroic Act : When Heroes offer themselves on the altar of chance, willing to take the risk that their quest for adventure may lead to danger, loss, or death. Like soldiers who know that by enlisting they have agreed

to give their lives if their country asks them to, Heroes accept the possibility of sacrifice (Vogler 2007).

Reception Analysis : Reception theory emphasizes the active role played by the spectator in constructing and interpreting the meaning of a text. In contrast to theories that understand the audience as passive, simply absorbing the meanings and messages embedded in a text, reception theorists argue that meaning emerges processually in the interaction between the text and the socially situated audience (Silva 2011).

Protagonist : The protagonist is the main character of a story. This character is also known as the hero or the lead. The protagonist must have clearly defined inward and outward goals. This character must be the one that readers will empathize with on a deep level. A strong protagonist needs to have some larger than life characteristics (Blaisdell 2018).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter covers the theories that are used in order to analyze the audience reception of the hero concept in *Grand Theft Auto V*. As a protagonist of action video games, three characters that are featured in the video game fulfilling the role as the hero. The main theory used is reception analysis by Stuart Hall. Hero's Journey concept by Christopher Vogler is used as the supporting theory. In this chapter, related studies are discussed with the purpose of defining the gaps, similarities, and dissimilarities between this study and previous studies.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study analyzes an audience reception regarding the coded message that is relayed through the media, in this case of study, the video game as the media that played a role. There are two theories that are employed in this study. Reception Analysis by Stuart Hall is used as the main theory because I will be focusing on the audience reception regarding the heroic act that is coded in *Grand Theft Auto V*. As video game is considered as media that is possible to deliver a narrative because of its interactivity and immersion that created a unique form of meaning-making. Secondly, Hero's Journey by Christopher Vogler is used to determine the heroic act that is featured in the game.

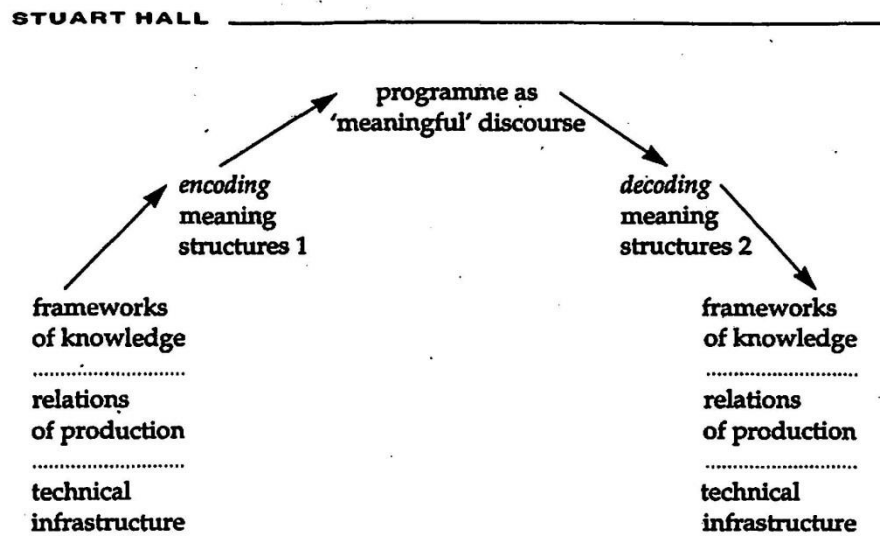


Figure 2.1 Media Reception Flow

The Cultural Studies Reader by Simon During (1993, 510)

conclusion, these theories are used to discuss the audience reception of hero's concept through the protagonist characters in Grand Theft Auto V video game.

2.1.1 Reception Analysis

In the first development of mass media studies, people are focusing only on analyzing the meaning interpretation. Message from the producer or sender is considered absolute, and the sender is having full responsibility for the message after the message is relayed to the receiver, then the process is considered done. Not long after, Elliot in (During 1993) stated that audiences could also be considered as both source and receiver of television message, this created a polemic regarding audiences position that cannot only be considered as a passive object. As a solution, Stuart Hall in his book entitled "Encoding and Decoding Televisual Discourse," claimed that it is possible for the audiences to participate in the meaning-making

process of the message that is relayed through media. This development started from the premise of a one-way linear system of the message that is expanded to a more dynamic system of distributing the message. Hall offers five stages in communication theory, production, circulation, distribution, consumption, and reproduction (ibid). This theory is giving more access to every party involved in interpreting the message.

The first step is production, in this case, video game production. One of the reasons why video game production is happening, it is because there are demand and needs from a certain party. For gaming industries, video game players demand more series of a certain franchise is notable due to the predecessors' success in the industry. They are creating demand from video game player as a consumer to consume or in this case, playing a certain video game. This process involves video game developer that is currently working on a project which is the development of a new video game. Video game developers might be a big company or an individual that is working on producing a video game. In this stage, the developers plan and choose an idea, issue, and value that will be relayed through the game content. From this stage, the distributing process begins.

Next phase is delivering the message that is packed in a program. In other words, a realization of the idea. Even though video game is not considered as a medium that is capable of delivering narrative because of its entertainment aspect that might be more dominant (During 1993). Through this medium, audiences are interpreting the meaning that is relayed from the producer. Still, it is possible that

the message is overwhelmed by the entertainment aspect, causing a different variety of opinion depends on the audiences.

The last phase is where the audiences interpret and make meaning from the media and decode the message. The interpretation of the message relies on audiences' background that might lead to a different perspective. For example, in watching a movie, people who watch the same movie might have a different interpretation caused by different experience that is felt by the audience. This message is coming from the audiences' perspective is named meaning structure 2. Begin with production; the audiences are reproducing the message from their own experiences and social practice. As it is mentioned by During (1993), that codes of encoding and decoding may not be perfectly symmetrical. While it is wishful thinking of a producer for the audience to accept the message that is encoded within the media, but there is no guarantee that the message is accepted completely to the audience (1993, 510).

Based on the theory of reception analysis, Hall (1973) categorized audiences into three positions that most likely occurred in interpreting the message of media. These three positions are:

1. Dominant-hegemonic position

The audience that classifies as dominant interprets the message as it is supposed to be from the producer point of view. They agree completely to the message that encodes through the medium. This position is commonly referred to as a professional code (During 1993).

2. Negotiated position

The audience that falls into this category might find themselves both agree and disagree with the message. This unique hybridization is consisting of audiences who able to interpret the message and agree to some of its aspects but also disagreeing to certain aspects as well. The audiences choose which aspect they believe in and negate another message that is not suitable for them (During 1993).

3. Oppositional position

The audience in this position is the opposite of the dominant position. They able to interpret the message encoded in the media, but they have an exact opposite view with the message encoded by the producer, as they refuse to believe the dominant point of view (During 1993).

These three position is the base of categorization in reception analysis proposed by Stuart Hall in his Encoding – Decoding theory that will be used in this research.

2.1.1 Hero's Journey

The hero is an archetype that commonly appears in every lore. While observing a hero archetype, Joseph Campbell (2004) found out that there is a similar pattern that occurs multiple times when the hero emerges in the narrative. Campbell names it as hero's journey in his book entitled *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, or simply called as monomyth. The monomyth consists of two worlds, the known world and the unknown. The story commonly starts with the hero in his safe and comfortable world. Later on, the hero will drift away from the known world into

the unknown. In the middle of the journey, the hero will have to go through an initiation phase; this is where the hero must prove himself, after getting here, the hero must go forward to finish the quest.

Following the development of era and narrative, Campbell's concept of the hero's journey is being developed by Christopher Vogler, in the twelve stages that compose the journey. The stages are arranged chronologically following the basic pattern of separation (departure) – initiation – return as conceptualized by Campbell. These twelve stages are:

Christopher Vogler "The Hero's Journey"

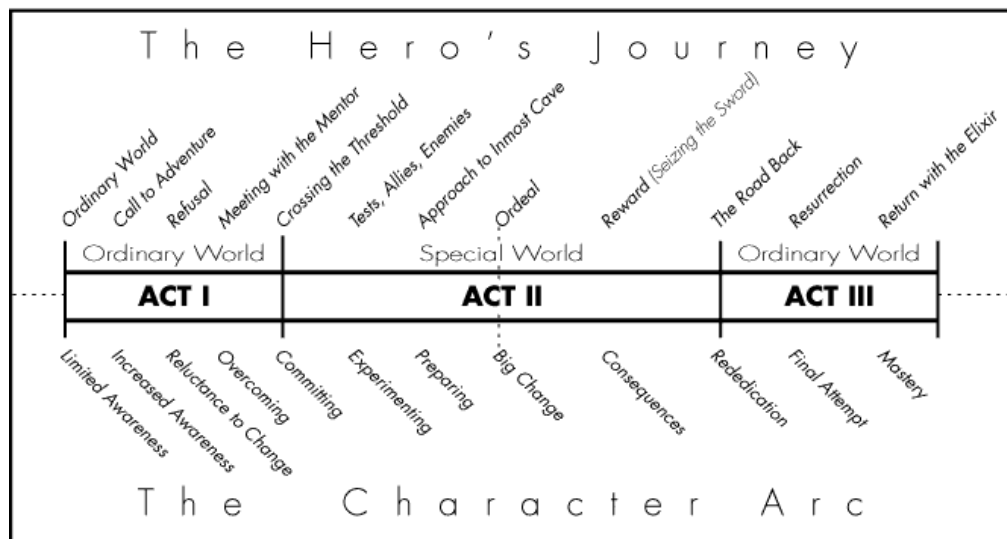


Figure 1.2 Hero's Journey by Christopher Vogler

A. Ordinary World

The first step of the hero's journey, before the journey begins, the hero first introduced in his ordinary life. In this phase, the hero had a vision of an upcoming phenomenon that forced him to deal with the problem ahead. This phase is giving us the audiences a chance to

identify the hero in his ordinary life, as to recognize his journey and the development of the characters later on. Ordinary world is constructed in a way that is giving the audience a contrast feeling after going to the unknown. Vogler (2007) stated that it is common for the audiences to relate with the hero before the journey begin, as it will make the audience feels the journey through the hero's struggle (2007, 90).

B. The Call of Adventure

The Call of Adventure is the first stage in the monomyth. The hero's motifs to answer the Call may vary as well as the ways he begins the journey. The Call of Adventure sets the story moving by disrupting the comfort of the Hero's Ordinary World, presenting a challenge or quest that must be undertaken and throws the Ordinary World off balance, and establishes the stakes involved if the challenge is rejected (Vogler 2007).

C. Refusal to The Call

Refusal happens when the hero ignores the call. This might cause by hero's sense of duty or obligation, fear, or any kind of reason that is resulting the hero to ignore the call. The promise of the Call seems to the hero as foreshadow of a frightening future. Vogler (2007) stated that Refusal of the Call is usually a negative moment in the hero's progress, a dangerous moment in which the adventure might go astray or never get off the ground at all. However, there are some special cases in which refusing the Call is a wise and positive move on the part of the hero (2007, 109).

D. Meeting with the Mentor

This stage is the last stage of the separation, and the hero is prepared to enter the Special World, the world of the Journey. Mentor (or sometimes called wise old man, protective figure or helper) is an important figure in the heroic narrative. The hero meets the Mentor to gain confidence, insight, advice, training, or magical gifts to overcome the initial fears and face the threshold of the adventure. A Hero may not wish to rush into a Special World blindly and, therefore, seeks the experience and wisdom of someone who has been there before, and precisely, this Mentor has survived to provide the essential lessons and training needed to better face the Journey's Tests and Ordeals (Vogler 2007).

E. The Crossing of the First Threshold

This is the stage where the hero first crossed the world of the unknown, leaving the safe haven behind. It is also the beginning of the second phase, the Initiation or the Special World, the world of the unknown as Vogler (2007) stated, Countless movies illustrate the border between two worlds with the crossing of physical barriers such as doors, gates, arches, bridges, deserts, canyons, walls, cliffs, oceans, or rivers (2007, 124). The Hero must confront an event that forces him to commit to entering the Special World, from which there is no turning back.

F. Test, Allies, and Enemies

In this stage, the hero will face a challenge, along with the enemies that wait in the special world. The hero might find an ally that also appears. The hero and the allies prepare for the challenge in the Special World. This stage can be viewed as the first true test for the Hero's skill and power, or to train with his mentor to strengthen himself before facing the enemies. (Vogler 2007).

G. Approach to the Inmost Cave

This stage is also known as “the belly of the whale” which represents the final separation from the hero's known world and self. It is sometimes described as the person's lowest point, but it is actually the point when the person is or transitioning between worlds and selves. The hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown and would appear to have died. The hero at this stage experiences the first process of transformation since this stage signifies the first step of initiation of Campbell's formula of hero's journey. The hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown and would appear to have died. The hero, of course, survives the threshold and defeats its guardians. The enemies, the guardians of the threshold, pose not only physical tests for the hero but also psychological challenges (Vogler 2007).

H. The Ordeal

The Ordeal might in the form of a physical test or a deep inner crisis that the hero must face. The Hero must face his greatest fear, sometime in the form of a deadly foe, and the Hero must draw upon all of his skills and power gained on the path to the inmost cave, along with the help provided by the Mentor. At this stage, the Hero engages the central life-or-death crisis, during which he faces his greatest fear, confronts this most difficult challenge, and experiences "death" (Vogler 2007). It is only this form of "death" the Hero can be reborn, experiencing a metaphorical resurrection that somehow grants him greater power or insight necessary in order to fulfill his destiny or reach his journey's end. This stage is the individual showdown between the hero and the ultimate villain. The defeat of the ultimate dark power gives rise to the new state of life. That is why this stage signifies the most vital step in the hero's entire journey. If the hero is defeated, the fate of the entire people is at stake. However, victory will justify the quality of the hero and the rights to take his reward.

I. The Reward

After defeating the villain and overcoming the challenge. The hero finally becomes stronger, and not rarely, the hero gets a prize after his quest. According to Vogler, the Reward may come in many forms: an object of great importance or power, a secret, greater knowledge or insight, or even reconciliation with a loved one or ally. Whatever the

treasure, it may provide the hero with everything he needs in his return to the Ordinary World (Vogler 2007).

J. The Road Back

After getting all his quest accomplished, the hero must go back to the ordinary world. This stage does not always mean the road will be easy; sometimes the hero will face a great danger on his journey back. Vogler describes this stage as follows: The Hero must finally recommit to completing the Journey and accept the Road Back to the Ordinary World. A Hero's success in the Special World may make it difficult to return. Like Crossing the Threshold, The Road Back needs an event that will push the Hero through the Threshold, back into the Ordinary World. The Event should re-establish the Central Dramatic Question, pushing the Hero to action and heightening the stakes. Like any strong turning point, the action initiating the Road Back could change the direction of the story (Vogler 2007).

K. The Resurrection

This stage is the peak of the narrative where the hero is challenged once more. He or she is purified by the last sacrifice, another moment of death and rebirth, but on a higher and more complete level. By the Resurrection, the Hero is reborn or transformed with the attributes of his Ordinary self in addition to the lessons and insights from the characters that he has met along the road. Vogler describes this stage in details in the following sentences: The Resurrection may be a physical Ordeal or

final showdown between Hero and Shadow; however, the Ticking Clock of the Road Back has been set. This battle is for much more than the Hero's life. Other lives or an entire world may be at stake, and the Hero must now prove that he has achieved Heroic Status and willingly accept his sacrifice for the benefit of the Ordinary World. Other Allies may come to the last-minute rescue to lend assistance, but in the end, the Hero must rise to the sacrifice at hand (Vogler 2007).

L. Return with Elixir

The Return with the Elixir is the final reward earned on the Hero's Journey. The Resurrection has purified the Hero, while the Reward served as the condition by which the Hero is now qualified and possess the right to be embraced back into the Ordinary World. The Elixir is an important element of any hero's journey stories. It functions not only as the reward for the Hero as he has undergone the journey, but also as an element needed to bring the balance back in the Ordinary World: The true Hero returns with an Elixir to share with others or heal a wounded land. The Elixir can be a great treasure or magic potion. It could be love, wisdom, or simply the experience of surviving the Special World. The Hero may show the benefit of the Elixir, using it to heal a physical or emotional wound or accomplish tasks that had been feared in the Ordinary World. The Elixir may bring closure to the Journey and restore balance to the Ordinary World (Vogler 2007).

2.2 Review of Related Studies

Upon analyzing this research, the writer cannot help but notice that there are previous studies that are also analyzing similar topics. These previous studies are necessary for the writer to give him insight upon analyzing this research, and also drawing a different line between this study and the previous. After giving these previous study a hard and thorough reading, it is indicated that there are very few studies that related to analyzing video game narrative and hero's journey altogether. Thus, the selected studies are expected to complement each approach together. The first study is a dissertation studied by Adrienne Shaw (2010) entitled "Identity, Identification, and Media Representation in Video Game Play: An audience reception study." The second study is an article by Guylain Delmas, Ronan Champagnat and Michel Augeraud (2007) entitled "Bringing Interactivity into Campbell's Hero's Journey." Lastly, a study by Sonia Livingstone (2007) entitled "Audiences and Interpretations."

The first study by Adrienne Shaw focuses on how the audience perceives themselves in a video game. As the virtual world inside the game often represents the ideal world, there is always a representation of everything projected into the virtual world. This includes the identity of the audience and how they interact with the world inside the game (Shaw 2010). Similarities between this study and the writer's study are the methods in collecting the data and how the virtual world of the game reflects the actual world. By using reception analysis, Shaw is looking for audiences' perspective towards how they identify the virtual world. Shaw argued that virtual world consists a representation in which based on the actual world. The

differences with the writer study are the object that is being studied and the theoretical approach. While Shaw is analyzing a number of video games in her study, I use Grand Theft Auto V as the primary object of analysis and identify the coded message in the object by using Hero's journey concept by Christopher Vogler.

The second study is done by Guylain Delmas, Ronan Champagnat and Michel Augeraud entitled "Bringing Interactivity into Campbell's Hero's Journey". The insight given by this study is how it is possible to apply Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey to the narrative aspect of video games. They argued that the pattern of hero's journey, in order to perfectly fit video game, have to adapt to the certain degree of interactivity (Delmas, Champagnat, and Augeraud 2015). Thus, the writer believes that the basic pattern is able to be applied to every video game that has a narrative in it. This study by Guylain is directly approaching the implementation of hero's journey in a video game, by adding more interactivity for the players to explore. There are no specific video games that included in Guylain's study. His study emphasizes more on the statistics and flows of hero's journey pattern while my research focuses on audiences' perception towards the portrayal of the hero within my specific video game, which is Grand Theft Auto V.

The third study is done by Sonia Livingstone entitled "Audiences and Interpretations" in 2007. The insight given by this study is to learn that readers, in this research case, gamer, is considered as an active audience that involved in making meaning process. She argued that media texts, like other texts, are multilayered, subject to conventional and generic constraints, open and incomplete

in their meanings, providing multiple yet bounded paths for the reader (Livingstone 2007). The research by Livingstone helped the writer to understand better the nature of the media, its audiences and how to interpret the audience reception. This study by Livingstone similarity with author's is how the notion of active audiences is playing an important role to the process of sense making of media. The object of Livingstone's study is a television show entitled "Cagney and Lacey", whereas in author's study object is video game. Video game offers a different approach from its audience. Audience engages more actively towards the video game. Thus the unique experience from video game players will have different impact. Livingstone (2007) stated that audience researchers may hope to develop a clearer account not of whether audiences are sometimes active and other times passive or sometimes homogenous and other times divergent, but of why audiences make sense of media in the ways that they have been shown to do

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Approach

This study will be using reception analysis, which is involving audience perspective in make-meaning the message relayed from the producer through the medium, which in this case is a video game. Qualitative method is chosen because of the meaning that is attached to the audio-visual that is representing the problem of the research. This study is interpretative-qualitative research that focuses more on making sense of a certain phenomenon through data that is not consisting of a number, but words from the subject of research, which is the audience. Furthermore, this research conducted by using the in-depth interview in collecting the data needed to answer some specific issue.

3.2 Population and Sampling

In this study, purposive sampling is chosen to determine the participant based on the knowledge of the writer towards the population itself, its elements, and the aims of the research (Babbie 1990). The population is selected based on particular characteristics or categories which has been determined by the writer. Then, the participants need to answer some of the necessary questions asked by the writer related to the object and topic of the research. Thus, it is necessary for the audience to fulfill all the criteria determined by the writer to ensure audiences understanding of the object. The participant that is selected in this research is gamers who already played Grand Theft Auto V video game and finished it at three times and selected each ending of the game at least once. The participant is a

Facebook's group member of GTA V (Indonesia) that are living in Surabaya for the time being so that the writer is able to conduct an interview in the same city as the writer.

The selection of Facebook's group GTA V (Indonesia) is based on the hype of the video game that is considered as one of the best-selling game and has a lot of players (Radhika Sanghani 2013). The group is consisting of 37.457 members all around Indonesia. The number is narrowed down by the number of players that domiciled in Surabaya. Another reduction of a number of participants is categorized by the age of the players. The writer chooses to select participant who is aged between 18-35, as in this age range are people who are more likely to acknowledge the video game development. Lastly, to ensure the understanding of the object that is being studied, the writer selects only those video game players who already finish the game at least three times and selecting each ending of the game at least once. The game had three different ending that has different results. The producers of the game never stated explicitly which ending is the "canon" ending, thus, learning all three different ending and experiencing it is important to make meaning the whole game as a narrative medium. A final number of participants is reduced to 5 people who able and intent to participate in this study.

3.3 Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on learning audience perspective regarding the heroic act that is encoded through the game, thus by learning the audience perspective. The scope of this research is how the audience perceives the heroic act that is implemented in the video game through the portrayal of the protagonist of Grand

Theft Auto V video game. Thus, only conducting the research on a member of Facebook's group of GTA V (Indonesia) to achieve the goal. This research is also limited by the number of participants, as it only a few participants that are considered eligible to participate in this research. Limiting only to the player who domiciled in the same city as the writer to ensure the convenience of collecting the data. Even though the participant of this research is all male, it is not, by all means, negate the woman's perspective regarding the object, but it is the result of the absence number of woman who plays the game and fulfilling the criteria made by the writer. The limited number of participants is also caused by some potential group members that are not willing to participate in this study.

3.4 Data Source

This research uses Grand Theft Auto V or as known as GTA V developed by Rockstar Games, published in PC, PlayStation and XBOX console and the transcript of the recording from in-depth interview result as the primary data source. The video game was initially released on PS3 and Xbox 360 Console in 2013, following its success, made its release on PS4 and Xbox One in 2014 and eventually released for PC in 2015. Transcript of the interview will be made after conducting an interview with the participant that fulfills the criteria.

The secondary data of this analysis is collected from both online and offline sources; it consists of books, article, news, and other academic sources that are related to the issue of this study. It includes Christopher Vogler's book that is dealing with hero archetype and his journey as the supporting data to deepen the analysis of this study further.

3.5 Technique of Data Collection

An in-depth interview is conducted to collect the data needed from the participant, as it is important to analyze the players' perspective to answer the current issue. The in-depth interview allows the writer to engage more with the participant to further answering the important topics with an open-ended question that leads to the participants giving more insight and opinion regarding the topic. Before conducting the interview, the writer does this following steps:

1. As the writer is already joining Facebook's group of GTA V (Indonesia), the writer feels obligated to ask for permission from the group's admin regarding the writer intention to conduct this research.
2. After having admin's permission, the writer making a post that describes the writer's intention regarding the research and its purpose.
3. The writer then further explains the criteria that the participant must fulfill in order to participate as the informant of this research.
4. After selecting the eligible participants from the group, the writer makes an appointment with the participant by meeting the participant in person to conduct a face-to-face interview.
5. Before the meeting, the writer has already prepared some question and consent form that must be filled and answered later on by the participant, so that the participant understands the terms and condition upon the meeting.

Five of the informants are people who eligible by fulfilling the criteria needed for this research, Facebook's group member of GTA V

(Indonesia), finishing the game at least three times with opting each of the endings once, and live in Surabaya. The selected informants are promised confidentiality for this research. The data of the participants' personal information is as follows:

No.	Name Initial	Age	Occupation	Finishing Frequencies	Date
1	HH	22	Students	3	10 October 2018
2	HS	22	Employee	3	12 October 2018
3	VC	24	Employee	4	12 October 2018
4	YA	21	Students	5	15 October 2018
5	DA	20	Students	3	15 October 2018

Table 3.1 Participants' Personal Information

Before the interview began, the writer prepared some of the necessary tools that will help the interview to run smoothly. First, I prepared a recording device and notebook to document the whole process of the interview. The important aspect of reception analysis is to learn the audience reception regarding the topic. Thus, I also prepared some questions that need to be answered by the participants.

Those questions above constructed to achieve the best response to address the heroic act within the game. Each question specifies some aspects of heroic act and the hero's journey that is coded within the game narrative.

Question number 1 – 3 is to learn the general audience knowledge regarding the object and to indicate how frequent the audience play the game, especially completing the narrative, as the game also features online multiplayer that allows the player to continue playing the game without doing the narratives. This will not be focused on this research.

Question number 2 is to learn the audience choice at the end of the game, to learn the narrative as a whole, players who elected to participate is someone who needs to finish all the available ending offered. Favorable ending by the audience opinion will determine the aspect of the narrative that might lead to different interpretation later on.

Question number 3 is to learn the audience preferences regarding the character option in the game. GTA V offers three different characters with a different background to be played within the game. Thus, audience choice is caused by certain relatable causes that evoke empathy towards the player.

It is followed by question number 4 that further identifying number 5 question regarding their characters' portrayal as a hero and understanding the reasons why.

Question number 5 – 6 will identify audiences' understanding of heroic act that encodes within the game which will further define the definition of a hero based on the players' perspective.

Question number 7 is to learn how the audience perceives the mentor figure that commonly appeared in Hero's journey. This question also puts the audience to analyze how the role of mentor affected the hero in his journey.

Question number 8 is to learn how the audiences perceive their characters, and how they react with them.

Question number 9 is to introduce the audience the existence of supernatural aid in the form of special abilities that are featured in the game. Each character offers a different skillset and abilities that affect the game.

Lastly, question number 10 is to correlate the audiences with their characters. How they make meaning of the characters and how they identify themselves. As a video game player, the audiences are projecting the vision of himself into the characters or avatar in the game. Thus, creating a unique bond between the characters which may relate to each other.

3.6 Technique of Data Analysis

Data is series of questions and answers translated from Bahasa to English. The author reviews the interview notes in the form of transcripts of interviews. Question asked to the informant is representing heroic act coded within the game. Furthermore, the results, in a form of the answer from the informant then categorized by the paradigm that is offered by Stuart Hall's reception theory. This result falls into three categories, which is the dominant-hegemonic position, negotiated position and oppositional position (Hall 1973). The author did not only match the paradigm, but also elaborate the data from the findings.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter covers the general description of the object and the analysis of the data that has been categorized into two sections, that is encoding, and decoding audiences' reception towards Grand Theft Auto V. The analysis was done by interpreting the data from interview regarding the audience reception of Grand Theft Auto V video game using the theory of encoding-decoding by Stuart Hall and the concept of Hero's Journey by Christopher Vogler.

4.1 Encoding the Heroic Act in Grand Theft Auto V

Video game interactivity is a groundbreaking point that always pulls interest to millions of video game player. As it is a unique media where the audience are actively engaged in the process of entertainment, there is a lot of thing from a video game that is offered to video game player. Immersion, being one of the most important aspects of video games. Immersion is a version of concentration, which is applicable to the narratives, stories, and environments that exist within an alternative, pseudo-reality (Terzioglu 2015). Thus, immersion creates a unique feeling to the player — a different kind of interactivity between the audiences and the media. In the video game, players are supposed to take an active engagement towards the video game.

This active engagement between the players and the video game, according to Stuart Hall (1980) in his reception analysis theory, is seeing the audience as being actively engaged in the interpretation of the text. Thus, not only passively

consummate the text, but the audiences also played a role in making meaning out of the text. It also implies that there will be a different meaning from different audiences, considering they are coming from a different background and perspective.

Rockstar Game, as the producer of Grand Theft Auto V video game, has an objective to relay a message to the mass audiences. This message is encoded in the text, which is the video game by the producer. Adrienne Shaw believes that video games mostly are built and construct typically to preferred readings as the goal. Nevertheless, video game relying heavily on the narrative aspect that progressing in the game (Shaw 2010). As the producer of the game is constructing the virtual world, their own idea is forming as a text that will eventually be relayed through the video game and passed on to the player.

Living virtually as a protagonist in the video game surely takes entertainment to the whole new level. People now are trying to drown themselves in the atmosphere of the virtual reality where anyone can be anybody.

video games are intrinsically motivating in part because they provide a context (albeit a virtual one) in which players can explore different aspects of their selves and “try on” ideal characteristics (Przybylski et al. 2012 p. 69)

As an action game, Grand Theft Auto V offers a big deal of entertainment activities. There were also things about heroism that is represented in the game, although the protagonist of Grand Theft Auto V is mostly criminal. Thus, this experience of a rather different character is intriguing for video game player. Instead of actually

doing criminal such as theft, murder, or trickery, players are offered to do the activity in the virtual world that is constructed for that purpose. The experience of playing a video game will be different from one another. As in the study conducted by (Shaw 2010) Some felt more drawn into the plot because they were playing. Others felt playing, in essence, negated the importance of the plot.

The absence of crime-fighting character does not mean that there is none of the heroic act. When Joseph Campbell published his finding regarding the Hero's Journey, people could see how most of the heroic tale are basically the same pattern that has been occurred in multiples media. The video game is being one of the entertainment media that actually following the pattern of Hero's Journey that relies heavily on narrative aspect. Even though video games are not considered as a medium capable of telling a compelling narrative at first, but Plyler argued that video games have big potential as a media to actually delivering the narrative aspect to the audiences.

Hero's Journey, blend into every narrative aspect, compelling the typical hero story also appeared even in the unusual genre of video games. Terms "*heroic*" is inputted by the producer in a way that is simply not obvious. As a hero, people expecting a protagonist to do a good deed, saving the girl, beating the enemy's boss and so on. Grand Theft Auto V delivers this notion by bringing a criminal protagonist to do the job but with a different approach. In the first chapter, when Michael's son, Jimmy, is caught in a robbery of Michael's yacht, Michael and Franklin are chasing the robber and saving Jimmy as it is common for a heroic tales that begin with the death or missing of a family member (Vogler 2007). While

Michael actually has this family, even though at some point he always need to save them from harm, Franklin does not start with a complete family's member since the beginning.

Franklin born as an orphan, his father left him when he is still in his mother womb. His mother died not long after. He is raised in a rough neighborhood filled with gang-banging activities and criminal. Drive by his unfortunate childhood, after Franklin is imprisoned back before the event in GTA V begin, he strives to earn success in his own way. He is trying to avoid any gang-banging and petty crime that he used to do with his partner, Lamar.

The journey of many Heroes is the story of that separation from the family or tribe, equivalent to a child's sense of separation from the mother. The Hero archetype represents the ego's search for identity and wholeness. In the process of becoming complete, integrated human beings, we are all Heroes facing internal guardians, monsters, and helpers. (Vogler 2007 p. 29)

Same goes with Trevor Philips, after the ill-fated heist in North Yankton with Michael, he ended up in the wasteland called Blaine County, north of Los Santos. There, he builds a business that mostly deals with illegal concern, such as transporting black market goods, drug dealing and heisting. His confrontation with Michael after finding out that Michael is still alive is causing tension between them. After believing that Michael is long gone, and his other friend, Brad is claimed imprisoned, he is in a runaway. He is chasing Michael because he felt betrayed, accusing Michael as a fraud. This notion also implies the missing person from the hero's life, with each of their own. Michael is fighting to regain his family, Franklin, born as an orphan who wants to achieve his own goal and Trevor who thought he

leaves behind by his friends. Having an objective is important for any kind of characters to be considered as a protagonist. Thus, obtaining the objective of the characters will be the main goal for the protagonist. To reach the goal, it is common for the protagonist to face a numerous challenge and hardship. As the game is progressing, the characters will be stronger than before.

4.2 Decoding the Heroic Act in Grand Theft Auto V

In this part of the analysis, I will be focusing on the audience response regarding the heroic act that is being relayed in the form of narrative in Grand Theft Auto V. Before I begin, I would like to explain more about the online survey. Unlike in-depth interview, which I, as the researcher and the audience could directly ask the questionnaire with an open-ended question, online survey engaged in a questionnaire that is distributed via online media, the answer from the questionnaire is compiled and interpreted.

4.2.1 Hero's Background

A hero is someone who is brave and daring. As it is really important for someone worthy called as a hero, bravery indeed is one of the important traits. Informant HS believes that Bravery is the first trait that all heroes must have.

“I think, because hero will surely have a tough challenge ahead, and a scared people are not going to fit in as a hero, they will run away from the challenge they will face. Their journey is started from their bravery to begin, knowing that they are brave, it is the first step for them” (HS. 2018. Interview with GTA V player by the author. October 12)

As Vogler (2007) stated that some heroes are willing, active, gung-ho, committed to the adventure, without doubts, always bravely going ahead, self-motivated (p.

24). This kind of person always occurs in every kind of situation. This too will affect the player perspective. Like the player, they virtually “placed” themselves in the game. The bravery that “appeared” in the video game characters is a direct impact of the player decision. A character’s trait might have distorted by how the player interacts with them. Shaw (2010) in his study, stated that it affects the way we interact with them, it affects the time we spend on them and most importantly, determines the satisfaction and pleasure we get from them (p. 103)

“of course it is important to be brave in that kind of situation, I see myself as Michael as in the game, he fought bravely for his family. Such as the time when he is with Jimmy in the beach, and Jimmy told him that his sister is in the yacht near there, having a party with psycho and guy from porn industry, Michael swimming to the yacht, confronting them, run with Tracey using speedboat while people are gunning Michael and Tracey down. Now that’s what is called bravery; he is doing it for people he loves.” (YA. 2018. Interview with GTA V player by the author. October 15)

Informant YA also implies that bravery to fight for their loved ones is important. Moreover, the bravery that the heroes had is not because of their own goals, but they are also taking the risk to keep their loved away from harm. Just like Michael when he needs to save Tracey, Franklin who explicitly stated that he does not want anything to do with Lamar and his gang-banging things. When Franklin finds out that Lamar is taken hostages by the rival gang, Franklin rush in to save his best friend, this quality of taking risk and sacrifice is considered as the most important aspect of hero. Vogler, in his book, stated that a hero is someone who is willing to sacrifice his own needs on behalf of others. Moreover, sacrifice is considered as the true mark of a hero (Vogler 2007). The challenge that the hero will face will be various. Thus, it is important for them to have the strength to face it.

The figure of the mentor appears to each of the characters. A mentor is someone that the characters hold highly. The relationship between hero and mentor is one of the common things in many tales (Vogler 2007). Mentors are the one who guides the hero through his journey and giving wisdom when the hero needs it. The legends of King Arthur have Merlin as his wise old man or Master Yoda as the mentor for Luke Skywalker. Thus, the appearance of a mentor is a necessity for the hero to growth.

Michael seems like someone who can do good on his own, but nevertheless, Michael needs someone as the brain for his work. Before doing his first heist after a long break, Michael meets again with his old colleague, Lester. Lester here acts as the mastermind or the observer of the team. For Michael, Lester is a must have company before doing any of the jobs he wants to do. As Lester will be the guide for the team, ensuring their success and cleaning up their mess. Even though Michael abandoned Lester back in North Yankton to make his deal with the Federal Investigation Bureau and to fake his death, Lester knows well that Michael is still alive all this year. Keeping track of Michael's activities in Los Santos and move to Los Santos himself. Lester knows well how Michael will need him later on after the incident of North Yankton, as it is a mentor's job to prepare hero to face the challenge ahead (Vogler 2007). Thus, Lester appearance is important.

“Lester is one of the major characters that affect greatly on Michael and the team; he is the mastermind and the tactician behind every heist that the team is doing.” (YA. 2018. Interview with GTA V player by the author. October 15)

For Franklin, his mentor figure would be Michael. In the first encounter of Franklin with Michael, it might have started with not so much pleasantries but later on, Franklin always sought Michael for guidance. Franklin tried to “repo” Michael’s car to the fraud car dealer, Simeon Yetarian, Franklin’s former boss. After the unfortunate event, Franklin back to Michael’s house, charmed by Michael’s success at such age. This trigger the mentor-student relationship between them. Even Michael stated that Franklin is like a son he always wanted. Franklin looked up to Michael with respect, for him, Michael could lead Franklin to the path of being successful, as he is tired of petty crime and empty promises of gang-banging with Lamar. He believed that Michael would earn him a wealth easily.

“Michael and Franklin's relationship is unique, Michael wants a son like Franklin and Vice Versa. Franklin had no father when he grows up, so naturally, he is looking for a father figure that could guide him, his encounter with Michael opens up so many opportunities for Franklin to actually grows and strengthen up his endeavor to achieve success.” (HH. 2018. Interview with GTA V player by the author. October 10)

HH claimed that Michael as a mentor is important for Franklin, thus, earning his respect prove useful for Franklin. Through Michael, Franklin knows Lester, who gives Franklin an opportunity to earn wealth — eventually moving out to his new house in an elite region of Los Santos. Michael too seems like giving a lot of wise advice to Franklin, so he becomes a better man than Michael does.

Stuart Hall stated that negotiating is a *version* contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements. Thus, it is not dependent on dominant paradigm, but also rejecting some part of it. In this study, I found that some traits of hero that is

offered in the monomyth of the hero's journey are not the exact pattern as it used to be.

“A bad childhood life is not supposedly to be the only qualifications, yes Superman and Batman lost their parents. Three of GTA V protagonist also lost their parents even though not all is specified how, but Franklin indeed is an orphan who lives with his auntie because he lost both his parent, dad is run away from home, mom is dead because of overdoses. I think we cannot justify that having those experience in childhood will define the path to be the hero.” (DA. 2018. Interview with GTA V player by the author. October 15)

Informant HH stated that childhood and non-existent parents would not necessarily construct a path as a hero, even though he believes that facing a hard challenge in life will elevate a hero status and strength to be someone worth to call a hero, but having this problem is not one of them. It is notable that a family member is important for the characters' growth, as in Michael's case, when he is separated from his family. The separation works as a motivation for the protagonist to be a better individual. Like Vogler's categorization of heroes, in this case, a group-oriented hero will thrive to back as a member of a group or family (Vogler 2007)

Unlike Michael and Franklin, Trevor had no mentor figures that he can rely on. He was in the team with Michael, but he does not consider Lester as his mentor. Instead, according to HS, Trevor is treated as a mentor in his own circle back in Blaine County

“I don't think Ron is Trevor's mentor, I could think it the other way around. A mentor is someone who is wiser and have wider knowledge, and I think Ron is not up to the job. It is Trevor who enlightens both Ron and Wade in Trevor's Enterprise. Also, I think Trevor alone is quite badass without someone telling him what to do, even though sometimes Trevor's action could be considered as a reckless one, but I guess somehow he needs some guidance from his trusted one” (HS. 2018. Interview with GTA V player by the author. October 12)

Trevor's action that mostly impulsive could prove as a disadvantage, Trevor does not think clearly and feels like rushing things. HS believes that Trevor needs wiser guidance, even though Trevor seems like ignored most of the advice. Trevor is getting quite a thrashing by Lester after pulling a heist on military equipment. Lester stated that all of them would be wanted by the federal government for pulling this stunts, and Trevor seems kind of regretting his action.

Unlike dominant reception, the oppositional paradigm interpreted the message from the producer the other way. A construction of hero archetype mostly works for the majority of the protagonist, as it is always the protagonist that is being the center of the narrative. It is also possible, for some reasons, that some audiences have their own value and perspective regarding interpreting the message in media (Hall 1973).

“I think some of the characters are being used by the antagonist, they are not having their own initiative nor have the courage to deal with the problem themselves. Franklin especially feels like only do something because he is being told to. Like when Lamar is doing business with his gang-banging and he told Franklin to do this or to do that. I really don't think that this is an aspect that hero should have.” (DA. 2018. Interview with GTA V player by author. October 15)

As informant DA stated, taking the initiative is considered as heroic traits. Thus, he found the characters of Grand Theft Auto V is lacking in taking the initiative. Adapting to different situation and condition. There is some moment in the game where the characters are actually only following orders from the higher-ups. This strengthens DA response regarding characters' initiative. Michael has tied up to his

deal with Federal Investigation Bureau several years ago. Now Michael is bound to do anything the Federal agents want. Limiting Michael's action towards the betterment of his life.

4.2.2 Hero's Action

Grand Theft Auto V is a game that depends on the narrative to unfold the plot inside. It is important to notice that every action in the game is relying heavily on the players to make meaning out of it. This study focuses more on the action that happened in the narrative aspect. The goals of each character are different. For Michael, it is his family safety and living happily. Franklin thinks about getting more money without involving himself in petty crime and jail. Trevor goal is to expand his business across the country. To achieve these three goals, there was a lot of challenge to face. Combining these three characters are required to finish the game. Naturally, as the game is filled with narrative, Grand Theft Auto V has exemplified the monomyth of hero's journey is not a traditional pattern. Though it is different, there was certain path of hero's journey that is occurred in the narrative of Grand Theft Auto V.

To earn money in this game, players are supposed to doing the quest, or the mission offered in the game. Ultimately, the heists that will be performed a multiple time in the games are the most rewarding activities. Players can choose other NPC characters with different status and skills to bring in the heist. In every mission, it is unavoidable to kill some other NPCs in the game. Thus, according to the players, it is an inevitable action that always occurred in the game, with no ways of avoiding

it. But it is notable that some players choose a to do a different playstyle regarding the characters they used. Informant HH stated:

“in a mission where three of the protagonist make an appearance, I prefer using Trevor to do a killing spree, his special abilities that are making Trevor going tranced and dealing heavy fire damage is fun, I could kill so many enemies with him.” (HH. 2018. Interview with GTA V player by author. October 10)

The excitement brought by doing these activities is closely related to immersion that this game brought. Greater immersion would make video games more intrinsically motivating for players who experienced game-self-ideal-self convergence (Przybylski et al. 2012). Apparently, this characters in-game is a projection from the players in the virtual world of video game. As the players considered themselves as the characters, the meaning of every action in the game closely resembles the players' intention. This symbolic interactionism to media, as Elichner stated, it establishes a basis for a deeper understanding of media communication, since media texts constitute symbolic material that has to be interpreted through a communicative act of role-taking (Elichner 2014).

Driving in video games also improve certain immersion like never before. One of the special abilities from the characters is driving. Franklin is exceptionally good at driving, furthermore, there is a feature in the game that let Franklin entering a zone of slow motion, giving him more handling at driving. This experience of driving is engaging players to drive in a unique way in the virtual world.

“when using Franklin, I felt like I'm an expert in driving, especially with those special abilities on, I can drive fast without hitting anyone like normally people do in real world, or even in the virtual world. Unlike simulator game, where everything has a rule and consequences, GTA V is a free-roam game, I could drive wherever I want, even not stopping at red

lights. If I was doing something like this in real life, well I could get in a lot of trouble.” (VC. 2018. Interview with GTA V player by the author. October 12)

Informant VC response that interacting with an object constructed in a video game is giving him more immersive experiences. This experience is named Virtual Interaction; it is basically how the players interact with virtual objects, such as when he drives around Los Santos with his virtual car (Terzioglu 2015).

These special skills that are possessed by the characters is a symbolization of Supernatural Aid in hero's journey. It is common for the hero to possess such ability to helped them through their journey. Supernatural Aid might come from the hero's mentor, inherited from birth, or results of training (Vogler 2007). Players considered this skill as a feature that is included in the game. Each of the characters has a different set of special abilities. Michael has a *slow-motion* ability that renders his surrounding pace really slow, so Michael has better accuracy when firing a gun. Franklin has a *power-handling* ability that helps him drive with better handling, thus helping him in any drive-chase condition. Trevor has a *go-frenzy* ability that strongly buffed his shooting damage, thus helped him defeat enemies faster.

Killing might not as good as it sounds, but it is an important aspect of the Grand Theft Auto V video game. Characters killing NPCs characters might occur anytime and anywhere. Though it is overly displayed in the video game, some players believe this action is not entirely necessary.

“I am not sure I like killing people in the game, but sometimes it is a must thing to do, if there were a way to finish the game without killing anyone, I

would definitely try that”. (VC. 2018. Interview with GTA V player by the author. October 12)

“it is natural, it is part of the game, I consider it as a challenge, some NPC characters I killed might not necessarily a bad guy, but there are some bad guys too. For example, when I’m in a heist, the military guy who guarded it might be considered as a bad guy, because they are guarding a weapon of mass destruction. Sometimes NPCs I killed is only a security guard that is doing his job. It is part of the challenge” (HH. 2018. Interview with GTA V player by the author. October 10)

Both VC and HH stated that even though the game nature is involving a killing, they considered this only as a challenge for the heroes to face. While aggression of the players might impact on the characters, or vice versa, players like VC and HH believes that sometimes killing is not necessary for the game. It is important to notice that the aggression caused by the violent video games might affects the different player in a different way (Adachi and Willoughby 2011).

Although the producer of the media constructed a number of activities and narratives that lead the audience to accept that the protagonist is deemed worthy to called as a hero, encoding-decoding offers a different approach for audiences to interpret the meaning. This leads to disagreement from the audience to the value offered by the game developer as the ‘sender’ of the media (During 1993). Audiences believe that there are some aspects of the characters that is not suitable for the hero to have.

“For all I know, stealing is not a hero-like activity. They take things that do not belong to them, more importantly, they take is for personal gain. Unlike Robin Hood, he steals something from the rich and gives them to the poor people, he had the motivation that is not his personal reason” (HH. 2018. Interview with GTA V player by the author. October 10)

Informant HH stated that stealing for personal gain is not heroic at all. Stealing is a most common criminal act that caused people arrested (Elizabeth R. Taylor 2014). Thus having those qualities as a person does not count as heroic. Reasons why the characters doing this criminal act also giving more negative point towards them. They are not doing it for the betterment of communities, but only for themselves. HH is comparing it with Robin Hood character that is famous for stealing from the rich but after he steals, he gives it to people in need, poor people that are objected by the unfair law. Robin Hood goals and reason is not for his own personal gain, unlike characters in GTA V. Reason they are stealing is clearly for personal gain, to make them rich and prosper.

“Yes, I relate myself to the characters, but I’m not considering myself as a hero. For me, it is just a game where I can do anything I want without limitation, including some illegal activities that normally I wouldn’t do. Normal people will be terrified if they do activities in the game to real life “. (DA. 2018. Interview with GTA V player by the author. October 15)

Although video games emphasize on players’ interaction towards the virtual world, it does not always mean that every action that players do is affecting or marking significance things. Moreover, Grand Theft Auto V offers an open-world game which let the player free roaming the virtual world without impacting the narrative unless the players engage in the narrative aspect of the game (Elichner 2014). Informant DA believes that the game is only serving entertainment purpose. Unusual activities are considered normal things to do in the game.

4.3 Interpretation of Findings

Rockstar Game as the developer of Grand Theft Auto V created characters that most of the audience will relate with one way or another. They are emphasizing and exploring the characters that are on the opposing side of the law. In the game, players are given out some choices about what they are going to do. Most of the game content is filled with criminal activities, and the characters' goals are mostly for their own personal gain, but nevertheless, the heroic act is encoded within the game. Projecting an ideal hero image to a criminal might seems impossible, but then again, it is not an absolute paradigm. As it is a delivered through a media, more importantly, a media that allows interactivity between the media and the audiences, the audiences also have a role to play. By its nature, media is a multi-layered text that has an open and incomplete meaning (Livingstone 2007). Hence, the audience will determine how they perceive the hero figure into the characters they played, and make meaning out of the encoded message in the game.

4.3.1 Dominant-Hegemonic Position

Story-wise, Grand Theft Auto V gives the player a choice to finish the game. There are three options, the first option is to kill Trevor, the second option is to kill Michael, and the last option is to save both of them. The act of saving people in need proved to be the options people pick most. All participants of this study believe that picking ending C as their most favorite ending. Online polling by Strawpoll (2016) shows that 80% of the respondent choose ending C as their favorite ending (Strawpoll 2016). This finding implicate that the audience who ultimately become

the decision maker for Franklin within the game, choose to save the other characters. Putting aside their pursuit as a criminal in the game.

A figure of the mentor appears thoroughly within the narrative. The audiences manage to identify some characters that is allegedly portraying the mentor figure. Informant HH, HS, VC believed that Michael act as the mentor figure for Franklin. Lester also identified as the mentor figure for Michael according to YA and DA opinions. The mentor figure is one of the important aspect for the hero. The mentor figures within the game serves as the advisor for the hero in his journey.

Special abilities that is featured in the game act as the supernatural aid from Vogler's concept of hero's journey. Informant HS and VC think that it is common for the hero to possess such ability. This special ability easily blends in into the game as a gameplay feature. The special ability also gives a deeper characterization for the certain characters. It also made the audiences to easily recognize the characters. It is similar to how the audiences recognize Superman with his super-strength and Batman with his intelligence and gadget.

4.3.2 Negotiated Position

While asked about the hero's action within the game, the audience too has fallen into different arguments. The most controversial trait that defines the hero from the villain is what they do in the narrative. Video game developer is nowadays exploring another possible scenario of a hero to emerge. A non-traditional narrative is becoming a trend to explore the monogamous heroic story. As people argued over

how realistic human traits within a narrative is considered as immersive for the audience. Killing and stealing that is featured in the game are, YA and DA believed as a mere challenge and part of the game, while VC argued that this action is not hero-like. Especially in Indonesia, where the research takes place. Majority of Indonesia citizen will argue that having those criteria will result in them treated as a criminal. As a country that strongly embodies the “eastern culture” that promotes good deed, manner and hospitality, this crime act is strongly opposed the value. This culture difference roots deeply into the nature of human being. Especially for eastern, where beliefs, faith, and ideology are rigid by nature (Michelini 2018)

4.3.3 Oppositional Position

The participants of this research that falls into Stuart Hall’s three positional paradigm defines that hero concept is not rigid. They might be following the pattern of the monomyth, but it does not ensure the same output of hero. The hero might emerge from someone that most people believed impossible. There is some difference in defining hero that is expected to happen towards the concept that will be more develop into today’s popular culture. Video game developer will find a more attractive and creative way to construct a unique protagonist that worthy to be called as a hero.

Informant HH for example, believes that not having a bad childhood or as an orphan is a necessary option to build a heroic aspect to someone. As it is might not necessarily a strong motive that drives someone to delve in a path of the hero. On the contrary, informant HS believes that it is common for a hero to be born parentless, and for him, this is the reason why some hero is stronger and have a purer

intention to protect people he loves. As an Indonesian, parent figure is considered really important. People who born parent-less is considered less fortunate and treated differently. This lead to the common perception that orphan who trained with hard challenge and living will have to endure more challenge ahead. Thus, they will grow as a better and successful person.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The producer of the game is explicitly trying to picture a criminal's figure within these three protagonists of their game. Nevertheless, as an interactive media, video game's nature that involves the player as the audience leads to a different point of view. While analyzing this video game, it is revealed that the narrative of GTA V is similar to the pattern proposed by Christopher Vogler. Thus, it contains the heroism value that is encoded within the game. Even though the representation of a good hero figure is pretty much absent from this video game. The audience managed to find that there are some aspects of heroism that is represented in the game, whether it is from the narrative aspect that involves these characters, or the in-game content such as features and gameplay mechanic.

The implication of these findings suggests that even though the character is considered bad and criminal, they are still portraying heroic act, as they also represented some aspects that are mentioned in Vogler's hero's journey — proven by how the image of the hero and audience perspective of hero is shifting. This implies that the concept of hero archetype is not solely based on the hero's journey. There is space for the hero to develop and not restricted by the ideal concept of the hero. Especially in the era of technology advancement, giving more space for the audience to explore in meaning making.

This study was conducted in hope to give contribution in raising awareness about the heroic act that is portrayed by the media especially a video game, as it is argued before that video game is not capable of delivering a narrative. By applying a concept such as a hero's journey in a video game, it is proven that video game nowadays is capable be a narrative medium. The different perspective towards the characters' heroic caused by the nature of video game as a media that engage its audience to be more active in meaning-making. Therefore, the writer expects this study can trigger the audience of media to think more critically towards media texts, especially a video game. The issue of defining hero has been discussed among scholars. Thus, the writer wishes this study could become a useful reference for future studies with a similar topic by providing the most recent development of the hero's journey. For further research that involves audience and media reception, to ensure the best possible output, participant should be evaluated thoroughly. Conducting in-depth interview will be helpful to elaborate the participants' understanding towards the object researched.

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APPENDIX 1. SYNOPSIS



Blaze of glory, explosion, and gunfight, typical American full-packed action Hollywood entertainment. Following the success of Grand Theft Auto series, Rockstar Game releasing the new video game entitled Grand Theft Auto V. Following its first released in 2013 for the console, there is a PC version released in 2014. Grand Theft Auto V story revolves around three major protagonists that are related to one to each other. Players can change the characters in-between the game, triggering a mission with different characters is also a possibility, even though there is some mission that is restricted to a certain character. Grand Theft Auto V is offering a sandbox open-world action game that allows the player to explore the entire city of Los Santos, a fictional city set in America that resembles Los Angeles.

The first character is Michael de Santa (Michael Townley), a retired bank-robber that lives happily with his family in Los Santos. Michael has a wife, Amanda, and two children, Jimmy and Tracey. Michael is moving to Los Santos

because of deal he made with David Norton, a Federal Investigation Bureau agent. They both arrange a deal to put an end to Michael's criminal activity back in North Yankton, a fictional state in America that is located in the Midwest. Michael must agree to betray his crew and faked his own death, thus, changing his name from Michael Townley to Michael de Santa, and move to Los Santos under the witness protection of FIB.

The second character of the game is Franklin Clinton. Franklin is a former drug-dealer in Los Santos. He is an orphan; his father left him when his mother still pregnant with him. Unfortunately, his mother also died of addiction to the drug. This leads to Franklin rough childhood in a rough neighborhood. After imprisoned back in 2008 after doing a lot of petty crimes. Franklin back to Los Santos to work in a repossession job. In this job, he met with Michael after trying to "repo" Michael's car. Thus, begin the father-son relationship between Franklin and Michael. Charmed by Michael's success in "business," now Franklin is following Michael's footsteps in a whole new level of criminal and government war.

The third character in this game is Trevor Philips. Trevor was Michael's heist crew back in North Yankton. After the last job they pulled, Trevor is made to believe that Michael is dead, not knowing that Michael is betraying the team to be protected by the Federal Investigation Bureau, helped by Dave Norton. Trevor builds a not-so-legal business in Blaine County, a rural desert town in the north of Los Santos. After learning that his former crew, Michael is still alive, he is coming to Los Santos to confront Michael and to expand his business.

Grand Theft Auto V starts with Michael and Trevor back in North Yankton in 2004, pulling a heist that ultimately leads to Michael's false death. Their runaway is doomed ever since the beginning after their driver is shot dead in the chase, Michael leads the crew to an ambush that is set up by Dave Norton and his fellow agent of Federal Investigation Bureau. After the incident, Trevor thinks that Michael is dead, not knowing that Michael is only faking, Michael moves to Los Santos with a new identity and live as a witness to the Federal Investigation Bureau.

Franklin Clinton first encounter with Michael happened when Franklin tried to "repo" Michael's job. Franklin was in a redemption state; he wants to get away from his petty criminal activities and start to earn legit money. Unfortunately for him, he met Michael, a successful man in the "business". Franklin is excited to follow Michael's footsteps, thus following every order Michael issued to Franklin. This creates a unique relationship between them, as Michael's actual son is considered a "no-good" for Michael, and Franklin's rough childhood as an orphan fits the puzzle. Eventually, three of the characters are met together to pull a job for the government. Creating tension between Michael and Trevor, and Franklin stuck in the middle of the problem.

APPENDIX 2. LIST OF QUESTIONS

Those questions asked are:

1. How many times did you finish the game?

2. What ending route that you take and why? Do you have a favorite ending route?
3. Between the three characters (Michael, Franklin and Trevor), which characters that evoke your empathy? Why?
4. Which of the characters above that did you consider as the “hero”? why?
5. What things that define that character as a hero?
6. What aspects is that most important of being a hero? Mention three aspects that first come into your mind, and mention why?
7. Do you notice a mentor figure in the game? And what do you think his actual role in the game? And how the mentor impacts the characters in the game?
8. Do you consider a different playstyle between characters?
9. What do you think about the special skills of each character that are offered as part of the game’s feature?
10. Do you relate yourself to the characters while playing the game? every action you do in the game are mirroring yourself as a person, therefore, if you are playing as the characters you mention above, how do you see yourself? Can you see the hero in you by doing things that are in the main plot of the game?

APPENDIX 3. INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

HH | Occupation: Student | Date of Interview: 10 October 2018

1. How many times did you finish the game?
3 times, twice in PS and once in PC

2. What ending route that you take and why? Do you have a favorite ending route?

I took every available ending, my favorite ending is option C. Because all the characters are alive, if I took other option, it makes the certain characters are not available to play again.

3. Between the three characters (Michael, Franklin and Trevor), which characters that evoke your empathy? Why?

I empathized with all three characters, because they are a manifest of human testing, which is to survive. Even though some aspects are exaggerated. From Michael, we learn that becoming a witness for FIB is to survive. Trevor with his business, is his way to cope from his dark past. Franklin tries to survive from Los Santos harsh condition.

4. Which of the characters above that did you consider as the “hero”? why?

Franklin, because he is the most innocent character with less sin. He is still young, and he deserves more opportunity to survive. He is also the only character with common sense rather than the other two characters. I also heard that ending C is the canon ending, which is Franklin that eventually decides the fate of the other characters. That makes him the hero of the story

5. What things that define that character as a hero?

Bravery. As the central character, a hero must be brave to face any challenge to inspire other people. Even though in this game, there are a lot of things that are inappropriate. Such as killing and stealing which is the main aspect

of this game. Stealing is not a hero-like activity. They take things that do not belong to them, more importantly, they take it for personal gain. Unlike Robin Hood, he steals something from the rich and gives them to the poor people, he had the motivation that is not his personal reason. In this case, Franklin is trying to be a successful man. He actually is a brave person that always get in trouble whether he likes it or not. He always stuck in a position where he has to save someone from trouble, and it takes courage to do so.

6. What aspects is that most important of being a hero? Mention three aspects that first come into your mind, and mention why?

Strength to face a challenge, taking the risk, and adaptive to any kind of situation.

7. Do you notice a mentor figure in the game? And what do you think his actual role in the game? And how the mentor impacts the characters in the game?

Michael and Franklin's relationship is unique, Michael wants a son like Franklin and Vice Versa. Franklin had no father when he grows up, so naturally, he is looking for a father figure that could guide him, his encounter with Michael opens up so many opportunities for Franklin to actually grows and strengthen up his endeavor to achieve success

8. Do you consider a different playstyle between characters?

in a mission where three of the protagonist make an appearance, I prefer using Trevor to do a killing spree, his special abilities that are making Trevor going tranced and dealing heavy fire damage is fun, I could kill so many enemies with him.

9. What do you think about the special skills of each character that are offered as part of the game's feature?

I think this is the gameplay feature that is added for the entertainment purpose.

10. Do you relate yourself to the characters while playing the game? every action you do in the game are mirroring yourself as a person, therefore, if you are playing as the characters you mention above, how do you see yourself? Can you see the hero in you by doing things that are in the main plot of the game?

it is natural, it is part of the game, I consider it as a challenge, some NPC characters I killed might not necessarily a bad guy, but there are some bad guys too. For example, when I'm in a heist, the military guy who guarded it might be considered as a bad guy, because they are guarding a weapon of mass destruction. Sometimes NPCs I killed is only a security guard that is doing his job. It is part of the challenge

HS | Occupation: Employee | Date of Interview: 12 October 2018

1. How many times did you finish the game?

3 times, now I mostly do the online session for GTA

2. What ending route that you take and why? Do you have a favorite ending route?

I took all three ending. Ending C is the best ending

3. Between the three characters (Michael, Franklin and Trevor), which characters that evoke your empathy? Why?

All three characters have their own way. Franklin with his harsh life, Michael that hides his past, and Trevor that is abandoned by his close friend.

4. Which of the characters above that did you consider as the “hero”? why?

All three of them is a hero. They have their own role and portion. Such as Franklin that has a good driving skill, Michael that has a good shooting accuracy, and Trevor that has rush bravery.

5. What things that define that character as a hero?

All of them have their own ups and downs. They are fighting their own battles. They complete each other stories in this game.

6. What aspects is that most important of being a hero? Mention three aspects that first come into your mind, and mention why?

Bravery, I think, because hero will surely have a tough challenge ahead, and a scared people are not going to fit in as a hero, they will run away from the challenge they will face. Their journey is started from their bravery to begin, knowing that they are brave, it is the first step for them. Also taking the risk, the hero is someone who will face a hard choice in his adventure. Thus, taking risk is important, and the strength to face challenges.

7. Do you notice a mentor figure in the game? And what do you think his actual role in the game? And how the mentor impacts the characters in the game?

Yes, like Michael is a mentor and father figure to Franklin, Franklin learned so many things from Michael. He is also the reason why Franklin is moving

to a more serious job and earn more. There is also Lester that is a mentor for Michael, Lester takes care of everything and preparing the team. For Trevor, people said that Ron is a mentor for Trevor, but I don't think Ron is Trevor's mentor, I could think it the other way around. A mentor is someone who is wiser and have wider knowledge, and I think Ron is not up to the job. It is Trevor who enlightens both Ron and Wade in Trevor's Enterprise. Also, I think Trevor alone is quite badass without someone telling him what to do, even though sometimes Trevor's action could be considered as a reckless one, but I guess somehow he needs some guidance from his trusted one

8. Do you consider a different playstyle between characters?

Yes, of course.

9. What do you think about the special skills of each character that are offered as part of the game's feature?

It's fun, giving the characters a deeper characterization. It is common for the main characters of the story to have a unique ability that helped them through their journey.

10. Do you relate yourself to the characters while playing the game? every action you do in the game are mirroring yourself as a person, therefore, if you are playing as the characters you mention above, how do you see yourself? Can you see the hero in you by doing things that are in the main plot of the game?

Yes, more importantly, Franklin in the ending C is finally able to save both his friends. He is also uniting them to work together again.

VC | Occupation: Employee | Date of Interview: 12 October 2018

1. How many times did you finish the game?

4 times

2. What ending route that you take and why? Do you have a favorite ending route?

I took all three ending. I prefer ending C, because all character is alive

3. Between the three characters (Michael, Franklin and Trevor), which characters that evoke your empathy? Why?

Michael I guess.

4. Which of the characters above that did you consider as the “hero”? why?

Three of them is hero in their own way especially because they have their own agenda and objective.

5. What things that define that character as a hero?

Their strength and willingness to take the risk and to achieve their goal by any means necessary

6. What aspects is that most important of being a hero? Mention three aspects that first come into your mind, and mention why?

Bravery, Taking a risk, and Strength

7. Do you notice a mentor figure in the game? And what do you think his actual role in the game? And how the mentor impacts the characters in the game?

Like Michael to Franklin I guess. Because I think Franklin is learning so much from Michael. In a specific scene, I recall that Michael considered Franklin as a kid he always wants. Michael always tries to protect Franklin, giving Franklin advice to become a more successful. Michael also warns Franklin not to become man like Michael, afraid that Franklin will make a same mistake as Michael.

8. Do you consider a different playstyle between characters?

Yes, because they have their own specialties.

9. What do you think about the special skills of each character that are offered as part of the game’s feature?

It's fun. It's different from the previous series. Overall I think this is a good development. They have their unique skill that is helpful in the game.

10. Do you relate yourself to the characters while playing the game? every action you do in the game are mirroring yourself as a person, therefore, if you are playing as the characters you mention above, how do you see yourself? Can you see the hero in you by doing things that are in the main plot of the game?

Sure, I think this is the best thing about this game. It gives me the virtual experience of diving into a world full of action. I played this game back then before I have a job, and I spend so much time playing this game. It is really fun. About the hero, I think that becoming the main characters means that I also become the hero. Finishing the objective of the game is such an accomplishment for me. Especially in the end of the game, when I choose to end C. It feels so climactic. To be able to achieve the best ending.

YA | Occupation: Student | Date of Interview: 15 October 2018

1. How many times did you finish the game?
5 times
2. What ending route that you take and why? Do you have a favorite ending route?

I finished all three. I really think ending C is the best ending. I kind of regretting my decision to take ending A and B

3. Between the three characters (Michael, Franklin and Trevor), which characters that evoke your empathy? Why?

Franklin, it's because he is not as guilty as the other two characters

4. Which of the characters above that you considered as the "hero"? why?

I am not sure if they can be considered as hero. An anti-hero perhaps.

5. What things that define that character as hero?

Someone who put others need first. They are willing to sacrifice anything for a greater purpose.

6. What aspects that is most important of being a hero? Mention three aspects that first come in to your mind, and mention why?

Kindness, Courage, and Strength. As a hero, I think someone has to have this trait. An ideal image of hero in my mind. It takes courage to step up, the strength to finish the challenge, and still be kind to everyone.

7. Do you notice a mentor figure in the game? And what do you think his actual role in the game? And how the mentor impacts the characters in the game?

I like to think when Trevor is in Blaine County with his friend, he is like a wise but badass figure. He speaks like he knows everything. Even though sometime his rash decision always leads him to bigger problem.

8. Do you consider a different playstyle between characters?

Yes, they are unique and have different things to offer in the game.

9. What do you think about the special skills of each characters that is offered as part of the game's feature?

I love them. Trevor has the best special skills. It let me finish the game easier. Franklin's skill is the second best. Grand Theft Auto V is consisting of half driving and half shooting. That is why Franklin skill is so helpful during driving session in the game. The super handling effect is awesome.

10. Do you relate yourself as the characters while playing the game? every action you do in the game are mirroring yourself as a person, therefore, if you playing as the characters you mention above, how do you see yourself? Can you see the hero in you by doing things that is in the main plot of the game?

Of course, I think that this game is so immersive that it is so fun to play. I think that I am the hero of this story, because I finish the game and achieve the best ending.

DA | Occupation: Student | Date of Interview: 15 October 2018

1. How many times did you finish the game?
5 times
2. What ending route that you take and why? Do you have a favorite ending route?

I finished all three. I really think ending C is the best ending. I kind of regretting my decision to take ending A and B

3. Between the three characters (Michael, Franklin and Trevor), which characters that evoke your empathy? Why?

Michael, I get the feeling that he is trying to be a good father and husband for his family, by protecting them from harm

4. Which of the characters above that you considered as the “hero”? why?

I am not sure, because I think they are not entirely good to be called as a hero. They are protagonist, but they don't represent a heroic character. I think some of the characters are being used by the antagonist, they are not having their own initiative nor have the courage to deal with the problem themselves. Franklin especially feels like only do something because he is being told to. Like when Lamar doing business with his gang-banging and he told Franklin to do this or to do that. I really don't think that this is an aspect that hero should have.

5. What things that define that character as hero?

Even though they shared a similar trait with famous hero, which is they born as an orphan or lost their parent in their childhood. Three of GTA V protagonist also lost their parents even though not all is specified how. A bad childhood life is not necessary trait. Hero is someone who is willingly to do any good deed. Like police, firefighter, doctor. In this game, all of the protagonists is bad guy, criminal. Michael is the criminal mastermind. He is selfish guy who only think for himself. He caused a lot of problem rather

than solving one. Franklin only do as he told. Without any initiative to get things done. He seems like an errand boy in this game. Lastly, Trevor is a psychopathic killer. He is mean and crazy. Sure he looks badass, but not in a heroic way.

6. What aspects that is most important of being a hero? Mention three aspects that first come in to your mind, and mention why?

Bravery it is the so important to be brave, risk-taking, and kindness.

7. Do you notice a mentor figure in the game? And what do you think his actual role in the game? And how the mentor impacts the characters in the game? Lester is one of the major characters that affect greatly on Michael and the team, he is the mastermind and the tactician behind every heist that the team is doing. Also in the beginning of the game, Franklin also sought Michael as a father figure, and he is willing to do anything to be success like Michael

8. Do you consider a different playstyle between characters?

Yes, I think that they all serve a purpose. With three characters with three different background, the story seems rich and colorful.

9. What do you think about the special skills of each characters that is offered as part of the game's feature?

When using Franklin, I felt like I'm an expert in driving, especially with those special abilities on, I can drive fast without hitting anyone like normally people do in real world, or even in the virtual world. Unlike simulator game, where everything is having a rule and consequences, GTA V is a free-roam game, I could drive wherever I want, even not stopping at

red lights. If I was doing something like this in real life, well I could get in a lot of trouble

10. Do you relate yourself as the characters while playing the game? every action you do in the game are mirroring yourself as a person, therefore, if you playing as the characters you mention above, how do you see yourself? Can you see the hero in you by doing things that is in the main plot of the game?

Yes, I relate myself to the characters, but I'm not considering myself as a hero. For me, it is just a game where I can do anything I want without limitation, including some illegal activities that normally I wouldn't do. Normal people will be terrified if they do activities in the game to real life.