Journal BASIS
Vol. 13 No. 2 October 2026
p-ISSN: 2406-9809
e-ISSN: 2527-8835
Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Universitas Putera Batam

FROM SIMULACRA TO HYPERREALITY: REPRINTED IDENTITY IN EDWARD ASHTON'S "MICKEY7"

Ni Made Yemima Rajani[1]
Universitas Udayana, Denpasar, Indonesia
e-mail: yemimarajani79@gmail.com

Putu Lirishati Soetama[2]
Universitas Udayana, Denpasar, Indonesia
e-mail:lirishati_soetama@unud.ac.id

Abstract *This study examined how repeated human regeneration in Edward Ashton's "Mickey7" (2022) constructs simulacra and produces hyperreality. The significance of this research lies in explaining how technological reproduction transforms the criteria of personal continuity, originality, and institutional personhood rather than merely producing a convincing copy. Rather than treating hyperreality only as a virtual or media effect, the study focused on a material-technological regime in which a person is repeatedly printed, supplied with backed-up memories, and institutionally recognized as the continuation of an earlier self. A qualitative interpretive method, informed by Creswell and Poth (2018), and close textual analysis, informed by McKee (2003), were applied to thirteen narrative passages concerning mortality, regeneration, memory backup, duplicate bodies, and the Expendable system. The passages were collected through repeated close reading and purposive selection of episodes directly representing those four narrative problems; the analysis identified their embodied or informational referents, coded their relation to simulation, compared patterns across passages, and reported the findings through thematic, evidence-based interpretation. Jean Baudrillard's (1994) successive phases of the image and concept of hyperreality provided the main analytical framework, complemented by N. Katherine Hayles's (1999) account of informational identity and embodiment. The findings showed a progressive displacement of the biological referent. Pain and fear initially preserved a residual sense of embodied reality. Regeneration then masked the discontinuity created by death. Memory data subsequently became the model that authorized personal continuity; and the simultaneous existence of Mickey7 and Mickey8 finally made originality operationally irrelevant. Hyperreality emerged not because the clone merely resembled the original, but because the colony's technical and administrative systems treated reproducibility as the normal condition of personhood. The novel therefore represents identity as a self-sustaining simulation in which memory, designation, and institutional recognition become more decisive than bodily continuity.*

Keywords: *cloning; hyperreality; identity; memory; simulacra*

1. Introduction

Contemporary science fiction frequently makes abstract questions of identity concrete by turning them into technological procedures. Bodies can be copied, memories can be stored, and death can be reorganized as a problem of information management. Such narratives are especially productive for postmodern analysis because they do not merely depict uncertain realities; they construct systems in which the criteria for deciding what counts as real are themselves altered. Baudrillard's account of simulation is useful in this context because simulation concerns a shift from representation toward models that generate their own reality, rather than a simple opposition between truth and falsehood (Baudrillard, 1994).

Edward Ashton's "Mickey7" dramatizes this shift through Mickey Barnes, an Expendable assigned to a human colony on Niflheim. When an Expendable dies, the colony can produce another body and restore a recent memory backup. The procedure creates the appearance of continuity while materially replacing the body that has

died. The narrative intensifies this problem when “Mickey7” survives a mission after the colony has already printed Mickey8. Two embodied subjects then possess almost the same remembered past and each can plausibly claim to be Mickey. The conflict is therefore not only about cloning. It concerns the criteria by which identity, mortality, and authenticity remain meaningful when a person becomes technically reproducible (Ashton, 2022).

The problem resonates with posthuman discussions of information and embodiment. Hayles (1999) argues that modern cybernetic imaginaries often privilege informational pattern over material instantiation, encouraging the idea that a self can persist when its bodily substrate changes. “Mickey7” literalizes that cultural logic: memory data can be transferred while the body is replaceable. Yet the novel also preserves the body's vulnerability through pain, fear, hunger, and death. This tension between embodied finitude and informational continuity makes the text suitable for examining the movement from representation to simulation rather than assuming from the beginning that the body has already become irrelevant.

Previous applications of Baudrillard have established the value of simulacra and hyperreality for literary and cultural analysis. In BASIS, Farida (2020) uses simulacrum to examine the unstable boundary between humans and 'otherkins' in “The Lord of the Rings”, showing how literary representation can blur categories of the real and unreal. Torkamaneh, Poordakan, and Lalbakhsh (2021) apply hyperreality to Othello and The Hateful Eight to explain realities produced through deception and competing representations. Wardani (2024) identifies simulacra and hyperreality in Vivarium through the artificial environment of Yonder, while Morris (2021) demonstrates how Baudrillard's framework remains relevant to technologically reproduced signs in digital media. These studies show that hyperreality can operate through characters, environments, discourse, and media systems.

Although these studies establish the flexibility of Baudrillard's concepts, their analytical objects differ in consequential ways. Farida (2020) examines the representation of human/nonhuman boundaries, Torkamaneh et al. (2021) focus on constructed realities through deception, Wardani (2024) analyzes an artificial environment, and Morris (2021) considers technologically circulated signs. None of these comparisons, as presented here, directly explains how bodily manufacture, transferable memory, and administrative recognition jointly authorize the continuity of one named person. This is the specific research gap addressed by the present study; it is not a claim that earlier scholarship has never considered cloning or posthuman identity.

A different problem emerges in Mickey7 because the simulated object is not primarily an image, a media message, or an artificial environment. It is the continuing identity of a human subject whose body can be reproduced and whose memories function as transferable data. The distinction matters because the novel makes simulation infrastructural. Reproduction is embedded in the colony's labor system, resource management, medical technology, and administrative classification. The reproduced Mickey is not merely perceived as real; he is scheduled, fed, assigned work, registered by Command, and evaluated in terms of the colony's material economy. Hyperreality therefore becomes a social

and institutional condition as much as a perceptual one.

Baudrillard and Hayles address different but complementary dimensions of this problem. Baudrillard (1994) explains how a reproducible model can acquire the authority to define the real; Hayles (1999) explains why informational patterns can be mistaken for a person independently of the material body that instantiates them, while cautioning against erasing embodiment. Accordingly, Hayles clarifies the memory–body tension that makes Baudrillard's shift from referent to model legible in the novel.

The original thesis on which this article is based identified the construction of simulacra across Mickey's repeated deaths, memory reproduction, and the coexistence of multiple versions of the same identity. For journal publication, the present article sharpens that argument by replacing a thesis-style catalogue of examples with a mechanism-centered account of 'reprinted identity.' The term is used descriptively to refer to an identity whose continuity is authorized by printed embodiment, backed-up memory, and institutional recognition. The analytical novelty lies in showing how these three mechanisms progressively displace biological continuity as the dominant reference for personhood.

In this article, 'reprinted identity' is an analytical term, not a term attributed to Baudrillard or Hayles. It designates the socially recognized continuation of a named person through three linked operations: fabrication of a new body, restoration of stored autobiographical memory, and institutional acceptance of the new instance as that person. Its theoretical relevance lies in connecting Hayles's informational pattern/material instantiation distinction to Baudrillard's account of models that govern what counts as real.

Accordingly, this study addressed two questions: how is Mickey's identity transformed into simulacra through the Expendable system, and how does that transformation produce a hyperreal condition in the novel? The study argues that the decisive transition occurs when reproduction ceases to be treated as a substitute for a lost original and becomes the operational norm by which the colony defines the same person across multiple bodies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Simulacra and Hyperreality

Baudrillard's formulation is often summarized through four successive phases of the image: it first reflects a basic reality, then masks and distorts that reality, then masks the absence of a basic reality, and finally bears no relation to any reality and becomes its own pure simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 6). Treating these phases as analytical relations rather than a rigid historical ladder is important for literary interpretation. A single narrative may preserve an embodied referent in one scene while allowing a model to dominate identity in another. The question is therefore not simply which 'stage' a text belongs to, but what relation between sign, model, and referent a particular narrative mechanism produces.

Hyperreality names the condition in which the model no longer merely represents reality but participates in generating what counts as real.

Baudrillard (1994) describes simulation as the production of the real through models, codes, and systems of signs. In "Mickey7", this idea becomes literal when memory banks and regeneration technology determine whether a new body is accepted as the same Mickey. The referent of identity shifts from continuous embodiment toward reproducible information and administrative designation. Consequently, the boundary between original and copy becomes less important than the system's capacity to reproduce a socially functional Mickey.

For operational analysis, the four relations are indicated by (1) narration that grounds personhood in pain, mortality, and a vulnerable body; (2) speech or institutional practice that presents regeneration as uninterrupted survival despite bodily death; (3) reliance on stored memory as sufficient evidence of personal continuity despite missing or interrupted experience; and (4) duplicate embodiments or administrative designations for which no singular original determines legitimacy. These are interpretive indicators, not an assumption that the novel follows a mechanically fixed chronology.

This reading differs from treating a clone as a conventional imitation. A conventional copy remains intelligible because an original retains greater authority. Simulacral identity becomes more radical when the copy does not need that authority. Once "Mickey7" and Mickey8 coexist with the same face, substantially the same memory, and the same social history, the question of which one is 'more real' cannot be resolved by resemblance. Both are embodied, both remember, and both act. The system has therefore produced two claimants whose reality depends on the same informational model.

2.2 Information, Embodiment, and Reprinted Identity

The posthuman problem of information clarifies why memory backup is central to the novel. Hayles (1999) criticizes the fantasy that information can be separated from embodiment without loss, yet she also shows how cybernetic culture repeatedly imagines identity as pattern rather than presence. Mickey's regeneration depends on precisely this assumption. The colony treats remembered pattern as portable enough to authorize a new body as a continuation of a previous person. The body is still necessary as a material host, but it no longer has exclusive authority over personal continuity.

Hayles's contribution is therefore diagnostic rather than a second, competing theory of simulacra: her distinction between informational pattern and embodied instantiation identifies what is being transferred and what is lost when Mickey is regenerated. Baudrillard's framework then evaluates the changing authority of that transferred pattern in the colony's practical definition of identity.

The result is not a complete disappearance of embodiment. Mickey experiences pain, cold, fear, hunger, and the risk of permanent death. These experiences prevent an easy claim that he has simply become digital. Instead, the novel stages a conflict between two criteria of identity: lived bodily continuity and recoverable informational continuity. That conflict is productive for Baudrillardian analysis because simulation becomes visible in the process by which the second criterion increasingly governs the first. The body remains real, but its uniqueness is

downgraded by a model that can be instantiated again.

Jameson's (1991) account of postmodern culture as increasingly organized through reproduction and weakened depth provides a broader context for this displacement, while Merrin (2005) emphasizes that Baudrillard's simulation is not merely a matter of false images but of systems that reorganize experience. In "Mickey7", the Expendable apparatus reorganizes the experience of death itself. What was once the end of a singular life becomes a recoverable interruption, provided that the system has a usable backup and sufficient resources.

2.3 Position of the Present Study

Existing Baudrillardian studies tend to foreground mediated perception, fabricated environments, or representational instability. Farida (2020) focuses on the unstable line between human and nonhuman figures; Morris (2021) examines media circulation; Torkamaneh et al. (2021) analyze competing constructions of reality; and Wardani (2024) emphasizes an artificial residential world. These studies are relevant because they demonstrate the loss of a stable referent, but "Mickey7" adds a distinctive mechanism: the referent that becomes unstable is a human identity reproduced as both matter and memory.

The present study therefore treats the Expendable system as an integrated regime of simulation. Printing supplies replaceable bodies, memory backup supplies a portable model of personal history, and institutional practice supplies legitimacy. The argument is that hyperreality emerges when these three components work together so effectively that the original body is no longer required to settle who Mickey is.

3. Research Method

This study used a qualitative interpretive design and close textual analysis. Qualitative inquiry is appropriate when the objective is to interpret how meanings are constructed within a bounded cultural text rather than to measure their frequency (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Textual analysis was used to connect narrative details, dialogue, characterization, and institutional practices to the conceptual framework of simulacra and hyperreality (McKee, 2003). The primary source was Edward Ashton's "Mickey7" (2022), with secondary sources used to refine the theoretical and comparative discussion.

The interpretive design was selected because the research questions concern how narrative language, characterization, and institutional decisions construct identity, rather than how often a theme occurs. "Mickey7" was selected purposively because its Expendable system combines repeated bodily printing, memory restoration, and the exceptional coexistence of two versions of Mickey within a single narrative, allowing the proposed shift from biological referent to reproducible model to be examined against contrary evidence of pain and fear.

The analytical corpus consisted of thirteen passages originally identified in the thesis. They concern four recurring textual problems: (1) bodily pain and mortality; (2) regeneration and the redefinition of death; (3) memory backup as a criterion of identity; and (4) the coexistence and administration of duplicate Mickeys. The article retained the full corpus but foregrounded the most representative passages instead of reproducing all thesis-level commentary. This condensation was necessary to shift the manuscript from chapter-based description toward a journal argument organized around mechanisms.

Data collection used document-based close reading and passage extraction (McKee, 2003). The working selection criteria were direct relevance to the two research questions; explicit reference to mortality, regeneration, memory, duplication, or institutional treatment; and sufficient narrative context to interpret the scene without isolating a line from its meaning. The thirteen previously identified passages constitute the bounded analytical corpus; the article quotes or paraphrases representative evidence rather than reproducing every passage. No interview, survey, or additional empirical dataset was used.

Analysis proceeded in four steps. First, each passage was reread in its immediate narrative context to identify the referent whose meaning was at stake, such as the body, death, memory, or the name 'Mickey.' Second, the passages were coded according to the relation between representation and referent: reflection, distortion, concealment of absence, or autonomous simulation. Third, the codes were compared across the narrative to determine how informational and institutional mechanisms altered the status of the original body. Fourth, the findings were interpreted in relation to hyperreality, defined here as the point at which reproducibility becomes a more operative basis for identity than singular bodily continuity.

A passage level coding guide linked the textual evidence to the framework: bodily pain/fear → embodied referent; euphemisms of continued life after regeneration → distortion of discontinuity; backup memories authorizing the same identity → model concealing the absence of uninterrupted bodily continuity; and simultaneous Mickeys sharing a designation → autonomous simulation and institutional hyperreality. Each coded passage was checked against its immediate narrative context, then compared with passages in the other categories. Results are reported under the four mechanisms in Sections 4.1–4.4, followed by an integrative interpretation in Section 4.5, directly addressing the two research questions. These categories describe the analysis articulated in this article, not a claim of independently verified inter-coder reliability.

The analysis did not treat Baudrillard's four phases as a mechanical sequence that every passage had to satisfy. Instead, they were used as relational categories. This prevented the study from forcing every scene into a predetermined chronology and allowed apparently contradictory evidence - such as Mickey's persistent fear of death within a system of regeneration - to remain analytically significant. Interpretive claims were limited to patterns supported by the novel's narration, dialogue, and institutional practices.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Mortality as a Residual Biological Referent

The novel initially preserves a strong biological referent through Mickey's experience of pain. After falling into a crevasse, he asks, 'Pain means I'm still alive, right?' (Ashton, 2022, p. 2). The sentence is brief, but it establishes a criterion of reality grounded in the body. Pain indexes a living organism that can be injured and can die. At this moment, no backup file can substitute for the immediate fact of suffering. The body is not a representation of Mickey; it is the material condition through which he experiences himself.

A similar residue appears in Mickey's reflection that he is only thirty-

four and should not yet have to think about dying (Ashton, 2022, p. 178). Even after repeated regenerations, he also admits that he has died six times without becoming accustomed to it (p. 29). These statements complicate the colony's technological promise of continuity. The system can print another body, but it does not eliminate the subjective event of dying for the current Mickey. Fear therefore preserves a distinction between replacement and survival.

This embodied layer corresponds most closely to Baudrillard's first relation, in which representation still refers to a recognizable reality. The relevant 'sign' is not a literal image but the narrative's representation of personhood. Mickey still interprets life through ordinary bodily limits: injury hurts, death threatens, and continued consciousness cannot simply be assumed. The importance of this baseline is methodological. Without it, the later claim of hyperreality would be circular, because the study would begin by assuming that biological continuity never mattered.

The novel's critical force comes from maintaining this residual reality even as the Expendable system devalues it. Mickey's repeated return does not prove that death is unreal instead, it creates a conflict between the lived reality of one body and the system's capacity to replace it. Hyperreality emerges through the gradual institutional victory of the second criterion over the first.

4.2 Regeneration Masks Discontinuity and Reorganizes Death

The second mechanism is the narrative and institutional masking of discontinuity. Mickey recalls that after earlier deaths he could 'imagine that it would just be me both times, closing my eyes and then opening them' (Ashton, 2022, p. 36). The formulation converts a break between bodies into the image of uninterrupted waking. A newly manufactured body is experienced as if it were the same embodied subject resuming consciousness. Regeneration therefore does more than copy appearance. It supplies a story of continuity that makes replacement psychologically manageable.

Other colonists reinforce that story. When Mickey is trapped and likely to die, Red Hawk tells him that it is 'not like you're really dying' because another regeneration can be authorized (Ashton, 2022, p. 3). The statement is a clear distortion of biological reality. The current body will die, but the colony's technical vocabulary treats that death as an inconvenience within a larger process. The replacement is projected backward onto the dying subject, as though a future copy cancels the present body's extinction.

The same logic changes the ethical value of rescue. Red Hawk refuses to risk other lives because he 'can't justify that kind of risk for an Expendable' (Ashton, 2022, p. 2). The category Expendable functions as a sign that reorganizes moral perception. Mickey remains a conscious human in danger, yet the system classifies him as replaceable. Once replaceability becomes institutionally credible, the immediate body is treated as less valuable than bodies that cannot be regenerated. The simulacrum therefore has distributive consequences: it alters who is worth saving.

The Cycler extends this logic from identity to matter. Mickey explains that material placed in the corpse hole can be broken into atoms and reconstructed in a different arrangement (Ashton, 2022, p. 31). Human remains enter the same material economy as other resources. Death no longer ends in a

stable corpse that anchors the memory of a singular person; the body becomes recoverable matter for the colony. This is not merely a dystopian detail. It supports a social order in which material continuity loses symbolic privilege.

These scenes correspond to the phase in which the representation masks and distorts a basic reality. The Expendable system does not yet erase the fact of death. It changes what death is permitted to mean. The printed continuation is used to conceal the rupture between one body and another. This process is crucial because hyperreality requires more than technological capability. It requires a vocabulary and an institutional routine that make the capability appear normal.

Here the analysis extends Morris's (2021) emphasis on reproduction as a system rather than an isolated falsehood. In social media, reproduced signs can gain authority through circulation. In “Mickey7”, reproduced personhood gains authority through repeated administrative use. The result is an ontological routine: the colony behaves as if replacement were continuity, and that behavior gradually becomes more consequential than the difference it masks.

4.3 Memory Backup Becomes the Model of Personhood

The third mechanism appears when memory rather than the body becomes the principal evidence of identity. During the confrontation between “Mickey7” and Mickey8, one version observes that the other possesses 'every second of memory and experience that I have, less the six weeks since my last backup' (Ashton, 2022, p. 25). The statement does not defend authenticity through bodily origin. It treats personal history as a transferable dataset whose only meaningful difference is the timestamp of the backup.

A second exchange makes the same point more explicitly: 'I remember everything you remember' (Ashton, 2022, p. 22). The duplication of autobiographical memory destabilizes ownership of the past. Experiences that would ordinarily be unrepeatable can now authorize more than one embodied claimant. The past no longer belongs exclusively to the body that lived it; it belongs to whichever body has received the data. Memory shifts from evidence produced by a life to a model capable of producing the social identity of that life.

This shift closely resembles Hayles's (1999) account of the posthuman tendency to privilege informational pattern over material instantiation. “Mickey7” does not present a disembodied consciousness, because each version still requires a body. Nevertheless, the body becomes interchangeable while memory pattern becomes the element the system tries to preserve. A new Mickey does not need the same cells or uninterrupted metabolism. He needs sufficient informational continuity to act, remember, and be recognized as Mickey.

Baudrillard's third relation is useful here because the model begins to mask the absence of a stable original. The backup appears to preserve a continuous person, but what it actually preserves is a selected record. The six-week gap is evidence that the model is incomplete, yet the colony still treats it as a sufficient basis for identity. This reveals a shift in the standard of reality: completeness is less important than operational reproducibility.

The novel also exposes the paradox of this informational criterion. If memory authenticates identity, then two bodies with the same memory are equally authenticated. The model cannot

distinguish original from copy because it has produced both. At this point, the technological solution to mortality generates a new crisis: the very data designed to guarantee continuity makes singularity impossible to defend.

4.4 Multiplicity and the Operational Death of the Original

The crisis becomes explicit when the two Mickeys are simultaneously recognized under the same designation. In an exchange about a summons from Command, they conclude, 'We're both Mickey8 now' (Ashton, 2022, p. 50). The line is significant because the name no longer points reliably to one person. 'Mickey8' becomes an administrative sign capable of organizing more than one body. Instead of the copy receiving its legitimacy from an original, both bodies receive legitimacy from the same system of naming and memory.

This is the point at which originality becomes operationally irrelevant. “Mickey7” retains a chronological claim to being earlier, but chronology no longer supplies exclusive social authority. Both versions remember the same relationships and both expect access to the same future. Their dispute over dinner, for example, concerns which one may use shared social resources, not which one possesses a metaphysically authentic self (Ashton, 2022, p. 133). The practical problem is allocation between two valid claimants.

The rock-paper-scissors scene radicalizes that equality. Because the system cannot tolerate duplicate Expendables, one Mickey must disappear, and the two consider settling survival through a game (Ashton, 2022, pp. 32-33). A random mechanism can decide who continues precisely because neither version has an uncontested claim to greater authenticity. The narrative converts a philosophical question into an administrative problem. The 'real Mickey' is no longer discoverable; the system only needs one remaining instance.

The colony's resource calculations reinforce this hyperreal logic. Command worries about the calories and protein consumed by repeated regenerations and may refuse a future print if Mickey becomes too costly (Ashton, 2022, pp. 28-29). Continued existence is therefore evaluated through resource accounting. The question is not whether the printed Mickey is genuinely the same human being. The system has already accepted that premise. The question is whether another instantiation is economically justified.

Baudrillard's pure simulacrum is relevant because the reproduced identity now functions without needing a privileged original as its reference. The name, memories, routines, and institutional records sustain 'Mickey' across bodies. When two bodies appear, the system experiences not an ontological impossibility but a duplicate-record problem. Simulation has become the practical reality within which the colony operates.

This finding also differentiates “Mickey7” from the artificial environment discussed by Wardani (2024). In Vivarium, hyperreality traps characters within an environment that imitates and overtakes ordinary domestic space. In “Mickey7”, the simulation is attached to personhood itself. The hyperreal object walks, suffers, remembers, enters relationships, and competes for resources. The result is a more intimate collapse of the distinction between model and referent.

4.5 Hyperreality as an Institutional Condition of Reprinted Identity

Taken together, the findings show that hyperreality in “Mickey7” is produced by the interaction of embodiment, information, and institution. Printing alone would create only a physical duplicate. Memory backup alone would create only a record. Institutional recognition alone would create only a legal or administrative category. The Expendable system combines all three: it provides a body that can act, a memory archive that supplies personal history, and a social apparatus that treats the result as the continuing worker. Reprinted identity becomes stable because these components repeatedly confirm one another.

The progression can be summarized as a displacement of the dominant referent. At first, bodily pain and mortality authorize Mickey's sense of reality. Regeneration then reframes death as interruption and makes the current body replaceable. Memory backup becomes the model that carries identity across replacements. Finally, duplicate instantiation shows that the model can generate more than one equally credible Mickey, at which point originality ceases to solve practical questions of personhood. The hyperreal is therefore not an illusion hiding a recoverable truth; it is the operational world produced by the reproduction system.

This interpretation refines the thesis's earlier emphasis on the 'blurred boundary' between original and copy. Blurring suggests that two categories still exist but are difficult to distinguish. The novel eventually depicts something more radical: the categories lose explanatory usefulness. “Mickey7” and Mickey8 are distinguishable as bodies, but that distinction does not determine who owns the memories, relationships, name, or claim to continued existence. The system has transformed identity from a singular origin into a reproducible function.

Farida's (2020) BASIS study is a useful point of comparison. Farida shows how literary representation destabilizes the line between humans and otherkins, demonstrating the productive ambiguity of the real and unreal. “Mickey7” extends a related problem into technological reproduction: the unstable boundary is no longer simply categorical but infrastructural. The colony can manufacture the ambiguity on demand. This difference explains the article's contribution to the journal's literature-oriented discussion of simulacra: simulation is examined as a mechanism of reproduced human identity rather than primarily as a representational resemblance.

The finding also supports Merrin's (2005) argument that simulation should be understood as an ordering of reality, not merely as a deceptive image. The colony's treatment of Mickey shapes rescue decisions, labor value, resource allocation, and the meaning of death. Hyperreality is therefore socially consequential. The model becomes real because institutions act on it, and those actions determine whose body is saved, printed, recycled, or allowed to continue.

At the same time, Mickey's persistent fear prevents the analysis from celebrating a complete technological transcendence of mortality. The subjective cost remains attached to each embodied instance. This remainder is important because it exposes the violence required to maintain the hyperreal system. From Command's perspective, Mickey is renewable; from Mickey's perspective, each death is still experienced by a particular body. The gap between those perspectives is the novel's central critique of treating

informational continuity as equivalent to lived continuity.

Table 1. Summary of principal analytical outcomes

Analytical focus	Key textual indicator	Interpretive outcome
Mortality / embodied referent	Pain, fear, and the risk of death	Bodily experience remains a meaningful baseline.
Regeneration / distortion	Death presented as a recoverable interruption	Replacement masks discontinuity between bodies.
Memory / model	Backup data used to authenticate a continuing Mickey	Informational continuity gains authority over bodily continuity.
Multiplicity / pure simulacrum	Mickey7 and Mickey8 coexist and share an administrative designation	Originality loses practical authority; institutional recognition organizes personhood.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that simulacra in “Mickey7” emerge through a progressive displacement of the biological referent, answering the first research question through four connected mechanisms. Pain, fear, and mortality initially anchor Mickey's identity in embodied experience; regeneration then masks the discontinuity of death; backed-up memories become a reproducible model of personal history; and the coexistence of Mickey7 and Mickey8 makes a singular original operationally unnecessary. Answering the second question, hyperreality develops when bodily printing, memory archives, and the colony's administrative recognition mutually authorize a socially functional Mickey. Read through Baudrillard (1994) and Hayles (1999), the novel does not eliminate embodiment: it shows how informational continuity can be institutionally privileged even while each body still suffers and faces death. This distinction extends earlier studies of represented or mediated hyperreality by identifying the infrastructural production of personhood as the study's specific contribution.

The study is limited to one novel, a bounded corpus of thirteen selected passages, and a primarily Baudrillardian interpretive framework supported by Hayles; it does not establish that the same mechanism operates across all science-fiction narratives or resolve the philosophical problem of personal identity outside the text. A further interpretive challenge is that Mickey's persistent bodily fear resists any simple claim that the biological referent disappears completely; this tension was retained as evidence rather than treated as an exception to be removed. Future researchers could compare “Mickey7” with other cloning, mind-upload, and artificial-person narratives; test the proposed indicators on larger corpora; or combine simulation theory with biopolitics, labor studies, and competing theories of personal identity to assess when institutions privilege informational reproducibility and when embodiment retains authority.

REFERENCES

Ashton, E. (2022). “Mickey7”. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Baudrillard, J. (1994). Simulacra and simulation (S. F. Glaser, Trans.). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. (Original work published 1981)

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Eco, U. (1986). Travels in hyperreality. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Farida, H. (2020). Being human among otherkins: Identifying the simulacrum in JRR Tolkien's “The Lord of the Rings”. Jurnal BASIS, 7(1), 81-90. doi:10.33884/basisupb.v7i1.1817

Hayles, N. K. (1999). How we became posthuman: Virtual bodies in cybernetics, literature, and informatics. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Jameson, F. (1991). Postmodernism, or, the cultural logic of late capitalism. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Kellner, D. (1989). Jean Baudrillard: From Marxism to postmodernism and beyond. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

McKee, A. (2003). Textual analysis: A beginner's guide. London, England: Sage.

Merrin, W. (2005). Baudrillard and the media: A critical introduction. Cambridge, England: Polity.

Morris, J. (2021). Simulacra in the age of social media: Baudrillard as the prophet of fake news. Journal of Communication Inquiry, 45(4), 319-336. doi:10.1177/0196859920977154

Poster, M. (2001). What's the matter with the Internet? Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Torkamaneh, P., Poordakan, F., & Lalbakhsh, P. (2021). Baudrillard, hyperreality, and the evil in Othello and The Hateful Eight. CINEJ Cinema Journal, 9(1), 346-370. doi:10.5195/cinej.2021.354

Wardani, L. D. K. (2024). Simulacra and hyperreality in Lorcan Finnegan's Vivarium (2019). Litera Kultura: Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies, 11(2),75-82. doi:10.26740/lk.v11i2.58792