

## CHAPTER III

### FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, *Dragon Nest* game's features will be discussed as simulation whereas the mechanism will analogically be seen with Baudrillard's concept of *simulacrum*. *Simulacrum* is a vessel of some simulations. According to Baudrillard, Simulation is the reality space that full of reduplications and recycles of some different life's fragments. Simulation does not have a concrete reference, it is a duplication of duplications, and therefore the different between the duplication is blurred. In *Dragon nest* game the reality is built to resemble the real life, they are taking the references of Asian, European and even Middle – Eastern mythology creatures, buildings and cultures as the background to form a fantasy world. These elements are relevant to build a reality for players. The reality that mimics the nature of real life can be seen in social interaction, economic movement, a human form of beast and elf race.

#### 3.1 Dragon Nest World as Simulation

*Dragon Nest* is a fantasy world creates by using models from real world. If it is analyzed with Baudrillard's concept, *Dragon Nest* offers an endless adventure of the characters game that played. They should complete the tasks that are given in the world of *Dragon Nest*, players will get helped by Non-Player Characters (NPCs). NPCs are uncontrollable characters that implanted with artificial intelligence so that they can give clues and helps player to complete the quests. The

disguise of mythology creatures, buildings and cultures surround the world will let the players to be immersive within the game as if the world is presenting in their mind. Even though, the reality that is offered by *Dragon Nest* is never real.

The presence of *Dragon Nest* proves the notion of popular culture according to symbols that are spreading around the world, whereas the symbols are presenting the elements of the game and the existence of human as players who become one in the formation as simulacrum. It is like *Disneyland* that has been stated by Baudrillard where *Disneyland* presence is the notional fantasy of American people (1983). If *Disneyland* is the representation of American people, then *Dragon Nest* is the representation of the existence of human as the players in the game's world. In other words, *Disneyland* is an artificial reality that shows up the new reality and the consequence is the reality will lose the appeals. While in *Dragon Nest* reality tends to attract players by copying the simulation of real life that make the reality value altered.

### **3.2 Dragon Nest Game Features**

*Dragon Nest* has some features for players to play it. Some of them arena, mounts, costumes, items production and events. The detail of explanation will be described below.

#### **3.2.1 The Arena of Colloseum**

Colloseum is a zone allotted for player versus player (PVP) or even guild versus guild (GVG) enthusiast. This feature requires players to be against and kill

each other individually or in team. In this feature there are two sides, sentinel and tempest side. The sentinel is marked by the blue hairs, while tempest is marked by the red hairs. They will battle against each other until one of the side's captain is wiped out. In team's battle, there is a captain that leads the team. Captains has special marks on his heads, he wears a gladiator helmet. Captain has an important role in the team. Aside of being a leader, he is the most targeted person in team. If he is killed then the game is over. The captain role is randomly determines each round.

Players will get benefits by participating in this activity, some of them are: the ranks that give players the status, the higher the ranks the more famous they are, even their names will be shown on the leaderboard. Not only ranks, players also get medals that can be exchanged into gears that is obtainable through pvp only.



Figure 3.1: sentinel and tempest team (<http://dn.cherrycredits.com/>)

### 3.2.2 Mounts system

Mounts itself is a transportation for players to accelerate the movement of players from one place to another. As the background of dragon nest is a fantasy world, the mounts are also a fantasy creature. Mounts can only be obtained by

trading the mount medal. The common mounts can be obtained through bosses; *manticore*, *apocalypse* and *archbishop*. It is usually a horse, yet the unique mounts can only be obtained by buying item malls. The difference between a common and the unique mount is the movement speeds, moreover some of the unique mounts have an ability to fly.



Figure 3.2: dragon nest unique mount (<http://dn.cherrycredits.com/>)

### 3.2.3 Avatar Costumes

This feature provides the players to customize their avatars appearance.

Besides enhancing the appearance, costumes are giving an additional status, both the social and power. Costumes have the rarity status that influence how good the appearance and the status are. Players can get the costumes through item malls.

There are permanent and temporary costumes. However, there are costume that only available in some events like Christmas and Halloween event.



Figure 3.3: avatars' costumes (<http://dn.cherrycredits.com/>)

### 3.2.4 Items Production

This feature provides the players to produce the items, some items that players can produce are gears or armor, jewelry. These items do not require any skills because they are made through blacksmith NPCs. Blacksmith NPCs will help players to craft and enhance their equipment. Players are required to gather the material items from bosses. They have variant rarity which depends on how high the level and difficulty of the bosses are. Yet, level players need more power to complete the difficulty level.



Figure 3.4: enhancement windows and protection item malls (<http://dn.cherrycredits.com/>)



Figure 3.5: productions' skill (<http://dn.cherrycredits.com/>)

The other items that player can produce are; potions, unique enhancing requirement item, additional lives in raid nest, which need skills to produce each of

them, they are farming, fishing and cooking skills. Those items are useful to help the players to complete the difficult stages.

### 3.2.5 Event

There are two kinds of events in this game. First, the event provided by the game's company. There is usually a discount of the latest item malls or recharging cash discount. Second, the event that happen in real life, such as Christmas and Halloween events.

The game company usually gives the players gift that requires a task to do which has a limited time to complete it. These actions have a purpose to keep the players to play the game even though there is the real event in real life. For example, in Christmas event the background game's place will be decorated with a Christmas theme.



Figure 3.6: Christmas Event Party (<http://dn.cherrycredits.com/>)

### 3.2.6 Guild

Guild is a structured organization formed by players. Guild has an order of organization within it. There are guild leader, veteran, senior member, member and

recruits. Only the Leader can promote a Guild member's rank, and he is also the only person who can expel another member. Guild is a place for players to interact each other deeper. Guild will build the solidity of players' relationship among the members which affect the players in game.



Figure 3.7: rosemary guild (<http://dn.cherrycredits.com/>)

### 3.3 Simulation Mechanism Based on Baudrillard Concept

Furthermore, those features that stated above will be parts that formed a world inside the game, where the behavior and value are alterable. They made the game dynamic. Especially, the game's company provide the up to date items regularly. It can be seen in figure 3.6, Christmas event that occurs at the same time in the real life. They are following the time's event that flows in real life and presents it inside the game.

The mechanism of values will leads the players into hyper reality states. However, concept of values will be shown on table below:

| USE VALUE    | EXCHANGE VALUE | SYMBOLIC VALUE          | SIGN VALUE               |
|--------------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Multiplicity | Self Imaging   | Resemblance with "real" | "Better" world than real |

| Equipment              | Enhance     | Powerful                | Immortality   |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Guild                  | Interaction | Domination              | Famous        |
| The Arena of Colloseum | Emotion     | Killing each other      | Satisfaction  |
| Item Malls             | Real Money  | Cash Items              | Reputation    |
| Events                 | Real Time   | Resemblance with “real” | Event Rewards |

**Table 3.1: finding identification using Baurdillard’s concept**

Based on the table above, there are several step to mechanize the simulation.

*Dragon Nest*’s world offers the feature for players to reborn by giving them the freedom to express themselves. Avatars are tool to personify the self-imaging.

Every players are given 24 slots to fill with characters they want. Players can choose to be any genders or characters they want to be. These avatars are customizing from top to bottom, the hair colors and cuts, eyes’ colors and shapes, the shirts, skirts, all of them can be customized. In order to make it “alive” these avatars are equipped by emotions and gestures, to show happy face when they are happy. Furthermore, the avatars have experience, level, combat skills and job to do. They are related to each other, in order to get a high level the avatars should do tasks that are given by non-player characters. Each task will give experiences and money when it is completed. Experiences are accumulated to level up, while leveled up the avatars gain more combat skill points that can be used to get more combat skills. Those



features are the resemblance of human in real life, but it has been simplified in a game.

The equipment is one of the measurement the avatars' power, the levels of equipment affect the status and power of it, enhancing the equipment is not easy.

The material of enhancement and the fee are increasing along with the level of enhancement so as the possibility of fail and broken goes higher, but the possibility of broken equipment can be removed by using cash item. The high level enhanced equipment is more powerful than low level or non-enhanced equipment. For example, a warrior with epic sets of equipment is looking for raid party to the sea dragon nest become more preferable to be in party than a warrior with rare sets of equipment. Slowly, the warrior would gathering enough material to craft a higher rank of equipment through the nest, it makes the warrior even more powerful than before. Players will notice the power of an avatar by inspecting their equipment.

Moreover, the more powerful an avatar the chance to fail while doing a task or dueling against another player are minimized.

The guild within the game ease the players to interact further. On the top of that they are forming a relationship inside the game, since it is difficult to determine who the man behind the screen is. The players can alter their intention to others. It means when communicate to each other by chatting, they can be someone that opposes themselves, as in playing a role. Players are "helping" the other players to get attention or actively participate in guild activity in order to gain promote of rank. As in Turkle said, 'we are encouraged to think of ourselves as fluid, emergent, decentralized, multiplicitous, flexible and ever in process' (Turkle, 1985) it means

that, players become something else to fit in to the world they living in that is the game's world. However, the players are still connected to each other although they never meet each other in real life and they only met on-line because the presence of another people is made the virtual world is "real". It means the signs and representation are constructing the "real" life inside the game. According to Baudrillard, simulation is embracing the real situation in simply terms. Simulation made to give a person feels of something they cannot do in real world by giving them the values that close to reality. In other words, the guild is the simulation of society, where the domination of a person become the measurement on which level they are, the ordinary one or the leader.

The arena of colloseum is a place for players to duel against each other individually or as a group. In colloseum, players are trying to kill each other in order to gain point to win the battle. Avenge and revenge are the only things that occurs in colloseum. The players' emotion are spilled in anyway like cursing, flaming words. The winners are bullying the losers with flaming words, on the other hands, the losers are cursing the winner by false accuse them for cheating. The satisfaction of winning a battle in game are the simulation of the feeling on achieving something by hard working.

Item malls is the game feature where player can spend real money to buy virtual items. The items are variety such as enhance material, costumes, mounts, rare items box and many more. Usually, there are a limited items on a specific event like Christmas event. However, the items are put in a box that contain a common items. Players are randomly get the item when opening it, mostly they will get the

common items, so the players will need to hold on their luck. Some of player will get the limited item with less boxes or if they just unlucky they need to spend more money to buy more boxes. Players' name will be announced when they got the rare item. The players who got the items become center of attention because he or she have the exclusive limited items.

Events in the game is imitated the events in real world. The game's event is occurred in the same time with the real world events. Instead the players who are the "society" will also be celebrating the event. In exchange of that they will be missing the time to celebrate the real world event with their friends and family.

While the event is held, the environment of game will also be changed. The decoration, background music will be adjusted to fit the theme. The players will get special quests. The quests require players to do activity in limited time. The players will be rewarding the unique items that are related to the theme of event.

The simulation becomes the new place for human to live where they can find or actualize their existence. Naturally the simulations build based on accurate models of real world. According to Baudrillard leads to the presents of the real things or even form new facts. *Dragon Nest* provides a new views that different than real world, because from the very beginning the online space in *Dragon Nest* world is only a place for players to proof their existence without being afraid of convention outside the game. As the example, In the real world when people fails, they will get the consequence that they have failed in the society, but it does not apply in games' world. When players are failing, they can try it again and again, death is not even the end of everything, because they can always revive to keep on.

In facts, the simulation has influenced the life of the players. The time that they spend to play the game are longer than the time to do another activity. As for a “hardcore” player, they will spend more than 35 hours per week to play the game, they are preferring to live in the game’s world. Game’s simulation created the dependent players toward technology as the media to form a new culture, as Kellner said, “Postmodern societies were organized around technology and generated new forms of culture, experience, and subjectivities” (1989). The game’s developer is providing the free game that only need a computer, program and internet connection. While playing, the players want to fulfil their needs with the features that are offered to them. They stimulate the players to increase their power, to change the avatar’s look or even to have a mount that they buy with real money. These players have found a new place to interact and new role to play inside *Dragon Nest*. Simulations that provided inside the game become the proof that *Dragon Nest* is not a mere game for the players, because *Dragon Nest* provides the existence of players. Finally, *Dragon Nest* is a simulacra that has a role to fulfill players need and also form a consumer society.

As the main goal of the game’s company to develop the game is to maintain their consumers to keep playing the game. They will keep updating their game’s contents to fulfill the players’ desire, in order to gains more profits by selling cash items. The developer wants the player to spend their time and money for game and they do not take the responsibility on players that being consumed by the game.

Addiction of game appears when players cannot control their desire to play the game then spend more time and money. The addiction of game certainly act as the

proof that it is simulacra where the commodity become the engine. As the replacement, they can fulfill the needs that are created by consuming commodity of the game, they are; a social status, economy and social interaction that simulated in *Dragon Nest* so that they want to keep playing.

In this states, the addiction of players become a causative factor of hyper-reality. The addiction of playing the game becomes the trigger of the contingency of commodity. As stated above when players are trying to fulfill their needs, they are willing to spend their time and money on it. Monthly events is one way to attract the players to buy cash items. For example, when Christmas event the developer is updating the environment of the game's world with Christmas's decoration; snow, Christmas tree, Christmas background music, etc. it chains to another features like, Santa Claus costume, deer mounts, discounts for item protection and more. Those alone is not enough, the developer will give more prizes when players have spent certain amount of money to buy that.

The players want to buy the item with their money, the simulation has mechanized the value of real money as a tool to get reputation. The cash items have given some status. The status will become the aspect that changes economic values to symbolic value. Then, players are gaining more reputation when they are wearing exclusive cash item based on the table 3.1. Such as stated above, when Christmas event the developer is updating the game's content by giving players an offer of Christmas related item. Certainly, if players want to celebrate the Christmas too, players will fit up their avatars to celebrate the Christmas with Christmas related

item. It is not only make their avatar become more beautiful, but also it will give them additional status when they are wearing Christmas related item.

Ultimately, *Dragon Nest* is free to play game, it is free to download and play it. It means that the players can continuously play the game, while playing they are offered the features like costumes, guild, monthly events, prizes, etc. These features are the mechanism inside the game which sets the players to stay plays the game.

Afterwards, the players find their existence and become addicted to play the game, it lead the players to hyper-reality and started to consume the commodities to fulfill their need.

