

Madness As Baudrillard's Hyperreality: Of the Post-Apocalypse

Baudrillard'ın Hiperrealitesi Olarak Çılgınlık: Kıyamet Sonrasından

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Abstract

In this article, we try to follow the traces of one of the most famous post-modern concepts, namely hyperreality, within one of the most successful post-apocalyptic movies, the *Mad Max: Fury Road*. We aim to present how this concept of hyperreality is cinematically used to deepen the sense of post-apocalypse through the madness of the character named Coma-Doof Warrior. He is the one who leads Immortan Joe's War Boys into battle, emboldening them with the sounds and sights of his flame-throwing guitar. But the Doof Warrior is much more than a crazed bugler. In fact, he is portrayed in such a way that he doesn't live in the same reality as Immortan Joe and the War Boys. With this portrayal, he, as a hyperreality, helps to deepen and saturate the sense of the post-apocalypse in the *Fury Road*. As chapters of the article, first, we explain the dif-

Özet

Bu makalede, postmodern kavramların en ünlülerinden biri olan hiperrealitenin izlerini kıyamet-sonrası temalı filmlerin en başarılılarından olan *Mad Max: Fury Road* filmi içinde sürmeye çalışıyoruz. Bu hiperrealite kavramının film içinde Coma-Doof Warrior adındaki karakter aracılığıyla kıyamet-sonrası hissini derinleştirmek için nasıl kullanıldığını göstermeyi amaçlıyoruz. Bu karakter; Ölümsüz Joe'nun Savaş Çocukları'nı kovalamaca ve kavgaya doğru götürmesine alevler çıkaran gitarının sesi ve görüntüsü ile onları cesaretlendirerek rehberlik eden gitaristtir. Ancak Doof Warrior sıradan bir delirmiş savaş borazancısından daha fazlasıdır. O, Ölümsüz Joe ve Savaş Çocukları ile aynı gerçeklikte yaşamıyor şeklinde resmedilmiştir. Bu resmediliş ile o, bir hiperrealite olarak, *Fury Road*'da kıyamet sonrası hissinin derinleşmesine ve yoğunlaşmasına yardım eder. Bu makalenin bölümleri

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ferent meanings and contexts of hyperreality and we focus on its usage within postmodern thought, especially by Baudrillard. Secondly, we show the connections between perceptions of reality, hyperreality and apocalypse with a justified assumption on the impossibility of the concept of post-apocalypse. And since these connections are cinematically used in the *Fury Road* to amplify to sense of post-apocalypse through different themes, and narratives, a new possible path of understanding the societal collapse and apocalypse (both as internal and external, both on a major and minor scale) emerges. Thirdly, through this path, we manifest the close relations between characteristic features of the state of insanity and the idea of hyperreality as they function within the movie. Lastly, we make an interpretation which widens the scope of the idea of hyperreality with adding a phenomenological layer that deepens its philosophical content within postmodern thought. With this interpretation, we hope to enrich the philosophical grounds of the relevant discussions regarding the movie and create a more solid link between philosophy of film and Baudrillard.

Keywords: Critique, Phenomenology, Philosophy of Film, Postmodernism.

olarak, biz öncelikle hiperrealitenin farklı anlamlarını ve bağlamlarını açıklıyoruz ve bu kavramın özellikle Baudrillard tarafından postmodern düşünce içindeki kullanımına odaklanıyoruz. İkinci olarak; kıymet-sonrasının olanaksızlığına dair gerekçelendirilmiş bir varsayım ile gerçeklik algısı, hiperrealite ve kıyamet arasındaki bağlantıları gösteriyoruz. Bu bağlantılar *Fury Road* içinde farklı temalar ve anlatılar üzerinden kıyamet-sonrası hissini arttırmak için sinematik olarak kullanıldığından dolayı, toplumsal çöküşü ve (hem içte hem de dışarıda yaşanan, hem majör hem de minör ölçekte olan) kıyameti anlamaya dair yeni bir yol ortaya çıkar. Üçüncü olarak, bu yol ile, film içinde sahip oldukları işlevleri üzerinden hiperrealite fikri ve delilik durumunun karakteristik özellikleri arasındaki yakın ilişkileri ortaya koyuyoruz. Son olarak da, hiperrealite kavramının kapsamını, ona postmodern düşünce içinde felsefi içeriğini derinleştiren fenomenolojik bir katman ekleyerek genişleten bir yorum geliştiriyoruz. Bu yorumla birlikte, filme dair ilgili tartışmaların felsefi zeminini zenginleştirmeyi ve sinema felsefesi ile Baudrillard arasında daha elle tutulur bir bağlantı kurmayı umuyoruz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eleştiri, Fenomenoloji, Film Felsefesi, Postmodernizm.

Introduction

The end approaches, but the apocalypse is long lived.

When Derrida wrote the line above (Derrida, 1984a, s. 29), he made a remarkable connection between the idea of “the end” and “the apocalypse” (which is *also* a form of ending) with using the conjunction of “but”. He didn’t use the word “and”, but he used “but”, (and) this made all the difference. If we want to clarify the sentence, we can also read it like this: “The end is what’s always approaching, therefore the apocalypse is long lived.” Derrida helps us to problematize the sense of apocalypse not only as something finalized, fixed, stabilized and constant, but also as something mobile, moving, transforming, and continuing. It is not just something that will be waiting for us down the line in the end, but it is what whose awaiting is something that had already started so long ago. These two senses (apocalypse as the final point of all and apocalypse as the process of the final) have a problematic aspect to them when they are considered from a specific postmodern viewpoint. Through this problematic (which will be explained in a while) we follow these those senses as they can be found as thematic background elements in the movie *Mad Max: Fury Road*. In here, we will examine and read the *Fury Road* with the idea of hyperreality and try to have a better understanding how an element of insanity is used as a hyperreality in this movie to absolutize the sense of post-apocalypse.

The term hyperreality is used to define (especially in postmodern phenomenology) at least four different occasions we experience. First, it is used for the situation where our consciousness is aware of that there is more than one reality. For example, sometimes in our dreams during sleep, we are aware of the fact we are dreaming. In these lucid dreams, we have the awareness of that the reality around us is just a dream and we know that we are “in fact” just sleeping. We have the conscious awareness regarding the difference between a dream and a reality. The dream reality (where we fly, run at the speed of light etc.) is one reality and physical reality (where

we sleep in our bed) is another reality and the mind is aware of them both. This awareness brings the experience of hyperreality, like for example as it is portrayed in the *Inception* (2010) (Liu, 2016, s. 10-7).

Secondly, this concept is used for the situation where again there are two different realities and we are aware of both, but we don't act accordingly to this awareness. One can find rather funny videos of people using virtual reality headsets or glasses where they are so "caught up" in the virtual world, they forget they are standing in a regular, physical room. They damage physical walls, furniture, televisions as they try to "escape" from virtual monsters. Even though they are aware that they are "actually" in their houses with no real danger around, they still act and move their physical bodies accordingly to the spatial area of the virtual world, not to the physical one. As another example, one can remember those fuzzy moments where it's almost impossible to distinguish between human intelligence or artificial intelligence. When the AI is advanced in cyberspace, even though we know it's an AI, we still feel like what we are interacting with is a human intelligence. These are again where the experience of hyperreality happens (Barroso, 2019, s. 46-9).

Thirdly, the term hyperreality is used to describe the situation where the sense of reality is saturated, enhanced or amplified, as the word "hyper" suggests. This enhancement might be accomplished with technological tools that create augmented reality like holograms. Or it can emerge as a personal, psychological experience, like when we look at a painting which somehow awes us so much that it makes us feel what strikes us through the painting is "more real and true" than everything else around. Heidegger's famous remark "in the work of art, the truth of the being has set itself to work" points to a similar experience (Heidegger, 2002, s. 16). And when a religious believer to any of the Abrahamic religions thinks and feels that the God and angels are more "real" than humans and everyday physical objects, it can be said that some form of hyperreality is experienced (Wartenberg, 2013, s. 121).

Within the parameters of this third sense, we encounter with one of the main philosophical semantics of the word hyperreality which is given to it

by Eco. For him, hyperreality is directly related to the diametric condition where for there is to be the real, there also must be the fake. This is the indispensable process of fabricating the absolute fake in order to generate the real (Eco, 1986, s. 6-7). The hyperreal surfaces or manifests when the fake becomes so perfect that it replaces the real. This is the reversal of the roles between the real and the fake. This is the ultimate substitution where representation is so perfect and flawless that it precedes and prevails the real. It is when the representation is “more real than real, more perfect than the original” (Perry, 2002, s. 42). This approach also brings us to the fourth sense.

Fourthly, the term hyperreality means, as Baudrillard defines, “the generation by models of a real without origin or reality.” (Baudrillard, 2010, s. 1). It's the copy without the original. It is related to the situation where the difference between what's real and not real is so blurred that it no longer exists. It has something to do with the inability of the mind differentiating between a reality and a simulation of reality. It is when the mind is aware of two different realities but can't quite figure out where one ends and other one begins. In all those moments in our life when we truly feel and think, “I'm not sure if this is real or I am just dreaming”, where we couldn't differ fiction from reality, we experience a sense of hyperreality. In Baudrillard, this sense of hyperreal is directly related to his understanding of semiotics. The hyperreal is what's left when both the signifier and signified (of a sign) disappeared, when there's no more connection between a referent and a reference. It is the “fake real” which doesn't lead back to any authentic real. It is what's without origin. (Baudrillard, 2010, s. 1-13). We can also remember famous movies like Matrix (1999) and Truman Show (1998) where some forms of hyperreality can be found (Bharati T. & Ajit, 2018, s. 2-3).

While the hyperreality is also “more real than real” as it was in Eco, another detail now surfaces where since the hyperreality is more real than real, this sees that the simulation is truer than true (Smith, 2010, s. 66-8). With this detail, we start to talk about simulations as realities (in three different orders) with the thematic of semiosphere. To define in short, in semiotics, semiosphere designates the sphere where the sign processes operate

in all interconnected areas of a lifeworld. It is the domain of all signs that represent and define a culture. It is not the reality as an abstract and universal concept, but the particularized and experienced reality that someone or a society is living within with their social, financial, religious, political, dogmatic, historical, existential etc. characteristics which make them who and what they are. Now the identicalness that hyperreality creates between “reality as semiosphere” and “simulation as semiosphere” was actually already sensible within the semantics of the word “virtual” which means both “real” and “unreal”, but with this identicalness, it will be possible for us to bind a connection between the experience of reality and experience of apocalypse through adding a phenomenological layer which centres this sense of hyperreality in the *Fury Road*.

Of course, there are other definitions for hyperreality [for example, “sound hyperreality” can be defined as “sensory or audial impressions we would never really have in the other world”, meaning the sounds which can only be created through digital softwares (see Gonzales, 2018, s. 17-9)], but we will stick with how Baudrillard defines it, since it is most related with the sense of hyperreality which the Doof Warrior creates within the *Fury Road*. Because the way the Doof Warrior behaves is designed in a way that he also doesn’t have the awareness that enables him to distinguish between two different realities. And the way Baudrillard defines is also the most relevant to the philosophy of film and phenomenology of post-apocalypse where it is crucial to comprehend the relation between perception of realness and the sense of apocalypse. To explain this relevance of Baudrillard, we must first start with the relation between the concept of cinema and idea of hyperreality.

Fall of the Distinction between Real and Not-Real: Birth of Hyperreality

The general conception regarding cinema bringing a new sense of vital realism for humans is true on at least two levels. The first layer is about cinema bringing the experience of motion when compared to reality of

photography as something still or space-time fixed representation. With this regard, “cinema” will always have some aspect that is “more real” than photography, since our everyday experience of life and existence include motion more than immobility and inaction. Humans live their lives with moving around. Human existence relies on humans not stopping. As a historical-cultural heritage, humanity has shadow plays, operas, theatres, plays etc. as the sense of motion on some sense of screen, and since the late 19th century, it has cinema. With cinema, it can be said that the represented reality finally caught up with the reality of everyday life, at least motion-wise. This is the first level.

The second level has something to do with what cinema does to the sense of reality. As the “represented” reality catches up, especially in the sixties, humanity realized that cinema can be used as a tool which doesn’t only “represent” but also create a narrated reality.

The famous “L’Arrivée d’un train en gare” of 1895 showed from a low angle, close-up, a steam train so realistically approaching the early cinema audience that they would cry out or move. Cinema—and now television and other audio-video forms—has obviously gone even further than the realism of the early documentary. And one important effect is the lowering of the realism/irrealism distinction still more strongly apparent in the photograph. I shall turn to two very recent events to heighten this effect. (1) The Vietnam War of the sixties brought a kind of “television realism” into virtually every household of the West. (Ihde, 1995, s. 48-9).

So, the cinema, or to be more precise, what is shown as a “represented reality” on the screen, does not only create a representation, but it has a power of implying, ignoring, overlooking, emphasizing, overshadowing, highlighting etc. one sense of the reality over the other. With this power, reality turns into a raw pile of events which can be cut up into pieces, edited, and put back together in different sequences and then put onto the screen as the background images of any indoctrinated narrative which are set up in a way that they prove the validity and rightness of that narrative. With this power, the reality turns into the pre-determined documentary of

what is decided to be taken as real. “But what was most fascinating was the simultaneous immediate awareness by the viewers that the news was being ‘cooked’ and yet its planned effect was accepted and even celebrated. It was as if the ‘realism/irrealism’ of television was itself the new ‘real thing.’” (Ihde, 1995, s. 49).

And as the third level, this loss of the distinction between realism and irrealism is one of the causes of the generation of hyperreality. And this depiction is really close to how Baudrillard has thought of this idea. As he argues, in three levels of simulation, the first level belongs to the representation where its being the copy of a reality is obvious. This level is where the difference between reality and representation of it is clear. On the second level, this obviousness disappears and the line between reality and representation becomes unclear, foggy, obscure. And the third level (this is where the hyperreal belongs) is where the sense of reality is generated without depending on any reference to some “other” authenticity or real which was still relevant (more in the first level, less in the second) since the two-fold structure (one is reality, other is representation) was still intact in the process of generation (Lane, 2001, s. 30). With hyperreal, there is no more some kind of mimesis or representation. So, for Baudrillard, in hyperreality there is not only sense of “blurring” between first two orders, but there is also a sense of “detachment” from both (Lane, 2001, s. 86).

This sense of “detachment” is an important detail since it will be the main link or bridge that will enables us into connection between the hyperreal and madness of Coma-Doof Warrior in following pages. But now, we must first take a step back and see how the idea of apocalypse comes into play with the sense of reality in both cinematic and existential levels when they are considered with a phenomenological viewpoint.

What Can Be More Real Than an Apocalypse?

We love stories that follow a catastrophic event, such as a nuclear bomb explosion, zombies, alien invasion, epidemic, and so on. We love the narrative of it, and we love the imagination it includes. It can be any kind of

“end of the world” scenario, or it can be the “after” story of any kind of catastrophic event, such as after the nuclear bomb, zombies, alien invasion, epidemic, pestilence, cosmological disasters, and natural calamities on a larger scale. We read them, watch them, talk, and write about them.

Surely, we may not like every apocalyptic or post-apocalyptic fiction or work out there. Through and thanks to our artistic sensitivity, we may find some of them cheesy or kitsch (by the way, *Fury Road* is surely not one of them). We may find some of them badly constructed, poorly written and/or directed. We may find some of them tasteless in detail, generic, and without any authenticity. Sometimes the storytelling factor might be out of touch or not our cup of tea, and sometimes the casting and acting might be below our expectations. But for most of the time, if the work which has an apocalyptic or post-apocalyptic theme (this work can be a book, a movie, a song, a play) is truly well-produced, then it definitely sells big time, gains fans, becomes well-known or at least it earns the cinematographic respect of the viewers, audience and readers who have a deeper knowledge of the artistic genre and area that the work belongs to. The *Fury Road* is the perfect case to study humanistic interest in the idea of apocalypse.

We imagine and contemplate about possible apocalyptic scenarios and how the world would've turned out after if those apocalypses would've happened. It's almost like we incline towards and consume these narratives about our very own ending to compensate the fact that we can't imagine or fully comprehend how it all began. Just because we can't fully fathom how the universe or the evolution of vitality in whole existence (in all presence and being) began, we incline to fully familiarize ourselves with how it all (whole existence, presence and being) will end. Since we don't have any personal or collective memory regarding how the existence of universe and humanity started, maybe in this way, by imagining how it might will end, we are trying to close the gap and meet the deficit, regarding being a human. Why? Maybe by imagining how it will all end, we try to overcome ourselves as humans. We find beauty, or at least aesthetic appeal, in decay and what is ruined, flawed. Consider the awe we feel in response to

the architecture of historical ruins or long-abandoned, wrecked buildings. We grasp the beauty of the imperfection at the edge of nothingness (Yurt & Başarır, 2020, s. 680-3). In a universe where entropy always increases (where decay, vanishing and disappearing are constantly happening), the phenomenon of apocalypse is both *what's always happening all the time* (on smaller scales) and *what awaits at the end of the line* in the natural course of the things (on the biggest scale). It is both what is already inevitably happening (as a continuing decay and increasing entropy) and what eventually will happen as the ultimate end of the world, of the whole universe, of the whole reality. It is both the process of moving away from order towards absolute chaos, and the ultimate end of that process.

So, seeing beauty in the decay, which is the true state of nature and things, might be an aesthetic defence mechanism that has its roots deep in our subconsciousness. This may help us cope with the tragic realization of the process of total annihilation of everything there is (including oneself). And it can also be the appreciation of finally realizing the true and real state of all occurrences and happenings. In short, what is apocalyptic is always *more real and true* when compared to what is not apocalyptic. So, in one sense, *Fury Road* depicts something more real, because it has the theme of apocalypse. Every little detail in *Fury Road* -like the founding pillars of societal structure being reduced to the presence of milk, water, gasoline, bullet, and ownership of fertility- screams the realness of the apocalypse in the *Fury Road* to our face.

The relation between what is apocalyptic and what is real has also another layer. This concerns with the two different definitions of the word “apocalyptic”, where one is “regarding a disclosure or revelation of great knowledge,” (as revealing what is real) and other one is “catastrophic, regarding the complete destruction of the world.” Even though the relation between these two meanings, one being “a new sense of reality” and other being “a total catastrophe”, will become a problem later, the success of the “realness” of the *Fury Road* is directly related to the way it embraces this relation. It uses the sense of hyperreality (both its weak and strong forms)

to deepen the sense of realness and apocalypse within the movie. We will talk about these in following pages.

But now, it must be mentioned that another technical detail about the “realness” of the *Fury Road* surfaces when it is considered in the context of cinematic superpowers, superheroes, spells, computer-generated images, and visual effects that create non-realistic components. *Fury Road* is as “real” as anything apocalyptic can get on a screen. It depicts a post-apocalyptic world which is plausible, believable, and realistic. There is no alien invasion, no magical infinity stones, no viruses that turn people into zombies, no large astronomical objects hitting the earth and causing the extinction of humanity. Instead, *Fury Road* tells the story of a societal collapse due to war and critical resource shortages which are nothing magical or unrealistic. It shows how fragile our traditions and advanced technologies are, and how they can disappear in the blink of an eye. Those thousands of years of social, intellectual, cultural etc. progress we have managed to accomplish can be erased or undone with some event like it's nothing. The *Fury Road* tells that us going back to the primitive hunter-gatherer state is not that of a slight possibility, it can happen. The seeds that one of the Many Mothers holds in her bag symbolizes this possibility. And *Fury Road* is not a CGI-drenched movie; most of its effects are physical. This also adds another layer of realness and truth to the aura of its narrative. It portrays a dystopia which is practically breathing down our necks [we can find a philosophical examination of something similar to this in one of Derrida's works (Derrida, 1984, s. 30-1)]. Therefore, the *Fury Road* attains a sense of realness that most of the other movies with apocalyptic theme miss out.

The Impossibility of Post-Apocalypse

But, when we think about the word “post-apocalyptic”, we immediately realize that something is off. There is a big problem with the phrase “post-apocalyptic.” In the truest sense, from a phenomenological point of view, the phrase is self-contradictory. It almost feels like a paradox. In the

broader sense of the word, apocalypse might mean any kind of catastrophic event on a bigger scale. But in the strict sense of the word, there can be no “post” after the apocalypse because apocalypse is the very thing that annihilates the possibility of any “post” or “after” situations. If it’s really an apocalypse, then there can’t be any “post” or “after”. And if there is any form of “post” or “after” of some event or thing, then, that event or thing can’t be an apocalypse, by definition. This is the phenomenological impossibility of the post-apocalypse. There can’t be anything such as “post-apocalypse”, since the apocalypse is the ultimate, final end of all things (we are excluding the narrative of biblical, religious afterlife for now).

So, most “post-apocalyptic” fictions tell the story of a timeline where modern civilization has collapsed, yet there remains something left after. This is also true for *Fury Road*. When we see the political and social tyranny of Immortan Joe, we understand that this is not the *lack of* a civilization, but it’s just *another form of* it. Something catastrophic had happened to our modern civilization and this new form of society is what’s left after. When we see the elements like the political and social tyranny of Immortan Joe, Furiosa as a character of empress, the hierarchical order and ranks in Immortan Joe’s militia, task sharing, rationing, tribalism, distribution of roles and work, trade of oil and water, we understand that this is just another form of civilization. It’s just more harsh, primitive, savage, unethical, non-modern and unfair than the civilization we are accustomed to. Therefore, it is not even a “post-civilization” fiction, because there is still some type of civilization, just like there was one in ancient tribes and clans. So, one can say that *Fury Road* is not as real as a post-apocalyptic fiction can get, because it’s not a post-apocalyptic fiction, per se, to begin with.

At first sight, this might seem like it is a detail that decreases the sense of apocalypse. Because one might argue that the lack of a society would be more fitting to the sense of apocalypse than the presence of another form of it. But in fact, it is quite the opposite. Remember that apocalypse is always both *what’s happening* and *what will happen*. So, the presence of some diminished form of society actually increases the sense of apocalypse in *Fury*

Road, because it makes us wait (and hope) for the apocalypse to happen to the tyranny of Immortan Joe. And this sense of apocalypse as “what will happen” shows itself more clearly when we think of the food and water scarcity, alongside the inability to continue the human lineage and population with enough new-borns. When these things are considered, it feels like it really doesn't matter if there is some sort of primitive and savage civilization, because humanity will definitely perish. An apocalypse is still on its way to destroy the societal structures that are left within the world of *Fury Road*. So, this can be seen as a movie which shows the last one or two generations of humanity who will die out in time no matter how they act or what they do. Regarding this, *Fury Road* can be seen as a post-apocalyptic movie where the apocalypse has happened and is still happening.

Of course, one also needs to remember here the fantastic ending of *the Fury Road* where the last scene optimistically tells us that a new order with the guidance of Furiosa will be established in the Citadel and this might be the very thing that humanity needs to not just survive but also to flourish and prosper again. When Furiosa is brought up with surrounding cheers of “let them up”, it is, as the reversal of power, the point where the sense of dystopia starts to disappear, which might also function as the starting point of a utopia that will be built. When Milk Mothers open the valves and let the pouring water touch the wasteland, it is no longer a wasteland, and it is the proof that nothing will be as it was under the tyranny of Immortan Joe. It is the point that makes us imagine a new societal structure will be established, and people will thrive. Within this perspective, the *Fury Road* has one of the most amazing endings where the sense of “happily ever after” is not cliché or cheesy for a post-apocalyptic movie.

A Hyperreality Lies in the Smile of the Doof Warrior

Now the *Fury Road* has both the sense of apocalypse which “is happening” and which “will happen”. To increase the sense of apocalypse, to deepen it, one might argue that the *Fury Road* needs another sense which “has already happened and been completed”. This third sense comes with

madness of the Doof Warrior as a *hyperreality*. He plays his guitar to lead Immortan Joe's War Boys with melodies of rage and music of mayhem. With his music, he heartens them to attack with full craze. His music creates a similar emboldening and instigating effect, more or less, with the chemically and pharmacologically enhanced "courage" or "fearlessness" drugs that were used to stimulate soldiers in especially WWII create. The Doof Warrior might be, at first look, portrayed as an over-emphasized musician who is the equivalent of a bugler who represents a continuation in the lineage of the historical connection between the war and the music. But with a more detailed analysis, it becomes clear that the phenomenological depth of The Doof Warrior character (and therefore the contribution of his role to the movie) is deeper. The Doof Warrior is the depiction of apocalypse that has already finished its happening, because the Doof Warrior himself, his madness, is the very result of that apocalypse being completed. He is the interior apocalypse that "has already happened" within the human mind and psyche, which deepens the exterior apocalypse that both "is happening" and "will happen" within the world of *Fury Road*. A hyperreality, as something which saturates and "hypes" a reality (therefore the sense of apocalypse) is in play with the Doof Warrior's absolute madness. His absolute insanity functions a form of hyperreality.

Other than being a post-apocalyptic movie, *Fury Road* is also a movie of madness and insanity. It's in the title itself. The mental state of the War Boys is so radical and extreme that even the survival instinct of the human psyche is not at work or functioning in the way that we are used to. This is because their perception of reality is essentially different from ours. Just think of the kamakrazee state of the War Boys, wholeheartedly believing they are destined for Valhalla and shouting "Witness me!" There is no doubt or scepticism in their mind about the truth and realness of this. More than believing, they think Valhalla is really waiting for them. This waiting isn't a matter of possibility, it's as real as the vehicles they drive, weapons they use. For them, the narrative of afterlife is not a matter of faith. It is not a matter of probability which can or can't be validated as something abso-

lutely true and real. In the way their rationality and logic work, the Valhalla is as real as the water, blood, and milk they need to consume. Maybe even more real than those. For them, Valhalla is the reality when reality reaches its own absolute. Because the narrative of Valhalla awaiting for them is so inscribed within the minds of the War Boys, the reality of Valhalla is so what is going to be the next (and main) reality if they manage to die with honour, these two realities touch each other. The reality of Valhalla is the doubtless subsequent that is definitely going to be there, when the present reality ends. This situation creates some weak form of hyperreality within the movie. It is weak, because even though these two realities are deeply connected, like the second one is fundamentally and continuously attached to the first one, the War Boys know the line which divides these two realities. They are aware of that line is the death. The line that separates two realities is not blurred or indistinguishable, not for them, and not for us.

The strong and pure case of hyperreality (which truly deepens the sense of apocalypse) comes with the mental situation of the Doof Warrior. The most insane one. The craziest one where every line is blurred forever. The Doof Warrior is part of the militia, but he is not exactly one of the War Boys. How could he be? After all, he's blind. And according to the director-screenwriter George Miller, he is blind from birth. And when Max whacked him on the head and his mask fell off, we see that he is not partially behind, because he doesn't have eyes and it's almost like they are carved out. So, it's impossible for him to drive, shoot or attack in an effective way to be one of the War boys. One might question how a character like him could survive all this time in the world of *Fury Road*. There are different versions of his background story mainly circling around the idea that (following George Miller's account) Joe found him abandoned as a deformed toddler, took him in out of pity and then trained him to be a bugler. Some other fans say that the Doof Warrior killed his own mother and skinned her face off and turned it into a mask, because he is that crazy. The singer iOTA, the Australian actor-musician who portrays the Doof Warrior confirms that Doof Warrior's skull mask was fashioned from his dead mother's

head, although there's no remark about the character of the relationship (positive or negative) between Doof Warrior and his mother.

Whatever his origin story, he has his role within militia. He keeps the adrenaline and feeling of urgency alive with his music. He probably also uses his riffs to convey orders from Immortan Joe, since his guitar produces the only sound that can be heard by all the War Boys marching with the noise of engines revving and shouts. Some fans say that since the Doof Warrior stands really close to the booming speakers, his hearing must be really impaired and poor, because of constant exposure to his own music on high volumes. Therefore, he might be playing his guitar rather instinctively with only the feeling of the vibrations in his body from the loudspeakers, explosions, and motors guiding his music. He probably determines the mood of his tunes by feeling his environment, such as how fast the Doof Wagon is going, how deep and powerful the turmoil and rumble (which are created by other vehicles and people around) are. It seems that the Doof Warrior can sense the panic, resentment, hatred, aggression, disappointment, desire for violence, and rage in the air—and he creates the mood of his riffs in accord with what he senses. Even though he senses the crave for violence, there isn't any reference regarding Doof Warrior himself is violent or has any tendency for violence. This might be related to the impossibility that since the Doof Warrior can't construct the sense of "self" in himself (because of the apocalypse that had happened in his mind), he also can't construct the sense of "the other". Therefore, it might be impossible to claim that the Doof Warrior himself has the urge for violence (see, Lawlor, 2016, s. 87-91). He doesn't see the flames flowing from his guitar, but he feels the heat for sure. His cadence when the fleet came to a stop (because of vehicles being stuck in the mud) is on point. Most of the time, he is in front of the convoy, probably trusting the Doppler effect.

Finding Baudrillard's Simulation

The Doof Warrior is more than just an apocalyptic bugler. His reality is not the same as the reality of the War Boys. It's crazier. It's the craziest.

When Max talks to himself in the beginning of the movie, he says “it was hard to know who was more crazy”. Well, the answer is clear, it is the Doof Warrior. Consider the scene where Max separates him from his guitar. The Doof Warrior is not interested in capturing or overpowering Max. At one point, he has the positional advantage where he could easily neutralize Max from behind, but he doesn't. More than that, he literally doesn't even try to protect himself from the tussle. He just wants to have his guitar back; nothing else matters for him. He doesn't care about the chase, he doesn't care about Max, Furiosa or wives. He doesn't care about the fleet, what's been stolen, or the fight. He just wants to go back to playing his guitar. Even after Max smacks him down, he doesn't try to retaliate or punch back. Max and the reality that Max is in don't matter for the Doof Warrior. He just wants his guitar back and continue to play. And when he gets it back, a genuine smile on his face appears and this clearly shows his sense of fulfilment and existential completion. He was on the brink of dying and all he cared about was his guitar. He is “the” insane on the battlefield who doesn't even try to survive, kill, or capture. Since everyone else has some sense of survival mechanism intact even though they are eager to die and to be welcomed in Valhalla, in their psychological well-being and sense of selfhood, it can be said that the Doof Warrior is the most insane among all of them. He is the most maddened one. This is the hyperreal. This insanity, this madness makes him the pure case of hyperreal. Because with this absolute madness, he is not just living “in his own little world”, but he is well beyond the awareness that enables the difference between two realities. He acts in a way that his guitar is the only thing that is real. He is the perfect example for Baudrillard's simulation. Maybe the Doof Warrior has the sense for two different realities, but surely for everyone else around him, he is stuck in a simulation. He has no awareness regarding the things happening around him. In the eyes of the others, the Doof Warrior is the line where two different realities meet each other, even though hardly. Everyone knows that the Doof Warrior is not aware of the chase or what Furiosa had done to the Immortan Joe and in that way, he is a hyperreality.

This is not only because of his disabilities (being deaf and blind), although they play a part in this hyperreality being possible, but no, the fact that he is a hyperreality lies in his madness.

The Crazier the Doof Warrior, The More Hyperreal He is

The Door Warrior's "simulation" is different. He is not like the person with VR headset on, trying to not fall from a cliff, while he is in fact in his own living room. No, more than that, the Doof Warrior's sense of reality is not same as that of others. He lives and exists somewhere where the rest doesn't. He is, to some degree, aware of the "other" reality, because when the vehicle he is on stops, he slows down his music. But he still doesn't have the mental ability that enables him to distinguish the characteristic features of that "other" reality, because he literally can't be aware of them. His whole existence consists of only his individual horizon and his own semiosphere. Probably he is not even aware of the fact that he is "supposed to" overcome Max. It is probably impossible for him to distinguish Max from other War Boys, or any other human being for that matter. Moreover, he doesn't try to get some form of reward from Immortan Joe, while that's what all the other people are basically trying to do. Probably he doesn't even know if and what they are chasing after. He doesn't even try to enter Valhalla with an honourable death, while that's what all the other war boys basically trying to do. Probably he doesn't even know a thing such as "Valhalla". How can he know? He is blind from birth, he is probably partially deaf, and we have no information about him being able to speak and think properly. Who can communicate such information with him? He is probably the loneliest one in the whole *Fury Road* world, since it's almost impossible for others to have a conversation with him. He doesn't care about someone "witnessing" him because no one cares about him, since he can never witness someone else. He probably doesn't have an idea about what "witnessing" means. Is he even capable of being taught such abstract concepts? According to the "other" reality around him, he is absolutely contextless regarding what's going on around. While all the

other War Boys can follow what's happening around them (whether they are getting close to capturing Max, Furiosa or when Immortan Joe gets one of the wives back etc.) the Doof Warrior knows nothing. He is not aware of any substantial processes or news. He doesn't and can't know why the Doof Wagon accelerates or slows down. He just experiences it without a context and without a content. That's why his guitar and music are probably the only entities in his own reality. And his madness is his hyperreality.

This makes him the perfect case of hyperreality (as defined above) in *Fury Road*. Because, in the case of the Doof Warrior, it is now impossible to distinguish between two realities. The War Boys might think and live like the physical reality and the reality of Valhalla are deeply intertwined with each other with their lack of scepticism and doubt about the reality of Valhalla. But they are still able to distinguish one reality from another, because they know that, in order to be in Valhalla, they need to die in an honourable way in a battle. They are aware that they need to "transcend" to the Valhalla. They know that the reality of Valhalla is something to "get across" to. This shows that they are aware of the difference between the two realities. They know that there is a "line" between *this* and *that* reality. But the Doof Warrior doesn't show whether he has this awareness or not. Moreover, different from the War Boys, his second reality is not the reality of Valhalla. He is not trying to die in an honourable way. His second reality is the reality where he plays the guitar on the Doof Wagon, as it is moving. His first reality is where he only plays his guitar by himself and does nothing else. And it's almost impossible for him or for us to distinguish in which moment he lives in which reality. During the chase (again, he probably isn't even aware that there is a chase), while he is on the Doof Wagon, playing his guitar, he probably lives in the two realities at the same time, without being able to differentiate between them.

This phenomenon of hyperreality (which is actualized by the Doof Warrior character) amplifies the sense of realness (and therefore sense of apocalypse) which is crucial for the overall aura of the movie. Thanks to the close connection between the *apocalyptic* and *the real*, the Doof War-

rior, as a hyperreality which is fuelled by absolute madness is the ideal post-apocalyptic character that amplifies the sense of post-apocalypse. What “hypers” the real also necessarily “hypers” the sense of apocalypse. He is the hyperreal because his whole existence consists of almost only his individual horizon. It is nearly impossible to fully include him inside the reality where the other characters live. This is not just because he is blind, partially deaf, and probably dumb. This is mainly because he belongs to another realm of reality—a reality where his guitar and music are the only entities that *are*.

The Doof Warrior as the Model for What’s to Come and What’s Left

Moreover, by depicting a sense of hyperreality itself in the *Fury Road*, the Doof Warrior also represents another kind of apocalypse. If an apocalypse is related to the end of the process of moving away from order towards absolute chaos, then the Doof Warrior, as a hyperreality, successfully accomplishes that feeling. His mind is more chaotic than the minds of the War Boys or anyone else’s. If the *Fury Road* is the apocalypse that happens in the society and world (exterior), then the Doof Warrior is the apocalypse that happens in the human mind and psyche (interior). He is the only character who can’t possibly go any more insane, because he is already at the extreme and final limit of his own insanity. His mind can’t be more chaotic. This absolute madness and chaos in his mind, in his psyche make him the hyperreal. He lives two apocalypses at the same time while all the rest live only the exterior apocalypse of the *Fury Road* world.

For the Doof Warrior, these two realities seamlessly merge into one where it becomes impossible to pinpoint the differences between them, just like how Baudrillard defines the hyperreality. It is impossible to determine where the first apocalypse ends and where the second one starts for him. He bears these two apocalypses within himself and brings the purest sense of hyperreal to the movie. He lives in both realities. He is the product of both realities. As a hyperreality, he *is* both realities. Maybe

he is an involuntary solipsist who is stuck within his own mind where he can't even differentiate between his own reality (interior) and the reality he shares with other people (exterior). As a final remark about him, to see how essential the Doof Warrior is in creating the sense of post-apocalypse in *Fury Road*, we should emphasize one more thing. The apocalypse of *Fury Road* world is still yet to happen. It might have already begun, but as a process, its completion remains in the future. It is ongoing. By contrast, the apocalypse of the Doof Warrior has already happened and finished. Therefore, the Doof Warrior is the symbolic representation of the exterior apocalypse of the *Fury Road* (as interior apocalypse) if and when that apocalypse fulfils itself. His personal sense of apocalypse also amplifies the sense of post-apocalypse of *the Fury Road* with this way. Because the Doof Warrior is literally *what's left* after the apocalypse which has happened (in his mind, or in the mind of the person he used to be). He is the impossible glance that shows us what happens "after" the apocalypse. His madness, as a hyperreality, is the real "post-" in the post-apocalypse.

Conclusion

Through the problematic situation of the distinction between the real and the unreal (real and fake, real and artifice, real and copy, real and fiction etc.) becoming indistinct, we recognized the concept of hyperreality as it is defined by Baudrillard, and we tried to enrich the philosophical layers of this concept with a general aspect from philosophy of film and especially examining how this concept actualized in the movie *Fury Road*. With differing the idea of hyperreality with other closely related concepts (such as "distributed virtual reality", "augmented reality", "mixed reality") (Terashima, 2005, s. 13), we followed a path which led us to a phenomenological condition where there is the possibility of a link which binds the experience of reality and experience of apocalypse with a rather new manner through the *Fury Road*.

In this new manner, we encounter that the sense of hyperreality, since it is some kind of detachment, can work as one of the main essential

key points to investigate the idea of apocalypse both philosophically and phenomenologically. This essential connection between apocalypse and hyperreality is manifested here through the analyse of a movie, but it is crystal clear that this connection can be found and examined within different intellectual and cultural aspects of humanity as well. Maybe with this connection, the phenomenology of apocalypse can finally be dealt with not only under the dichotomic features such as “finalized-continuing, fixed-mobile, stabilized-moving, constant-transforming” which will always be more or less superficial, but also with its own substantiality and phenomenological depth. Since it is almost to the degree that in every apocalypse, there is always a hyperreality (as the apocalypse is where the sense of reality ends or is left behind as the occurrence of detachment) and vice versa.

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