Women are frequently used as objects to satisfy men’s pleasure and it can be seen in many aspects of life even in a form of virtual graphics especially in video game. Many games present sexy female characters as a lead character, which also function as men’s pleasure. Tomb Raider: 2013 is an iconic action-adventure game with Lara Croft as the heroine. She is also the most recognizable female character and called as the most successful human virtual game heroine. Tomb Raider: 2013 brings new concept of pleasure in the virtual world by showing strong and independent image of its character. Therefore, this research is conducted to analyze how the heterosexual male gamers tend to consider the strong-female-character on the video game as sexual object by playing the game as Lara Croft. The responses from the heterosexual male gamers were gathered through in-depth interviews. The population was based on several criteria; such as heterosexual male, adult (19-30 years old), Surabaya residents, had at least played Tomb Raider 2013 video game. After collecting the responses, the concept of Male Gaze by Laura Mulvey will be applied to examine the data. The result indicates that heterosexual male gamers tend to see Lara Croft’s body as sexual object even though she is only virtual female character from a video game.

**Keywords:** Lara Croft, Male Gaze, Sensuality, Video Game

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**Introduction**

In a modern world, the significant differences between men and women’s roles still remains, which mostly lead to male supremacy. In this case, men are the dominants and women are the subordinates. Almost in every aspect of life, such as economics, education, and politics are dominated by men which enhance male supremacy. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women has conducted a global survey on gender equality and proved that despite some improvement in the last decades, women remain inferior to men in various sectors; such as wages, senior management, politics, and media (UN Women, 2014). In the communications sector like media, about 46% of the stories reinforce gender stereotypes; while only 6% challenges it. The idea of male supremacy can be easily reflected on the media, especially video games as the reflection of human life.

Video games, as one of the popular cultures, is capable in showing a virtual human figure on screen. Gee stated that video games are similar to popular films and television programs (2007 p. 197), because the characters on video games are made carefully to create an impression of real-life characters to reflect real personalities. Cosseboom explained that Indonesian gamers spend about IDR 100,000 to 1 million rupiahs per day with an average of two until ten hours per week. Online games and console games have replaced physical games, TV viewing, and traditional games. In Southeast Asia, Indonesia is also the fastest growing market for gaming industry. Indonesian gamers spend US$16 in average on their gaming needs per year; thus, it indicates a promising growth in the future (2015).

Newzoo, an online website, which focuses in providing some great insights about gaming markets around the world, also stated that Indonesia is a second largest market in Southeast Asia after Thailand and the 24th largest market in the world with 66.0M online population and 42.8M gamers (2015). Unfortunately, the portrayal of women in video games is rather concerning, as many video games expose their bodies sensually (some are even depicted partially nude). Without considering its value (bad or good), the ideology which is depicted in the video games will be undoubtedly followed by its players, if
they consider it worth following. Furthermore, video games nowadays are not only to be played; but also, to be talked about, fantasized about, read, and turned into a role model as the formation of subjectivity and inter-subjectivity (Annetta 230). On video games, the sensual portrayal of women is often offered as a form of entertainment to attract male audiences, as they are expected to like unnaturally thin and sexy women characters (Yi Mou n Wei Peng 929) thus indeed, the portrayal of women as an erotic object is unavoidable.

Patriarchy and castration anxiety can emerge from male’s gaze (Mulvey 21). Men are the powerful figures and play their parts as the meaning maker. Moreover, the female characters are often represented in a hypersexual way with unrealistic body image and sexually inappropriate clothing (Mou and Peng 924). As a result, it portrays women as submissive and dependent to men (Cantor 1987). In the midst of male-centric video games, there is a popular video game with a female lead, entitled Tomb Raider. It is different from any other games, since the heroine - Lara Croft, is an independent and strong woman. According to the developer, one of the last two releases, Tomb Raider Reboot (2013), has sold more than 8.5 million copies worldwide and also recorded in Guinness World Record: Guinness World Records Gamer's Edition (2015). It implies that Tomb Raider 2013 remains as the best-selling game franchise with a female lead and the highest selling game in franchise history.

Lara Croft is a virtual female heroine, yet she creates such cultural implications with her sensual appearance. Therefore, the fact that she is a female heroine and a virtual graphic character have contributed to the importance of this research, particularly among the male gamers who play her character in Tomb Raider 2013 games. With her virtual body shape, Lara Croft is positioned by heterosexual male gamers as an object to be looked at during the heroine’s journey in the game. Thus, in order to study this phenomenon, the gaze theory will be an important tool to analyze the video games from male’s point of view. The male gaze theory was first initiated by Laura Mulvey (1975) who argued that women’s role to be stared at and fulfilling male’s sexual desire. She, (as cited in Storey 2009 p. 105) further asserted that the functions of women in media are; (1) to be an object for male desire; (2) to be a signifier of castration threat.

Mulvey’s Gaze theory is commonly used in various studies. In a study titled “The Male Gaze and Online sports punditry: Reactions to the Ines Sainz Controversy on the Sports Blogosphere” by Baryant, et ell, a sport reporter named Sainz is sexually objectified by several football players. Another study conducted by Hoffeswell (2011) who analyzed male gaze in video games characters as in the form of virtual graphics. He posited that female characters in DOA: X2 (2006) and O: BSS (2009) tend to be powerless even though they are active because they are in control of the player who is behind the male gaze. (52). Similar with Hoffeswell’s studies, Dietz (1998) also conducted a study to evaluate women’s roles in video games. Dietz divided four possible stereotypes of women based on characters’ appearances and behaviors; female as sex objects or prizes, female as victims, female in feminine roles, and female as heroes or action characters. Dietz then found that on video games, the traditional gender role which being portrayed through the characters is still the central theme of many games. Based on Hoffeswell and Dietz’s studies, it is concluded that many video games still carry the traditional gender role. The female characters in video games have feminine traits and provoke men to be more dominant.

Thus, the reasons above are the reasons why the writer chose to further analyze Lara Croft’s character using qualitative research method. The writer conducted several in-depth interviews with male audiences based on purposive sampling in Surabaya Gamers Community (SuGaCom). The audiences were chosen through several criteria; adult (19-30 years old), heterosexual male, Surabaya Gamers Community (SuGaCom) members who lived in Surabaya, and at least have played Tomb Raider 2013 and familiar with Lara Croft. Their responses were transcribed and analyzed using Laura Mulvey’s Male Gaze theory.

Method of The Study

This study represents current social issue which exists on media; thus, qualitative approach is an appropriate method to use. The writer applied qualitative approach to decipher the reception of heterosexual male gamers in Surabaya Gamers Community toward virtual female heroine’s sensuality, Lara Croft from Tomb Raider: 2013.
Meanwhile, in-depth interview is the method to collect the data. Marsiglio argued that by using in-depth interviews as the data collection method, the interview shall help the informant in interpreting their personal experiences (1). Purposive sampling was chosen as the sampling for the informants. The informants were chosen by the writer due to the population, its components, and the purpose of the study. These are the selection informants based on several criteria: heterosexual male gamers, adult (19-30 years old), Surabaya residents, had at least played Tomb Raider 2013 video game, and familiar with Lara Croft. The writer chose heterosexual male gamers because this research applies male gaze theory which deals with how men view a woman as a sexual object. Next, the age range is determined as in that age, people passed six stages of life in which a person experiences several processes. People in their 20s’ or so-called young adult, are undergoing a journey to lose and find themselves; thus, they participate in the society, become a member of certain circle of friends, and as a lover (Boeree, cited from Erikson 07). Finally, before conducting the interview, the writer approaches potential informants to get to know their personality better. It further aims to eliminate the awkwardness when conducting in-depth interviews as the discussed topic is related to sexuality; a topic that some people find it taboo to discuss.

The selection of Surabaya Gamers Community (SuGaCom) as the population was because the community is one of the biggest gamer community in Surabaya. Surabaya Gamers Community (SuGaCom) organizes active gamers gathering every month. The community is hosted on Facebook with almost 1100 members in total.

The steps to conduct the in-depth interview are explained further in this paragraph. First, the writer contacted the administrator of the group along with the staff member to gain information about the community. The writer expects to have various audiences’ perception toward Lara Croft’s figure through Surabaya Gamers Community (SuGaCom) members. Next, the writer filters the participants by limiting it to those who had played Tomb Raider 2013 game and are familiar with Lara Croft. It is better if the informants have already played the previous series of Tomb Raider in order to be able to compare several versions of the game.

Meanwhile, one of the most important aspects in gaming world is game console. Game console is a computer device to produce signal which is then transferred by screen or monitor and turned to a video game in graphic and audio system. More specifically, according to Wolverton, PS3 and Xbox 360 were the first game consoles which are displayed in high-definition graphics (03). Therefore, the writer focused on PlayStation users to find the informants.

The primary data from this study is Tomb Raider 2013 video game and transcripts. Meanwhile, the secondary sources are taken from journals, books, and reliable online articles from the internet. Ten (10) informants were selected and they were told that their credentials would be confidential. The following table is the participant’s personal information:

<table>
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<th>No</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
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<td>DM</td>
<td>27 y/o</td>
<td>Freelance Animator</td>
<td>29 April 2016 (16.00 WIB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>EG</td>
<td>26 y/o</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>4 May 2016 (19.00 WIB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>BT</td>
<td>24 y/o</td>
<td>College Student</td>
<td>5 May 2016 (10.00 WIB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>21 y/o</td>
<td>College Student</td>
<td>9 May 2016 (13.00 WIB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>FZ</td>
<td>23 y/o</td>
<td>College Student</td>
<td>14 May 2016 (10.00 WIB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>25 y/o</td>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>15 May 2016 (15.00 WIB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>MV</td>
<td>22 y/o</td>
<td>College Student</td>
<td>17 May 2016 (12.00 WIB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>YG</td>
<td>24 y/o</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>20 May 2016 (20.00 WIB)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The writer has been approaching the potential informants for approximately two months (from March to April 2016) and has been sharing some ideas about video games in general. The communication was done by phone calls, text messages, and internet chat clients (WhatsApp, BlackBerry, LINE, and Facebook). After establishing certain level of closeness with the informants, the writer determines the time and place for the in-depth interviews.

Moreover, the writer has prepared some scenes from Tomb Raider 2013 to be played by the participants on PC. In order to recall their experiences, the writer and the participants play some scenes from Tomb Raider 2013 video game which is already prepared by the writer. The writer already prepares some questions which will be recorded with an audio recorder. While recording, the writer takes some notes to mark some important point from the interview process as well. Though the question list has been prepared, the question can be developed along with the participants’ answers.

Furthermore, the transcripts have become the primary data for this study and shall be analyzed further. The writer also categorizes the interviews’ result in several sections according to the concept of Male Gaze by Laura Mulvey. The sections are as follows: (1) women as the objects of Male Desire; and (2) women as the signifier of castration threat. Based on the aforementioned categories, the writer shall analyze the meaning and draw the result.

**Discussion**

**The response of Participants on the Sensuality in Tomb Raider: 2013**

*Tomb Raider: 2013* is a game with one of the most famous female characters and has a great impact in the gaming world. The female heroine in the game portrays that not all heroes in the game are necessarily men. This game also provides a new concept of pleasure in the virtual world by showing a strong and independent image through the Lara Croft without losing the male gamer's attention. The sensuality and sexuality of Lara Croft are represented by her body shape, tight clothes, and the camera angle. The existence of sensuality in the video game’s characters aims to attract the audience, especially male. Gamers (especially men) who play Lara Croft in *Tomb Raider: 2013* give different opinions on the new concept of pleasure in the virtual world. Most participants agree that Lara Croft’s character is something that is important in *Tomb Raider: 2013* game.

The participants explained that *Tomb Raider: 2013* is not aimed for all ages and specially targeted for adult audiences. Most of the participants agreed that *Tomb Raider: 2013* is mostly intended for men. Sensual Lara Croft as the main character and the violence are the most common reasons selected by gamers. However, they cannot deny that this kind of video games can be played by anyone and it subsequently leads to negative effects, i.e., aggressiveness. The male gamers admit that *Tomb Raider: 2013* is more suitable for adult.

“Yeah, it’s good to see good looking characters. So, we don’t get bored and it becomes the strength of the gameplay actually. For the targets of audience, I think it’s meant for adults because there is so much violence in the game. Therefore, the content follows up, including the storyline or the characters.” (RZ/20 May 2016)

“Without considering the rating from international rating institutions, I personally think that this game is suitable for teenagers and adolescences, about 17 years old and above” (DM/29 April 2016)

The violence along with the sexiness of Lara Croft becomes the determinants for the participants to play the game. They deliberate that *Tomb Raider: 2013* specifically aims adult as their target audience and not suitable for children under 18, because they are still emotionally unstable while *Tomb Raider: 2013* incorporate a lot of violence scenes. Square Enix as the publisher itself rated this game as M for 18+
players with super violence content. Some of participants agreed that the violent content in the games also influence the choice of character. They believed Lara Croft is created to balance the player’s age. Furthermore, Lara Croft’s sensuality becomes one of the important parts in the game. One of the participant argued that Tomb Raider: 2013 does not offer something special and finds that Lara Croft’s figure is more iconic than the game.

To respond the sexiness and sensuality which is shown through the character of Lara Croft in Tomb Raider: 2013, almost all of the participants have the same reason on how they perceive it. Firstly, it is because as the main character is the only one who is treated as an object; thus, it is necessary to look attractive and sexy. It aims to make the players enduring and enjoying the game. Secondly, the sensuality aims to attract male gamers to increase the sales. They agreed that the attractiveness of the characters could sell the game more.

“Well, because it is the fact. It is true that female heroine usually needs to be attractive. The game developers don’t want to be anti-mainstreamed, so they derive from what have been formed in the society. It must be tiring to form the mindset about the characters” (DM/29 April 2016)

“Men like beautiful and attractive girls. Moreover, if the character is just like Lara Croft, who is pretty, sexy. It feels great to play her.” (EG/4 May 2016)

“If it’s not revealing, it’s not attractive. The characters in a game are usually created to be sold. So, they are created into various characteristics and forms. The target is meant for the players to like them and become their huge fans. Then they release the figures, which are quite expensive, and the fans buy it.” (MV/17 May 2016)

There are also pro and contra related to how the female appears as sexy and attractive heroine, there are two participants who argued that they do not like how the way the game portrayed Lara Croft’s figure. It is because it can disturb their concentration, if the camera angles are focused to the sensuality and sexiness of the character. One of the participant also explains that he did not like how Lara Croft continues to scream the game, because it made him losing focus and feeling aroused. According to him, rather than screaming, it sounds more like moaning; thus, it delivers ambiguous sexual message to his mind. Some camera angles are also focused on Lara Croft’s body parts and it is considered disturbing. Furthermore, he believes that although video games purely act as entertainment, but it should be educative as well.

“She is a female character of a game right. But due to her popularity, it makes people think more than that. Everything in Lara’s figure seems too much, especially her breasts. So, I’m not surprised if her physical appearance becomes her attractiveness among the gamers.” (BT/5 May 2016)

“According to Western people, sex is for sale. So, by creating a character like Lara, it’s one of the business strategies. That’s why the character of Lara is prominent in the game. But I don’t think it’s a good idea since in here, not everything is sex-oriented.” (AS/21 May 2016)

The negative opinions from the participants exist, because he feels disturbed and do not like the idea how women are used as female heroines. The participant said he would rather play video games with male characters. The reason why he had played Tomb Raider: 2013 is due to pure curiosity. According to him, a game which offers sensuality is not educative and mostly only uses women as an object. It is also the reason why he does not like game with female character, as the character exists only to be enjoyed by players, instead of offering something challenging. What makes video games good is when they do not sell the character, yet sell an interesting story. The indicator of a game’s success according to him is when the game contains an educative content which offers something inspiring for the players. Another participant agreed that Lara Croft’s sensuality is something important to the game, however, he did not completely agree.

From the analysis above, male gamers from Surabaya Gamers Community (SuGaCom) explained that Tomb Raider became a phenomenal not only because of the content, but also because of Lara Croft as the main character. Lara Croft is so well-known and iconic; thus, it provides a particular effect to gamers, as they are not merely playing games. They claimed that Lara Croft is an attractive and sexy female character. As her sensuality is displayed by her tight clothing and body shape, both make gamers
unconsciously gazing at her body. Although they said they unconsciously stare at Lara Croft’s body, they argued it is normal for a guy to stare at a female character as attractive as Lara Croft. They found it interesting when an attractive and sensual figure acts as strong as men, because it is more challenging to play her as a game character.

Lara Croft with her interesting charm provides pleasure to gamers while playing the game. The rating which was given by the publisher also shows that this game is a game intended for adults, the contents are not suitable for children. It aims to show that the visualization of sexuality through Lara Croft’s physical appearance is to attract male gamers and offer interesting and entertaining format in the gaming world.

Responses of the Participants on the Representation of Lara Croft as a Sexy Character

Almost all participants can accept the sexy heroine image, although a few of them think it is rather strange to see a sexy woman doing masculine things. According to them, Lara Croft on Tomb Raider: 2013 represents sensuality and sexiness through her body shape, big breasts, round hip, beautiful face, and tight clothing. This notion is supported by the camera angles which are focused on Lara Croft’s sexy figure. The participants considered Lara Croft as sexy character mainly because of her physical attractiveness. The fact that she is also a kind hearted female heroine added value that amaze the participants. They got some enjoyment while playing Lara Croft character who is physically attractive and mentally admiralble.

“She’s really sexy. I can’t describe it in words, but she’s amazingly sexy. Her boobs and also her bottoms (laughing)” (AS/21 May 2016)

“The character of Lara Croft itself is very interesting if we talk about Tomb Raider. From the old version, in which the image was still blurry, the character of Lara Croft has been attractive. Even in the old version, her boobs were the highlight. I don’t know why. I just like it, as if there’s a magnet and mostly focused on her boobs” (DM/29 April 2016)

“Yes, she is pretty. Her breasts are big. Her clothes are tight. She often screams. So, I think she fits for Hentai” (BT/5 May 2016)

Male participants further argue that Lara Croft is created as a perfect version of female on the screen. She is describing as beautiful, strong, and physically perfect; thus, it has become one of the reasons which attract gamers to play. Lara Croft has an attractive body which is the main thing that attracts people.

“I think Lara’s physical attributes represent a real woman’s figure, in extraordinarily perfect way, because she is a game’s heroine. She is like a combination between a kind-hearted girl with amazing body and it rare.” (EG/4 May 2016)

What interesting here is, the writer found that some of the participants accept the sensuality and sexiness in Lara Croft’s character, because she has an image as a good girl. Lara Croft is a kind and helpful protagonist heroine; such characters are being perceived favorably by the participants. It shows that male gamers are applying the bad girl and good girl concept in Tomb Raider: 2013; thus, it further indicates that sexy and kind heroine is more attractive than sexy and naughty one. They feel that such image is more suitable for Lara Croft’s image as a female heroine who has a long journey in the game.

Furthermore, two of the participants admitted they feel attracted by the hair of Lara Croft in Tomb Raider: 2013. These two participants admitted that Lara Croft’s hair looks beautiful and more real than the previous series. Apart from a better graphics and resolutions, Lara Croft’s hair style with bangs and ponytail interested them more to stare at her during the game. They felt that a girl with bangs look friendlier. Rather than those who do not have bangs. There is no “intimidation” when they play as a female heroine; rather, they feel the emotional bonding when playing with game character they like.

“In my opinion the character of Lara is attractive, maybe from her face and her hair. It’s rare to find a character with beautiful hair just like a girl in shampoo advertisement. I admit that I also think ‘weird’ during the narration, but once I start playing the game, I focus to the game and the story more. As a man, of course I like her boobs, but I like her hair more than her boobs, but it doesn’t always happen that way.” (EG/4 May 2016)
Audience Response toward Lara Croft in Tomb Raider 2013: A Study on Heterosexual Male Gamers

“The one which was reviewed by most gamers was her hairstyle in 2013, so she had bang, but her hair was still tied in ponytail. I don’t know where this statement comes from, but I agree with that belief. The statement is: a girl with bang is prettier and seems humbler towards men rather than a girl in ponytail without bang. She seems arrogant and tries hard to look smarter in man’s eyes. I don’t know it’s true or not, but the bang balances her tough character.” (DM/29 April 2016)

The writer also found some differences between the responses of participants regarding how they feel when playing Tomb Raider: 2013, particularly as Lara Croft character. Some of the participants admitted that they were satisfied with this game as it had a great story plot, great computer graphic, and the characters. Furthermore, it influences their imagination on fantasy and sexual stimulation. Even though a few of them do not really like the idea about female heroine, they admitted a character should be displayed attractive; though, they still cannot accept if female is portrayed sexually attractive in an adventure game. Furthermore, almost all of the participants liked how the developer designed Lara Croft as a beautiful figure with perfect personalities. They gained pleasure in looking at the way Lara Croft presented in video games, especially the suggestive camera angles. They also added that her breasts and bottoms view are the main focus to be stared at by the players, as those are the main focus which are presented on the screen. Besides, her low deep voice as a girl, her painful scream which sounds like moaning can also increase men's libido.

The result eventually show how the participants perceive the character and give their attention to every detail in Lara croft’s body; from her breasts, bottoms, tight clothing and tank top, and low deep voice. Lara Croft’s sensual character instigate the male participants desire more while playing the game as it offers the physical attractiveness of its character. Additionally, Lara Croft’s visual elicits more gazes toward the screen. The complete package of Lara Croft’s character provides the endurance and pleasure while playing the game.

**Woman as Object of Men’s Desire**

The discussion section divided into two according to the theory: firstly, woman as the object of men's desire; and secondly, woman as the signifier of castration threat (Mulvey cited in Storey 105). This section is important to discover how female heroine character is constructed in male gamers’ perspectives. The opinion of participants is classified according to the existing theories. The men’s objectification in the media is represented as powerful beings in recent years, while women are portrayed as the weak ones, which may bring negative effects to their lives. Various media are influential in portraying women as entertainment and erotic objects for men. Men's objectification toward women pointed out that women are treated as an object, while men are the subject or agents. This is not surprising as men might be stunned by the erotic charge set off by a woman's appearance on screen which can lead to male's audience attention (Hawley 123). The objectification of women formed women as a symbol of male sexual desire such as property, lust, or sex.

Meanwhile, Scopophilia and Narcissistic are two important things in Male Gaze study. Mulvey argued that Scopophilia can be obtained when the male audiences gain pleasure from staring at a sexually attractive object as a part of men’s natural instincts. After getting satisfaction from gazing at the subject, the narcissistic aspect could emerge and the Scopophilia could develop in which the audiences surrogate their sexual desire through sexual imagination which are directed toward the on-screen object (Mulvey 18)

**Scopophilia**

Based on the writer’s observation, almost all of the participants gain pleasure only by looking at and playing as Lara Croft character. Their reason is because Lara Croft is such a pretty figure for a video game character and matches with the beauty concept which exist in Indonesia. Lara Croft who appears with slim and tall body, light skin color, and beautiful black hair causes her character being readily accepted by gamers in Indonesia. Although Lara Croft has Western beauty standard, but globalization has made Western beauty standard being applied in many parts of the world, including Indonesia (Arimbi 225). Moreover, the tight clothing worn by Lara Croft also makes her look even more attractive. The game
settings in the forest and abandoned island are also amazed some participants as an attractive girl worn a sexy outfit in such setting is very rare.

“It is very sexy. From the clothes, she wears, body’s part, and ponytail hair, those are very seductive. She is very attractive because she wears a tank top in the middle of jungle. Her boobs are very likeable though they are smaller than in previous series. I like the new one because it is well-suited with her body and not too over-sized like in previous series” (YG/20 May 2016)

The participants believe that Lara Croft is a different character, as she is a female heroine and has a perfect body. She is also different from other heroines because she also possesses men’s traits. Tyson in her book, Critical Theory Today, discusses about traditional gender role between men and women. Women are always seen as irrational, weak, emotional, submissive, and nurturing, while men are viewed as strong, protective, decisive, and rational (83). Those men’s traits also belong to Lara Croft in the game.

She is also symbolized as a perfect figure on screen. Sigh and K Young (484-485), Grazyna Jasienska et. al (1214), and Marlowe (246) argue that some particular parts of woman's body such as buttock, hip or pelvis area, and breasts are often referred as WHR (waist-to-hip-ratio) to describe female attractiveness. Another study conducted by Singh and Luis in 1995 found that Indonesia men and women judging another person more attractive or not based from WHR. Using the standard, Lara Croft with big breasts and round hips can be categorized as attractive.

The participants tend to see that Lara Croft’s visually attractive body parts are different from theirs. This can be attributed to the “Mirror phase” by Lacan (Mulvey 17). Mirror phase is a stage where children recognize the difference between themselves as men/women in the mirror with others. Thus, children are able to recognize their own selves and misrecognize the outsider selves. Men shall see themselves as the complete version of women; thus, it creates ideal ego and superiority. The male participants indicated the mirror phase when they play as Lara Croft character. They see themselves as the complete version and view Lara Croft as an outsider who is different. Their curiosity about the outsider selves creates men’s ideal ego and superiority; thus, placing Lara Croft as an object. The male participants liked to gaze at Lara Croft’s big breasts and round bottoms, because they do not have those and those caught their attention.

Moreover, in this study, some participants also mentioned that they are not only interested in the Lara Croft physical body attractiveness, but also her ponytail and deep voice also keep their interest. The male gamers see Lara Croft as a misrecognition, which means that her body is different from their body anatomy.

“Her curves, her face, and also her sigh. If men hear that kind of sigh, automatically, they will have dirty minds. Hahaha” (RZ/20 May 2016)

“Don’t pretend that you don’t understand. Her face is beautiful, her ass and boobs make myself awake during the game. They are smaller than in previous series in terms of size, but nicer to see though.” (CH/15 May 2016)

“I think it’s normal for men if they see, sorry, her boobs and ass, and I guess a girl with a nice body is every man’s ideal. Also, Lara is mostly viewed from behind, so it’s easier to imagine stuff related with her body” (RZ/20 May 2016)

Aside of the physical attractiveness, the camera angles in Tomb Raider: 2013 makes Lara Croft as object to be viewed. It also supports as a guide to some gamers. As it is a game with a third person’s point of view where the players see the character from behind, it means that the male gamers tend to see Lara Croft’s side bottoms. The participants considered it is normal to look at her bottoms while playing the game, as it is presented in front of their eyes. According to them, it is men’s natural instinct to gaze and look at a physically attractive woman. Peplau (37) stated that compare to women, men are more aggressive and their sexual desire is higher. Hence, it easier to sexually attract male by making an attractive character and they shall respond the erotic image quickly.

“For entertainment, fan service is needed. It’s important to portray Lara as a sexy girl in order to please her fans even though it’s only through the camera shoots (MV/17 May 2016)
Tomb Raider 2013 is a game with a third person point of view where the players see the character from behind which means the male gamers tend to see Lara Croft's side bottom. The participants considered it is as normal to look at her bottom when playing the game as it was presented in front of their eyes. According to them, it is men's natural instinct to gaze and look at the woman who physically attractive. The male gamers gazed to the figure of Lara Croft who has feminine attractiveness as a game character. Peplau (37) comparing with women, men are more aggressive and their sexual desire is also higher. Hence, it will be easier to sexually attract male by making an attractive character such as Lara Croft and they will respond the erotic image quickly.

According to the of participants, it does not matter if they see Lara Croft figure as an object who sexually attractive as it is their nature that lead to their ego. The media like video games exists as a tool to deliver the idea. Based on the traditional gender roles, men have to be more aggressive than women; women on the other hand should be more submissive and passive comparing to men (Tyson 85). Men can talk about sex freely as they rarely experience sexually repressed by society and culture (Baumeister 133). The male gamers play Lara Croft as the third person point of view through the screen, and how the camera using medium shoot in eye level to Lara Croft body part in some narrative can provide an interaction between the performance (Lara Croft) and the male gamers (audiences).

The term “fan service” is often used in manga or anime; however, it has also been used in many mediums like movie or video games. “Fan service” is a term to give temporary amusement to entertain the audiences. The contents of a “fan service” are usually related to nudity and sex, because media think how to give service to fans by giving them what they want to please them (Tucker, 76). One of the easiest ways to please the audience in video games is through an attractive character with a perfect camera angle that focuses on a character’s body, presented in Tomb Raider: 2013. The fan service happens during Lara Croft’s climbing scene in the game, because the camera angle mostly focused on her body.

Moreover, according to the of participants, it does not matter if they see Lara Croft figure as a sexually attractive object, as it is their nature which is driven by their ego. The media like video games exists as a tool to deliver the idea. Based on the traditional gender roles, men have to be more aggressive than women; women on the other hand should be more submissive and passive (Tyson 85). Men can talk about sex freely as they rarely experience being sexually repressed by society and culture (Baumeister 133). They see that there is no nothing wrong to look Lara Croft as an object, as it is men’s nature.

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In the gaze theory by LauraMulvey, the movie satisfies the spectators by letting them exploring something on the screen as an object. The camera angle which focuses on Lara Croft offers satisfaction to the spectators through the screen. The male gamers play Lara Croft as the third person’s point of view through the screen and the camera angels provides an interaction between the performance (Lara Croft) and the male gamers (audiences).

“I have to admit that. Although we focus playing the game, her sensational boobs are attracting us to look at them. They created it that way, so I assume that ‘size matters’. Though the previous one looks unreal” (RZ/20 May 2016)

“Sexual fantasy cannot be avoided when playing such games. That was the reason why I played that game only after break-fasting or before sahur (late supper). Coincidentally, I found and played that game in Ramadhan 2013” (YG/20 May 2016)

Thus, the boundaries between the audiences and Lara Croft as the object seem strict. The participants can feel the impact while playing Lara Croft’s character so that they think they need to control themselves. In the terms of intimacy, some of the participants confessed that they can feel the closeness and realism with the character through the Lara Croft’s portrayal in the game. The camera angle which focuses on her breast can stimulate the participants’ pleasure in looking at those. The male gamer participants are also aware that such camera angles are meant for fan service.

Additionally, Lara Croft becomes their passive sexual object while playing her character in the game. They see that there is nothing wrong to see Lara Croft as an object, because it is also men’s nature to look at an attractive figure. Based on Mulvey's gaze theory, Lara Croft’s figure is proved to be the object of male desire, even though she is only a fictional and a graphic character. The character produces
Scopophilia, a pleasure in staring at the characters while playing the game. The internal factors which creates the pleasure in staring at a certain object is the sexual instinct of male; while the external factors come from the video game itself especially through Lara Croft's sexy figure and the camera angles.

**Narcissistic**

Besides Scopophilia, the writer found a tendency of narcissistic aspect to some participant. Apart from Scopophilia, the writer found a tendency of narcissistic aspect in some participant. Out of 10 participants, there are 3 participants who experienced a narcissistic aspect while playing the game. Narcissistic occurs when the spectator identifies the object on screen as the image of their interest (Mulvey 17-18). *Tomb Raider: 2013* only has Lara Croft as the main heroine and does not have a male protagonist as the supporting character. In the term of video games, the player is given the freedom to control the characters in the game; thus, being the only controller of Lara Croft in her heroine journey provides an emotional connection to the character. In short, Lara Croft will not only be a source of pleasure, but also used as an object for further development of Scopophilia: Narcissistic.

“Yes, I feel like protecting. If the character is pretty like Lara, it feels like having an adventure while dating.” (DM/29 April 2016)

To connect how their experiences during the game playing could be related to the narcissistic aspect, the participants explained that stimulation they get while playing the game did not happen immediately, but progressively. It happens when the men are aroused due to some erotic fantasies; it further leads to erection while playing the game. The writer discovered an interesting fact that the three of the participants who experienced narcissistic aspect played the previous series of Tomb Raiders as well.

It was also found out that the participants who suffer from narcissistic aspects position Lara croft as their ideal girl: beautiful, strong, and tomboyish. Additionally, the definition of being sexy and sensual is completely different from one participant to another. Some participants with narcissistic aspect explained that they usually like a tomboyish girl like Lara Croft. In short, Lara Croft becomes their ideal figure of woman.

“It’s now similar, and she looks like a real girl. I also like the tomboyish girl like Lara” (DM/29 April 2016)

“The definition of sexy is very broad. Sexy woman can be seen from many perspectives and various contexts, so it can be judged differently according to each individual. In Lara’s case, the sexiness comes from the clothes she wears. It is sexy but not like naughty or bad girls. She’s different” (CH/15 May 2016)

“I get the feeling of a real woman when I see her. She is like the representative of ideal figure that I’m looking for” (YG/20 May 2016)

The narcissistic aspect can be seen through the moment when the male gamers transfer their privilege in reality, put them to an on-screen character on the screen, and even fantasied about it. According to Mulvey, the movie on screen possesses a controlling attraction to make their audiences losing their ego and forgetting the boundary between the screen and the reality (836). Thus, such effects also occur when the male gamers view Lara Croft as their ideal figure and can even be aroused by her character. They are experiencing temporary loss of themselves and forgetting the world by viewing Lara Croft as their girl on screen.

Apart from the narcissistic aspect which is suffered by some participants, the rest admitted they are satisfied by her character, though they did not fantasize anything. According to them, Lara Croft can still be categorized as a normal object, as the games do not merely offer fan service. *Tomb Raider: 2013* still offers an exciting adventure game which makes them concentrating more on the story. Additionally, some of the participants who did not reach the narcissistic stage argued that Lara Croft is not their ideal woman. They admitted that they could experience the sexual stimuli if the object fits their criteria; while Lara Croft is not. They have a different notion of sexiness and expect natural sexiness from women; some of them prefer the innocent ones.

“I like her (Lara Croft), but I like a girl who behaves like a girl more” (EG/4 May 2016)
Looking at some of the participants’ responses in the context of male gamers in Surabaya, most of them can accept how sexy female characters are displayed as a heroine in a video game. Although they gain pleasure by looking at the heroines, they still demand the traditional values about women; so that they can fantasize it. As a conclusion, according to the participants, sexual stimulation can only occur if the object fits with their ideal type.

Additionally, media like video games is often portrayed female characters with unrealistic body image, e.g. big breasts, round hips, tight clothing, etc. This study proves that although men gain pleasure in looking at the sexy women characters, they prefer the more realistic character. It indicates that even if the concept of sensuality on the media was only made to attract men’s attention, male gamers still prefer the more realistic body figure for female characters, because it feels more real and close in their environment.

3.4 Woman as the Signifier of Castration Threat

Although Tomb Raider: 2013 has a strong female heroine character, but the game is still applying the patriarchal concept. Lara Croft as the main character is always represented as the “signifier of male other”. Lara Croft is only a virtual character, so that she cannot act as the meaning maker; thus, she acts the meaning bearer of the developer. Lara Croft character is shown as a sexy, attractive and a perfect heroine character. She is physically and mentally perfect as he was made so to attract male gamers. Some participant claimed that they were interested in playing the game because of her.

![Figure 1. Lara Croft in Tomb Raider: 2013](image)

The main target audiences of the game are male. Therefore, viewing the establishment of Lara Croft as an attractive character, as well as the body focused camera angles, it proves that this game contains phallocentrism. Phallocentrism is a state where men have full power to see what they wanted to see. Thus, resulted in imbalance construction between male gamers and female characters in the game.

To correlate the phallocentrism and the portrayal of female characters by the media, there are three different stages which occur in the movie between the meaning maker and the meaning bearer. Firstly, it is related on how the camera records the process of making; secondly, it is related on how the audience views the final product; finally, it is related on how the characters behave on the screen (Mulvey 843). Lara Croft, who lives in the middle of phallocentrism is experiencing all of the stages of castration in Tomb Raider: 2013.

As a fictional character, she is a product and passed the making process through the eyes of the male director. Further, the male gamers as the audiences view her as the final product to be looked at. Lastly, the audiences see how Lara Croft is being treated on screen with the male characters. Those factors indeed indicate Lara Croft as the subordinates’ character through male’s point of view. Consequently, it further proves the existence of phallocentrism as woman becomes the object, while man is the subject.

Lara Croft, as a fictional character, is created by a group of people with different ideologies. Hence, it is necessary to see how Lara Croft was created by the game developers. According to the official website
of Tomb Raider, *Tomb Raider: 2013* is directed by Noah Hughes and most members of the producer team are men. It indicates that Lara Croft was created from the male’s point of view which then leads to her role as a castration threat. By exposing Lara Croft’s physical attractiveness, it only strengthens the idea that the developer tends to make Lara as a castration threat. The term means that women try to make themselves look good in order to cover their shortcomings. Although the camera angles seem to attract men’s attention, Lara Croft is created by the developer as a passive object. There is a sexual imbalance between Lara Croft’s figure and the male gamers, as it is object (passive) and subject (active).

“She is a female character of a game right. But due to her popularity, it makes people think more than that. Everything in Lara’s figure seems too much, especially her breasts. So I’m not surprised if her physical appearance becomes her attractiveness among the gamers. It was intended that way by the developer” (BT/5 May 2016)

The developer has successfully created a sexy female heroine. The appearance of Young Lara Croft in the game draws the attention of the gamers. Meanwhile Mulvey divided male unconsciousness into two possibilities which enable them to escape from castration anxiety; (A) through punishment and (b) substitute woman with a fetish object (843). In this case, Lara Croft as a virtual character is represented by the developer as a fetish object; it further means that she is displayed as passive and powerless through male gamers’ point of view.

Based on the theory and participants’ response, they show that the male gamers in SuGaCom positioned Lara Croft as their sexual object and the signifier of castration threat. Additionally, the developer also created her as the object to provoke male desire. Exposing Lara Croft’s sensuality is the way to over her shortcomings and make her look good. Lara Croft’s position as the passive object denotes her as a ‘phallus worshipper’; it means that the character exists through men’s point of view. Although *Tomb Raider: 2013* has Lara Croft as the female heroine, this game still constructs woman as the fetish object, and give the power authority to the male gamers.

**Conclusion**

Based on the analysis, the writer concludes that there is a new concept of pleasure in Tomb Raider: 2013 video game through Lara Croft character. The audience responses indicated that almost all male gamers receive sensuality offered on Lara Croft. The reason they can receive sexuality of Lara Croft is because they liked her physical attractiveness which is located on her breast, round hip, buttock, tight clothing, attractive hairstyle, and deep low voice. It is also supported with the camera angle that directs players to look to her body. It can be concluded that nearly all body parts from Lara Croft get attention from male gamers as male’s objectification. The participants get a sexual satisfaction when they look at Lara Croft on screen (Scopophilia) as according to them, Lara Croft is such a perfect character and it is normal if some male gamers enjoy a sexy female character in the game. It also makes the game feel more pleasant if they see a female character that is physically attractive.

Further, there is a difference in responses to the participants that only the casual gamers with participant who is fans of Tomb Raider franchise. Most of the casual gamers who only play one series in Tomb Raider: 2013 only stop at the Scopophilia stage, where they get satisfaction just from looking. These participants did not reach the narcissistic stage because they could not connect themselves with the Lara Croft as she is not their ideal type of woman and prefer the innocent ordinary girl more rather than a heroine. It also has been shown that most of the participant can receive Lara Croft as a sexy female heroine, but they are still negotiating as the type of independent girl like Lara Croft is not their privilege. The male participants’ responses indicated that most of them still like an ordinary girl as their partner and as an object to fantasize. Although Lara Croft displayed sexy, it does not make them feel aroused and as they also have criteria. On the other side, a Tomb Raider diehard gamers tend to reach the Narcissistic stage and can fantasize with Lara Croft character. These participants liked the type of women like Lara Croft, who is independent and beautiful. However, related to the existence of two types of participants, they simultaneously agree that they prefer Lara Croft in Tomb Raider: 2013 more rather than Lara Croft in previous series as in this series, Lara Croft’s physically look more natural.
Connecting the participants’ response with male gaze theory by Laura Mulvey, Lara Croft character indicated as signifier of castration threat. The developer positioned Lara Croft as the object of male’s desire through her sensual body and tight clothing in order to attract male gamers’ attention. It is then created a relation where the character of Lara Croft becomes the passive object, while the male gamers become an active subject. The writer can also conclude that a female game character which is basically just a computer graphic can lead to the male gaze. Video games developers have the freedom to create such characters and it does not require the real women figure to make male audiences interested. Consequently, male gamers, who have a large population in Indonesia, will find a source of pleasure even in the form of computer graphic through the female character.

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