



Hyper-reality in Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*

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Abstract

Heaven and hell are good places for creating the plot of a story because no one has ever seen these lands. They are hyper-real places because we imagine them like what we see on earth and can never imagine them as they are. Their reality is based on what we read about them in the holy books. By using Jean Baudrillard's ideas of "Hyper-reality" and "Simulacra and Simulation," the present study attempts to consider the concept of hyper-reality in Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones* (2002) in which the main character starts her life on heaven. She tries to indicate heaven as a human creation a place like earth. The writer depicts heaven as an earthly landscape and makes the readers believe that whatever they read about heaven is really true and this fact puts more emphasis on the hyper-reality of heaven in the novel. Through the story heaven is simulated as a copy of a real religious one. Thus, the heaven of the novel is a hyper-reality because as it is a copy of religious one but it has no origin. We mean the things and places as amusement parks, different American cars, magic ice creams and newspapers have no place in the real religious heaven that we read about in different holy books such as The Bible and The Holy Quran.

Keywords: Reality, Hyper-reality, Simulacra and Simulation, Heaven

1. Introduction

This article aims at the clarification of the reality of heaven, simulacra and simulation of heaven as well as the concept of Disneyland and God in Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*. In which heaven is shown as a representation of American culture and society, the landscape of it is related to the imagination of each characters and every person's heaven is different from others. Characters reach to all their wishes in a moment so heaven acted as an ideal world for them. This emphasis on the influence of modern life on character's mind and this reason made them to imagine it as an earthly place.

Alice Sebold (b. 1963) is an American writer who has gained fame with her first novel *Lucky* (2002), especially due to her focus on the dark subjects of rape, child murder and the dissolution of families. with *The Lovely Bones*, Sebold attempted to manage the impossible. According to Daniel Mendelsohn, "Ms. Sebold [has] the ability to capture both the ordinary and extraordinary, the banal and the horrific, in lyrical, unsentimental prose" (16 January, 2003). *The Lovely Bones* has drawn the attention of critics who dealt with the narrative techniques and the comparison between literary and religious heaven, yet none of them has offered a Baudrillardian reading of it.

The heaven that Sebold has described is completely different from the typical heaven that religious doctrines express. From the beginning, there is no religious outlook toward heaven. In fact, we never see a clear presence of God in her novel. Dying and death have different meanings for the characters of the novel. Susie as the main character does not believe in her death and even heaven is strange to her. While she was alive she does not know anything about heaven, thus the heaven that is imagined is decorated with modern American life and in fact it shows the influence of American culture on the writer's mind. Heaven for Susie is a place in which she can reach to all the things that she wants. Sometimes the border line between real world of earth and hyper-real world of heaven being blurred and heaven becomes like earth as Susie says: "I thought, *on Earth as it is in heaven*" (Sebold 2002 123).

The present study aims to explore Baudrillard's key thoughts in *The Lovely Bones* in a close reading according to what is known as 'critical thinking'. This article attempts to consider the concept of hyper-reality in *The Lovely Bones* by discussing the reality of religious heaven and the hyper-reality of heaven in the novel.

2. Baudrillard's Hyper-reality

Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007), the French sociologist and philosopher, is well-known for his analysis of metaphysics, post-structuralism and postmodernism. Of his important theories are "Hyper-reality" and "Simulacra and Simulation". In order to have a good understanding about hyper-reality, first we should know what reality is? Reality is often contrasted with what is imaginary in the mind, what is false and what is fictional but Baudrillard believes that real is disappeared. By real he means the appearance which signifies a kind of disappearance that the real vanishing; in this sense, disappearance must be consider as another form of appearance (qtd. in Smith 2010 30). Now, what is the disappearance of the real? According to *The International Journal of Baudrillard's Studies* (January, 2011) Baudrillard

notes that the real world, in the modern age, on the basis of the invention of the telescope by Galileo and his discovery of modern mathematical calculation becomes definitely alienated. Indeed, his is the moment when human beings while setting about analyzing and transforming the world take their leave of it, while at the same time lending it forces of reality and we can say that the real world begins, paradoxically, to disappear at the very same time as it begins to exist it (January, 2011).

Hyper-reality is a post-modern philosophy which is defined by Baudrillard as the current social condition; which is the act of creating something fake that is perceived as being real (1994 58). This theory says that politics, nationalism and religion have created an environment in which we live but with an illusion (94). Based on John Tiffin and Nobuyoshi Terashima, hyper-reality is a condition in which what is real and what is fiction are aimlessly mixed together so that there is no clear distinction between where one ends and the other begins. Individuals may find themselves for different reasons more in true or involved with the hyper-real world and less with physical real world (2001 8). In fact the concept of hyper-reality brings three of Baurillard's particulars together, according to Mike Gane:

The first one is the situation that signs already announced: hyper-reality, the stage in which the real take in the image. The second one is the way in which modern cultures folded, "in which they wipe out age-old boundaries or transgress boundaries, the more real than real". The third is the development of a popular culture which breaks down the differences between the real and the artifice. Baudrillard finally reaches to this point that "the hyper-real can no longer be the mirror of reality" (2010 95-96).

Baudrillard believes in hyper-reality "as the generation by models of a real without origin or reality" (1994 6). He notes hyper-reality goes further than astonishing the symbol which represents the real; it wants to create a symbol that represents something which does not actually exist (1994 3). Also, in particular he suggests that "The world we live in has been replaced by a copy world, where we seek simulated stimuli and nothing more" (3). Mark Sayer believes, as we live in the world of reality, we do not live in the hyper-real world because it does not really exist and this is the problem. This world is disconnected from the sphere of human experience. We wish our lives were as exiting and attractive as the kind of lives guaranteed to us by the hyper-real world. But, we are weeded to the world of reality; essentially we know that we are trapped in the world of ordinary (2008 73).

We believe in the hyper-real world as something that can save us from the apathy of everyday existence. "If we can just buy that product, get that luxury car, go on that overseas trip-then we will escape reality, enter to the hyper-real world, and find meaning" (Sayer 2008 73), but all these things will one day end and we will always return to reality and it shows that there is an overlap between reality and hyper-reality (2008 74). According to Tiffin and Terashima talk, "Hyper world" is a seamless intermixture of a (Physical) real world and a virtual world. A real world consist of real and natural features for example real building and real objects but in virtual world we have such things but in cods of computer or in three dimensional way or like photos and videos although they are like real models but they are a shot by camera and are not real" (2001 9). Thus, hyper-real world is an ideal world for humans. In such a world, people can escape all real things that they create for themselves. In this world, they can reach all their wishes in a moment because hyper-real world is based on the imagination.

Baudrillard explains simulacrum (plural: simulacra) in semiotic terms as representational doubles or signs of real entities (1994 4). Simulacra are representational images that deceive us (qtd. in Baudrillard 1994). Simulation for Baudrillard brings us into a circular world in which the sign is not exchanged for meaning, but merely for another sign (1994 10), as a result simulation is the active process of replacement of the real (qtd. in Baudrillard 1994). The procreation of simulacra leads to what Baudrillard saw as a new era of simulation in which all referents have been abolished, and the distinction between the real and its representational has collapsed.

Simulation is a four steps process of replacing reality: 1. Faithful: the image reflects a profound reality. 2. Perversion: the image masks a profound reality. 3. Pretence: the image masks the absence of a profound reality. 4. Pure: the image has no relation to any reality, so it is pure simulacrum (Lechte 2010 200). Baudrillard believes that in this new era, the precession of simulacra becomes omnipresent, completely overtaking the domain of medicine, the military, religion, politics, cinema and television to name a few in all these examples of their totalizing control, simulacra figure as murderers of the real (1994 5).

Disneyland or other magic and fantasy world can be considered as an example of simulacra in the theory of hyper-reality. Baudrillard refers to an imaginary world and he argues that this world of Disneyland magnetizes people inside and has been presented as imaginary to make people believe that all its neighboring are "real". He believes that the Los Angeles area is not real, thus it is hyper-real. Disneyland is a set of device, which tries to bring imagination and fiction to what is called "real". This concerns the American values and way of life in a sense and "concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of sawing the reality principle" (1994 166-184).

Considering a false icon for God is another example of simulacra, Richard Lane states that, one of Baudrillard's examples is related to a religious image and the danger of "monotheistic", God being dispersed via a multitude of icons or simulacra. In such a development, the true God would be replaced by a series of simulated gods (2001 88-89). Baudrillard argues that it cannot be quite so simple, because the icons would then be deceived and it means that they have not the power of one God, so they being in relation with the absent God therefore it proves the existence of God and His ultimate power (2001 88-89). Baudrillard believes that in the faculty of simulacra we have effacing of God from the conscious of man and the destructive truth that they allow to appear that deep down God never exist. The only thing that is existed is the simulacrum and even the God himself become simulacrum (1994 5).

3. Hyper-reality in *The Lovely Bones*

3.1 Reality and Hyper-reality of Heaven

Through different parts of *The Lovely Bones* we see different kinds of heavens that are not similar to the real and religious one. We think religious heaven should be considered as a real one because most of the holy books give a clear definition of it but the heaven that we see in this work is not real. As we see in the holy books, God is a Supreme Being and creator of heaven but in this novel there is no sign of God and it portrays humans as the gods of their own heaven. This is one of the differences between description of paradise in the holy books and literary heaven of this novel. Another difference is related to the appearance of heaven in the holy book in which we see heaven as a place that contains large gates built by gold and its street made of gold (Larkin 2012 22:1), but in this novel we see none of these things; but instead, we see apartments, parks and American cars.

From the beginning of the novel, heaven is a representation of American culture and is a place Susie refers to as a land, which closely resembles a suburban high school, with playing field and kids shooting hoops and a place for fulfillment of her wishes. She said: "When I first entered heaven, I thought everyone saw what I saw. That in everyone's heaven there were soccer goalposts in the distance and lumbering women throwing shot put and javelin. There were large, squat buildings spread out on dismally landscaped sandy lots" (2002 16). It considers Susie is drowned in the hyper-real world of heaven and there is no clear distinction between reality and hyper-reality, because all the things such as 'soccer goal posts', buildings and high schools are real in our world but in heaven there is no sign of them so they blurred the borderline between reality and hyper-reality and these signs can show heaven as a hyper-real one. According to John Tiffin and Nobuyoshi Terashima, "Hyper-reality is seen as a condition in which what is real and what is fiction are aimlessly mixed together so that there is no clear distinction between where one ends and the other begins. Individual may find themselves for different reason more in true or involved with the hyper-real world and less with physical real world" (2001 8).

As Crystal Gary expresses, Baudrillard believes that hyper-reality can take the form of reality by "proxy" in a way that a person takes someone else version of reality as his or her own (16 March, 2013). Susie acts in a way that she is alive and we think it shows how the hyper-reality of her as a live person takes the place of her real being as a dead person and she simulates herself as a live person, by this reason the meaning of "proxy" in the above quotation becomes clear. Susie says: "It was then that I slipped inside the room with my mother and father. I was present somehow, as a person, in a way I had never been" (2002 279). In another page she says: "After I left my parents in the hospital, I went to watch Ray Singh. We had been fourteen together, he and I" (283).

The concept of hyper-reality brings three of Baudrillard's notions together; the first one is the situation that signs already announced hyper-reality (Gane 2010 95). In Sebold's novel the reality of religious heaven vanishes and the facts like Gazebo and the house that Susie lives in it take the place of real things (streets and houses that made by gold and silver according to different holy books) and the only thing that we have here is the simulation of reality, the hyper-reality. The second one is "Modern cultures folded in a way that they wipe out age-old boundaries or transgress boundaries, the more real than real" (2010 95), when Susie talks about newspapers that are magical we feel the sings of earthly modern communication in a way that the sings of earthly life absorbs the real sign of religious heaven and shown heaven as a modern land.

The third notion is the development of a popular culture which breaks down the differences between real and the artifice (Gane 2010 95). The example of this part is popular American culture and Disneyland, the great park that Susie plays in it, the modern play ground of high schools which break down the differences between the real religious heaven and the artifice picture of heaven put emphasis on its hyper-reality, in Sebold's work the landscape of heaven is based on the imagination of each character. In very first pages of the novel we reach to these lines "It is a 14 year old girl's heaven" (2002 16) it shows that the heaven which we are going to read about is totally different with religious ones, and the characters personalized the reality of heaven with their own imagination and show it as a hyper-real one when Susie says: "... , my favorite part was how the colored blocks were turquoise just like blocks on the Earth. So I could imagine myself there" (16).

Mark Sayer believes that we do not live in the hyper-real world, because it is not really exist and this is the problem (2008 73). According to this quotation we think existence of heaven as a hyper-real world is questioned to our mind hyper-real world can have two aspects: one aspect of it is that some people believe in hyper-real world as a place which they can reach to their wishes as Sayer notes "if we can just buy that product, get that luxury car, go on that overseas trip-then we will escape reality, enter to the hyper-real world, and find meaning" (73). This aspect puts emphasis on the fact that the real religious heaven has some hyper-real aspect. The second aspect of it we think can be related to the existence of heaven or hell as another world with hyper-real designs. As Susie tells us that in heaven she can reach to her wishes so it can be a hyper-real world for her, Franny told Susie "All you have to do is desire it, and if you desire it enough and understand why-really know-it will come" (2002 19), also Sayer believes that all these things (buy that product, get that luxury car,...) will one day end and we will always return to reality and it shows that there is an overlap between reality and hyper-reality (2008 74).

We agree with him because in our world that is a real world for us one day all those things that we bought or reached to them will be finish or will become out of work and we will back to our routine life and to reality. In this novel Susie reaches to all the things that she wants as soon as she thinks about them but the fact is that at the end she should stay in

heaven for ever and despite all her wishes which she reaches to them, she can never back with the people she loved on earth and this is the reality and real part of her life that we see in her hyper-real image of heaven.

I wanted to kiss her lightly on the cheek or have her hold me, but instead I watched her walk off in front of me, saw her blue dress trail away. I knew that she was not my mother; I could not play pretend... I could look down and see horse corn and I could hear it then—singing—a kind of low humming and moaning warning me back from the edge. My head would throb and the sky would darken and it would be that night again, that perpetual yesterday lived again (2002 41&120).

Although Susie can do whatever she likes and she somehow reaches to her wishes but at the end of them she should back to her real life in heaven as a dead person, and all the things that she does and the events that happen to her all of them are her imagination and this is her imagination that changes the real religious heaven to a hyper-real one. In another part of the novel we see how Susie trapped in the reality of her hyper-real heaven "I heard my name. I thought I could taste the blood on my fathers' face, reach out to draw my fingers across his lips,...But I had to turn my back in heaven, I could do nothing- trapped in my prefect world" (2002 139-140).

The overlap between reality and hyper-reality which Sayer speaks about happens in this paragraph of the novel, when Susie points to "an Inbetween" a line between real world of earth and hyper-real world of heaven: "In the days that followed and I watched my family... and I became convinced that the thick blue line was a real place—an Inbetween, where heaven's horizon met earth's. I wanted to go there into the cornflower blue of Crayola, the royal, the turquoise, the sky" (2002 34). Also in this paragraph the matter of Inbetween becomes clearer when she lives in a hyper-real world of heaven and her mother lives on earth as a real world "I reach my hand across the Inbetween and take the hand of that young lonely mother in mine" (150).

Sayer believes that this world (the hyper-real world) is disconnected from the sphere of human experience (2008 73), it is true because we never experience living in such world and we see this fact in this novel that the heaven which we read about it in this book is made by Susie's imagination and it is really disconnected from her experiences because she never experiences such living in the past and she does not know anything about it, that's why when she enters to heaven tries to decorates it with all the things that she likes not with the things that exist in the real religious heaven. "On Christmas Day, my family would have been more comfortable in heaven. Christmas was largely ignored in my heaven. Some people dressed all in white and pretended they were snowflakes, but other than that, nothing" (2002 66).

Sayer expresses we believe in the hyper-real world as something that can save us from the apathy of every day existence (2008 74). Heaven in this novel saves Susie from all the pains that she had on the earth Susie's imaginary heaven helps her to experience new life, new outlook toward life and earth, helps her reaches to all her wishes to the things that she never experiences them on the earth thus it acts as a hyper-real world for her. Susie says: "Each time I told my story, I lost a bit, the smallest drop of pain. It was that day I know I wanted to tell the story of my family. Because horror on Earth is real and it is every day. It is like a flower or like the sun; it cannot be contained" (2002 186).

3.2 Simulation of Heaven

Simulation for Baudrillard brings us into circular world in which the sign is not exchange for meaning but merely for another sign (1994 10), so simulation is the active process of replacement of the real (qtd. in Baudrillard 1994). In this novel, Susie replaces the architecture of religious heaven with her earthly wishes. This is the active process of replacement when she tells the reader: "Sometimes on Earth I had my father drive me by Fairfax high. So I could imagine myself there and later we have been given in our heavens our simplest dreams, there were no teachers in the school—we never had to go inside except for art class for me and Jazz band for Holly" (2002 16 & 18). Thus, Susie's dreams get the place of real and reality of religious heaven because in religious heaven we face with beautiful gardens and nice lakes but in this story they are replaces by high schools and different play grounds and this reason depicts the simulation of heaven.

As Baudrillard believes when the real is no longer what it was the nostalgia appears in its full meaning (1994 6), we see how Susie remembers her past and thinks about her family and her friends when she was with her mother and her father, "One of the blessing of my heaven is that I can go back to these moments, live them again, and be with my mother in a way I never could have been" (2002 150). Now she continues her diary in heaven so it is here that the borderline between reality and imagination is collapsed and we enter to hyper-real zone of heaven.

Baudrillard notes that simulation is a four steps process of replacing reality: the first one is "Faithful" (Lechte 2010 200). We see this aspect when Susie talks about the things that she has in her heaven, although all of these things reminds us the things that exist on the earth "A comfortable swing set, the old-time street lamps that I had seen once in a play of *Our Town*. I had remembered them because when I saw the play with my family, I thought of them as giant, heavy berries full of light" (2002 41). May be these things wants to reflect the reality of the lights in real religious heaven. Also this quotation shows what Baudrillard says about simulation, that it is ultimately pretence to have something one does not have (1994 3), and Susie throughout the novel talks about the things that other people in the heaven do not have because each person's heaven is different from others so the things that Susie has may be one does not have. For example, her heaven is different with Farrany's heaven in Susie's heaven no one reward her because of her doings. "In Franny's heaven, she served and was rewarded by results and gratitude" (2002 18).

The second one is "Perversion" (Lechte 2010 200) that happens when Susie first talks and describes her imaginary house that she likes to have in heaven and then she shifts and talks about the house that she has in her heaven. Although in

religious books we read that people will have houses but their house is not like what Susie describes that is decorated with earthly goods. Susie says:

The house that I grew up in was the same house where I was born. I dreamed about bay windows and cupolas, balconies, and slanted attic ceilings in a bedroom. I loved the idea that there could be trees in a yard taller and stronger than people, slanted spaces under stairs,...In my heaven there were verandas and circular staircases, window ledges with iron rails, and a campanile housing a bell that tolled the hour (2002 127-128).

The third kind that Baudrillard refers to is "Pretence" (Lechte 2010 200). It happens when Susie talks about her heaven's condition and different kinds of things that she has in her heaven, "I sat in the Gazebo in the main square of my heaven and often I found myself desiring simple things and I would get them. Riches in furry packages, dogs. My heaven has newspapers where our picture appeared a lot and made us look important" (2002 34). In this picture we do not have any knowledge about what she has in the heaven although we can imagine them and they are somehow real but they do not actually exist in the real religious heaven and clearly we feel the absence of reality. These images which Susie refers to them masks the absence of real things of religious heaven that can be exist in her hyper-real heaven, in her heaven we have the absence of beautiful gardens, golden streets, angels and happiness.

The fourth one is "Pure" (Lechte 2010 200). In the novel, Susie Salmon talks from heaven in a sense that looks a lot like her school play ground; everything she wants appears as soon as she thinks of it. In reality we can desire something but it never appears to us quickly. For Susie this action in heaven proves the hyper-reality of it because it has no relation to reality and the borderline between reality and imagination blurred and we cannot differentiate between them thus, Susie's heaven is a pure simulacrum. When Susie mentions "I felt the moist air lace its way up long my legs and arms. Lifting ever so slightly, the ends of my hair, I thought of spider webs in the morning, how they fed small jewels of dew, how with a light movement of the wrist, I used to destroy them without thinking" (2002 41), we completely reach to this fact that how reality replaces by imagination and every things in her heaven happen in a moment, because spider web is real on the earth but its destruction is something that never happens by thinking on earth. Baudrillard believes that simulacrum never hides the truth, it is the truth that hides the fact (1994 3). Susie says: "the truth was very different from what we learned in school. The truth was that the line between the living and dead could be, it seems, murky and blurred" (2002 48). Thus, Susie's heaven can be a simulacrum which never hides the fact of death and afterlife, it is the truth that hides the fact of real religious heaven in a way that it is not exist as it is.

3.3 Disneyland

Disneyland as an imaginary landscape is one of the examples of simulacra, Baudrillard refers to the imaginary world and he argues that the world of Disneyland magnetizes people inside and makes them to believe that all imaginary as real (1994 166). We see the reflect of Baudrillard's idea in this novel when by writer, heaven presented as an imaginary world that contains museums, amusement parks and different kinds of cars that in reality they are representation of America and Disneyland, and here in fact heaven shown as an imaginary land because all the things that Susie describes in her heaven is the product of her mind and her imagination like, "The newspapers that always shows the picture of people and make them to look important" (2002 20).

We think Susie uses her imagination for describing real religious heaven as a hyper-real one, although it is unintentionally in order to hide the real as Richard, G. Smith expresses "American people because of their way of living use Disneyland as alienated idealization to hide the real" (2010 96). Smith talks about the separation between real world and fun world and this separation in Sebold's work is between real religious heaven and this funny and hyper-real heaven. He says: "this separation simply conceals the fact that the real is no longer real" (2010 96), so all the things such as parks, museums and high school which Susie refers to them in her heaven has a real entity, as a result there pictures act as simulacrum which conceals the absence of reality and real things in religious heaven and the real is just an imagination.

Baudrillard calls Disneyland as a third order of simulation where fake castles look more real than real (Lane 2001 89). Susie's heaven also can be categorized in this order because all the fake things as peppermint ice creams, magical news papers and beautiful houses with perfect design look more real than real, and they take the place of real things of religious heaven in readers mind, although they are not real in religious heaven. So heaven in *The Lovely Bones* is the product of Western culture because not only Susie but also other people such as Holly and counselor unintentionally confuse reality of religious heaven with their own imagination, their imaginary and fake picture of heaven. Benjamin Woolley believes in the idea that memory system were used to "remember heaven and hell" is built into the foundation of literature then as a metaphor of reality we have the idea of fiction (1994 33). The point that is very important in this novel is that how Alice Sebold used this fiction for describing heaven in a way that she thinks of it and she used reality of this place as a metaphor for describing it in a hyper-real way.

3.4 God

As we know, God is the most important principal in all religions, but in Sebold's novel we see no presence of Him and it is very important that in this novel heaven is void of god. In this novel we never feel the existence of God from the first pages to the end, we see that Susie herself is the god of her heaven, and it shows the influence of post-modern era on the writer's mind which in that period of time God is put aside from the universe also it depicts one of Baudrillard's examples that is related to religious image and danger of "monotheistic", he says: "God being disappeared via a multitude of icons or simulacra" (qtd. in Lane 2001 88).

In *The Lovely Bones* Susie acted as simulacrum and we think the problem with this kind of thinking is that the world either hyper-real or real is not complete and we see this in the novel, which Susie indirectly refers to the absence of God "I couldn't have what I wanted most: Mr. Harvey dead and me living. Heaven wasn't perfect. But I came to believe that if I watched closely and desired, I might change the lives of those I loved on Earth" (2002 20).

Susie's family's belief in God is not strong and they somehow believe in Susie as a god that can save them. For example, when her father becomes sick her little brother prays in this way "Please don't let daddy die Susie, I need him" (2002 260), it shows he believes that Susie can save their father, and God in *The Lovely Bones* has no power. Baudrillard believes that, "In the faculty of simulacra we have effacing of God from the conscious of man and the destructive truth that they allow to appear that deep down God never exist" (qtd. in Baudrillard 1994 5). We see such fact that God is in Susie's mind although, we do not see any sentence about Him but we can understand it from Susie's words and we see that Susie herself is the god of her world and her heaven she acts as a simulated god as Baudrillard believes, and like God which is aware of people's thought she is aware of people's thought too "She would not break. I watched her, felt the lines she repeated over and over again in her head. *Fine. All of it is fine*" (2002 33).

4. Conclusion

Heaven in *The Lovely Bones* represents American culture and society. The influence of living in America makes the writer to create such a heaven which is completely far away from real religious heaven and acted as a hyper-real one. Heaven in this novel is a hyper-real world for Susie because it is based on her imagination. In this heaven, she can escape all the real things and reality that she faced with them on earth, she can reach to all her wishes in a moment but this hyper-real world is not everlasting and it shows how Susie is trapped in the reality of her hyper-real heaven. Although in real religious heaven people can reach to all their wishes in a moment, it is everlasting and this fact is a hyper-real aspect of real religious heaven which is different from the heaven of this novel.

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