

The Rejection of Techno-Culture in the *Alita: Battle Angel* Movie by Robert Rodriguez (An Application of Jean Francois Lyotard's Postmodernism Theory)

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Abstract

This research aimed to describe the rejection of techno-culture in the *Alita: Battle Angel* Movie by using Jean Francois Lyotard's theory. This research used a Descriptive Qualitative Method. The source of the data in this research is *Alita: Battle Angel* Movie directed by Robert Rodriguez that is published in 2019. The result of this research found that Alita, Zapan, Grewishka are characters that represented the techno-culture (Cyborg and Human Relationship and Hedonism) represented in the *Alita: Battle Angel* Movie through the power of science and technology, individualism, and rationality. The Rejection of techno-culture depicted through the character of Alita that her power is not evolved from technology but originating from the legendary martial art called *Punzer Kuntz* before her body is combined with Ido's technological tools. Technology does not necessarily have an important role in the human body as described by the heroine character, Alita herself, whose overall strength did not come from technology. Alita in this movie is a parody because she is a robot that humanized herself. In fact, she shows many aspects of his humanity that humans are busy degrading themselves.

Keywords: *metanarrative, postmodern, rationality, rejection, techno-culture*

INTRODUCTION

Technology in the present day was not merely about the advancement of life but also related to lifestyle. Technology had been creating a culture that Lyotard called techno-culture. Techno-culture does not only deal with science and technology, but also cultural, social, economic, and political reproduction which is influenced by the development of techno-culture. Techno-culture development is currently being carried out more and more by people who have high knowledge because the technology tools are very sophisticated so that whatever they want, they always depend on their life affairs with machines. So, technology is truly capable of changing the paradigm of human perception, experience, and consciousness. These technological tools were called Cybernetic because the whole technological process was included in the ability

of the mechanism which is able to change all forms of robots to be like humans, which in the end the advancement of technoculture played an important role in the process of creating robots that resemble humans. The advancement of technoculture is recorded in art, especially movies. Response to increasing technology and social awareness about the magnitude and breadth of diversity in culture, namely the diversity that questions the possibility of each perspective that is of a nature "*universal*" or "*special*" can be synthesized into a single perspective called postmodernism. However, as well as postmodernism which assumes that modernism has failed in raising human dignity. In postmodernism, modernism had failed to bring human life towards more advanced and the absence of violence. Modernism was an era of substitute that was stated as a scientific discovery, human autonomy, linear progress, absolute truth, and a rational plan of social order that begins with a high sense of optimism. The development of science in the modernism era brought destruction to mankind, wars occurred which resulted in human life in suffering (Maksum, 2012:44-45).

According to Lyotard (1984: 14), technoculture is a theory or construction of the world that includes everything and establishes the criteria of truth and objectivity in science and technology. Rapid technological development in the era of modernism has made many changes in the rules of human life. From here then born technoculture that emerged as the consequences of shifting some people's perception, experiences, and awareness including all hope in technological life. This highly sophisticated process was also developed in order to answer the expectation of this technoculture human being. Without technology and science or what is believed about the world, no one cannot understand life. Producing a technoculture idea tried to create a better life, so this analysis was related to the potential field in scientific topics, especially the relationship between the development of computer technology and the internet in the past like cyborg. Technoculture that is used by humans can bring advantages, one of which was a process of making human robots or what we called cyborgs. Cyborg or cybernetics organism which was a transplant between machines and living things, formed from social reality as well as formed from works of fiction. Social reality about life and death referred to the body that was seen as a system of symbols. Cyborg was one of the results of human engineering using advanced technology. More specifically, the technician of biology involves the creation of the techno body, a cyborg that was

part human, part machine, relating to others and the world through an intense technological shaping and mediation. The techno body involves not only the mediation of biological processes and communication systems, but also the fusion of the body and technology. Many applications of cyborg so that it can be entered into a digital literary work that was a movie.

According to Hornby (2006: 950) movie means a series of moving pictures recorded with sound that tells a story that was shown at cinema as one of visual aids that can be used in a writing class. A movie is one of the visual aids that can be used in a writing class. It made the lesson more fun. It can also be used to create situations for writing classes more clearly, that the students have big enthusiasm in teaching the learning process. Movie is a term that encompasses individual motion pictures, the field of movie as an art form, and the motion pictures industry. Movies are produced by recording images from the world with cameras, or by creating images using animation techniques or special effects. Movies in the postmodern era include many elements of advanced technology, one of them which is reflected in the *Alita Battle Angel* Movie by Robert Rodriguez.

This movie is a 2019 American cyberpunk action film based on the 1990s Japanese Manga series *Gunnm* By Yukito Kishiro. It is directed by Robert Rodriguez and produced by James Cameron, who co-wrote the script with Laeta Kalogridis. *Alita: Battle Angel* tells the Heroine named Alita (Rosa Salazar) as the stars of the voice of titular Heroine Alita, a cyborg who awakens in a new body with no memory of her past, so she sets out to uncover her destiny. Christoph Waltz, Jennifer Connelly, Mahershala Ali, Ed Skrein, Jackie Earle, Haley, and Kean Johnson stars in supporting roles. When Alita awakens with no memory of who she is in a future world she does not recognize, she is taken in by Ido, a compassionate doctor who realizes that somewhere in this abandoned cyborg she is the heart and soul of a young woman with an extraordinary past.

The Alita Battle Angel movie is a postmodern representation of space and place of all the principles of reality and the truth of modernism today rejected. In this case was Rejection of Technoculture. The Rejection of Technoculture was to reject universal or global explanations about reality, behavior and so on. Lyotard also stated that knowledge was not metaphysical and universal, but rather was specifically related to

space and time. That dream of now is merely being fulfilled, the desire experimented, exploited, manipulated, and filled the spaces of human imagination with everything imaginable and however absurd.

This movie showed the heroine is created by a medical expert who has the skill in turning the leftover rubbish into a half-human and a half-robotic that was supported by a culture of machine technology created with the ability of science. In this movie, Alita is portrayed as a young girl who is brave and not afraid of any enemy that would hinder her mission. Alita who is a female character who has a high fighting spirit to solve every problem she faces within the scope of human power who utilized technology. Alita is built based on the sophistication of technology owned by a medical expert named Ido. From head to toe, she also reflected like a whole human who has strong instinct and feelings. Alita who has lost her memory now has to be able to adjust to the people in Iron City. With her martial arts technique called *Panzer Kunst* she manages to beat up all her enemies due to underestimating her. Alita who played the heroine is packaged as a figure who is greater than a whole human because all her feet and hands take advantage of virtual technology created by humans itself with the advancement of technology.

It also presents that society is very expert in civilizing technology which is shown by the creation of some half-human beings and a half-robotic with the sophistication of their knowledge and having adequate technological tools. In addition to a teenager who acted as a heroine, there was also a Zalem City which is over the Iron City. It really shows that the presence of advancing technology in the modern era made humans so overriding the science of God as evidenced by the creation of the city over the city. Why the researcher chose the title of this research is because the researcher saw how technology is made into a form of culture by the society in this movie so that they could create objects that could move like whole humans. This research is an extended research of the aspects of the relationship between humans and cyborgs and changes in human nature due to technology. So, the researcher discovered that this movie is very closely related to one part of metanarratives in the modern period namely technoculture which was technology that was cultivated by modern society by marking high science in creating skills such as cyber culture in the movie.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher used qualitative-descriptive method, which qualitative-descriptive research is a research method that described and depicted research objects based on facts that seem as they are by utilizing qualitative data and then described it descriptively. The researcher used *Alita: Battle Angel Movie* (2019) that is directed by Robert Rodriguez as the primary data and also from several objects such as, *Avenger: Infinity War*, *Babel Movie*, and many sources related to research objects as the secondary data. The researcher applied the postmodern theory of Jean Francois Lyotard, especially related to the concept of Rejection of Technoculture because there are a lot of postmodern phenomena reflected in the *Alita Battle Angel Movie*. So this theory is very appropriate with the material object itself.

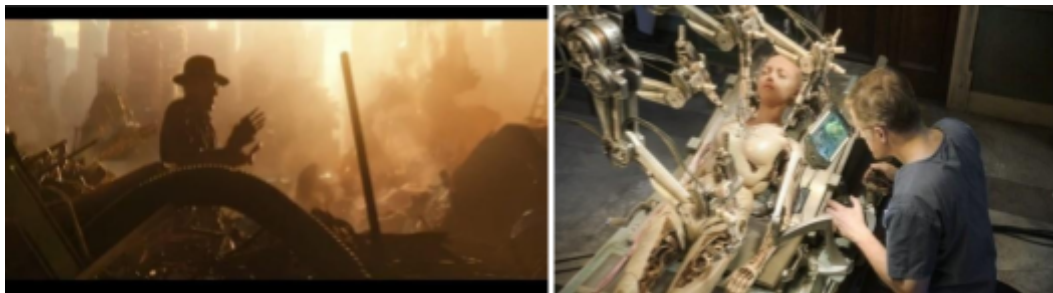
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Technoculture is a paradigm of change or shift in human perception as a result of the use of technology in daily life. In other words, technoculture was one of the theories included in the part of metanarrative consisting of technology, science, objectivity, structuring, ratio, and individualism which was among the most important things in every aspect of life. Rapid technological development in the era of modernism has made many changes in the rules of human life. From here then born technoculture that emerged as the consequences of shifting some people's perception, experiences, and awareness including all hope in technological life. This technology is presented in the *Alita Battle Angel Movie* by Robert Rodriguez.

Hedonism

One of the characteristics of modern society is a society that was too materialistic. Hedonism is a view of life that seeks the basis of everything that includes human life in the material world itself by setting aside everything that transcends the sense realm. Hedonism is a view of life in modern society which was based on lust alone which was very closely related to worldly wealth, inner pleasure, sexual pleasure, freedom, and power. In the modern era, hedonism considered that enjoyment, happiness and material pleasure were the main goals in living life. People are never entirely satisfied with what they have no matter how wealthy they are. Anyway, it is very hard not to be

materialistic nowadays. After all, modern society would have to give up a lot of things in order to live more spiritually. This whole system was based on materialistic values. All the goods society has provided throughout the centuries are made for human-kind and with a purpose made our lives more comfortable. With all this comfort around people really did not have anything else to do than to get themselves a certain goal they wanted to reach (but probably never would). As for those categorized as Hedonism in the movie were as follows: The first is displayed by Dr. Dyson Ido. Ido is a cyborg medical expert who can create a half-robotic human just by collecting junk that he got from the rest of the cyborg's exile. He then rebuilt it by utilizing the sophisticated medical equipment he has. Not only collecting used cyborg items, but also he became a hunter warrior and took the bodies of other cyborgs and exchanged them for money in the church where he collected various kinds of sophisticated robots. It can be seen in the pictures bellow:



Picture 12: *Ido is collecting used goods that fell from Zalem and build Alita*

The picture above shows that modern society really appreciates objects so without them realizing that modern society is too materialistic which is influenced by the development of technology and science they have so that an inanimate object can become a robot like humans. According to materialists, there was nothing but matter or natural phenomena, if they wish then there must be things they certainly did not understand. However, that just means they didn't understand the natural dynamics behind it. So, there was no soul, no god, no greater plan, no zeal for love or kindness, and no moral order to the universe, and if that's the case, then it was up to materialists to find their values. According to Lyotard, the influence of the materialist must be understood as a concrete material entity. The influence can be sound, color, smile, or caress as well as anything that has the ability moved to produce feelings and desires. This can be seen in the conversation said by Ido, **"I accept the money, if not the clinic has been closed for a long time"**. So, the

researcher saw that Ido was a materialist who seeks the basis of everything that included human life in the material realm by ignoring everything that transcended the sensory realm by prioritizing only material things such as property, money, and so on.

From the result, the researcher found the rejection and condition of technoculture. The rejection is displayed by Alita. Alita is the main character of a teenage girl who is a cyborg as well as a heroine in the movie. She was found in a dumpsite at the Scrapyard. She was then awakened by a medical expert named Ido. She also lost the memory of her past. With a feeling of suspicion she asked Ido who she really was. One night, Alita spied on Ido because he went out at night and brought weapons. Until finally Alita knew that Ido was a hunter warrior who was looking for a cyborg body. They are also surrounded by three vicious cyborgs who are ready to kill Alita and Ido. Without thinking, Alita immediately attacked the three enemy cyborgs with the power she had in her past. It can be seen in the following picture and conversation bellow:

Ido : Forget it. I won't do it
Alita : But, but you have to. This will help us fight Grewishka and all of its messengers. This body has the strength I need. I feel a connection. Maybe this is me.
Ido : You are given the opportunity to restart. With empty memories, few people get that?
Alita : Why did enemy planes respond to me, because you know that plane. I've been on a plane like that, right! Haven't I?
Ido : You are now not who you used to be
Alita : No..I am a soldier right? And you know, you always known
Ido : This is called berserker. Humanoid weapon system for URM Technarchy. Your core is made for this type of interaction with bodies. Your ID core activates it. **Your instinctive fighting technique is *Panzer Kunst*, an extinct fighting art for machine bodies. Berserker** using it. That's why you are drawn to conflict without hesitation. That's part of your training. You're not just a soldier, Alita.

From the statement above, Alita is one who has the power not from science and technology. But, she got her strength from an ancient martial art called *Panzer Kunst*. From my perspective, the power of Alita is a part of the postmodern world because she unwittingly rejects what is the ideology of modern society. This part is proof of the Rejection of Technoculture that not everything in this world is made by using the power of science and technology.

CONCLUSIONS

The Rejection of Technoculture is to reject universal or global explanations about reality, behavior and so on. Lyotard also states that knowledge is not metaphysical and universal, but rather is specifically related to space and time (History). To reject technological determinism, however, does not mean that we can simply approach technology instrumentally. The instrumental understanding of technology is based on the idea that it operates as a mere tool according to the subjective wishes of its users. Now while this common-sense notion may contain some truth, its truth must be radically circumscribed. This theory ignores the transformative role technology plays in reshaping and reconstituting subjectivity, embodiment and the social realm. To attempt a critical approach to technology from this position is all too often self-defeating, because it assumes that choices can be made from social and subjective positions which may themselves have been subject to a reconstitute process. Through this movie, Alita is represented by the Rejection of Technoculture. Alita is one who has the power not from science and technology. But, she got her strength from an ancient martial art called *Panzer Kunst*. From what the researcher sees in this part, the power of Alita is a part of the postmodern world because he unwittingly rejects what is the ideology of modern society. This part is proof of the rejection of technoculture that not everything in this world is made by using the power of science and technology.

Social relation is our most important political construction, and world changing fiction. In this part, social relation is displayed between Alita and Ido. Alita is a heroine cyborg created by Ido by utilizing an antimatter heart that can help Alita to continue to survive. The hybridization between human and technology is very much maintained in the movie which is Alita as the heroine has a human side physically and mentally. This can be shown when she registers as a hunter warrior so she can remember who she actually is and kill enemy cyborgs that threaten human life in Iron City. Alita in this movie is a parody because she was a robot that humanized herself. In fact, she shows many aspects of his humanity that humans are busy degrading themselves. The complexity of modern technology has transcended the limits of the sensory dimension human in digesting. Besides, the movie shows an Alita who still needs food to keep her blood flowing smoothly, which is channeled through the Bloodstream cables in her body.

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