

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the introductory chapter of the research. In this chapter, the researcher elaborates some discussions, namely Background, Statement of Problems, Research Objectives, Research Significance, and Definition of Key Terms.

1.1 Background

The *Suburbicon* movie directed was by George Clooney and the film's script was written by Ethhan Coen along with Joel Coen. The *Suburbicon* is a mystery crime film that released in 2017. The *Suburbicon* movie tells the story of a crime that befell a family in the *Suburbicon*. Where the crime committed by a group of criminals managed to attract the attention of many people. But it was not the crime case that was the center of attention, but the family who were victims of the crime. Because the family consisting of ordinary people is in fact able to display their other side. Where those who were the victims turned out to be the pressure party. Here is told about the other side of someone who might have never imagined before. (Italia Vanesia Antara Newa 2014)

In this movie characteristics of postmodernism seen clearly. The postmodernism which shown in the *Suburbicon* movie has a little difference with the postmodernism movie that I have watched among other: *Synecdoche New York* 2008, *Mulholland Drive* 2001, *Donnie Darko* 2001, *Birdman* 2014, *Pulp Fiction* 1994, *Blue Velvet* 1986, and so many another postmodernism movie. I will discuss a little one by one postmodernism movie that I mentioned above.

The first is *Synecdoche, New York* 2008. This an American postmodern drama movie written and directed by Charlie Kaufman. Without knowing the storyline and without any expectations, I unconsciously enjoyed this movie. In fact, honestly, this movie makes me confused and wondered all the way through the movie, but strangely I enjoy these moments of confusion.

Synecdoche, New York; a film with a complex, absurd plot, and of course the audience must think hard throughout the movie.

This is a beautiful movie, artful with a perfect mix of acting, music and dialogue. The plot of this movie is based on what I caught after watching this movie. Caden Cotard, a theater director who is quite well known in his city, has experienced anxiety in his life. Caden lives with his wife and his four-year-old daughter, who always lives in fear of things. Caden domestic life never runs smoothly and himself is unhappy with the condition. Caden also involved in an affair with Hazel who worked as a ticket keeper at the demonstration building where he was performing theater. However, Caden and Hazel's relationship is not going well because on the other hand Caden still feels loyal to his family.

Condition is exacerbated when Adele chose to leave Caden along Olive to stay in Germany with her friend. His wife and his daughter leave himself and his health becomes worse and worse self-destruction that he experienced. It continues with the failure of the affair relationship that he knitted with one of his theater players and become loss of communication with his daughter and his wife. In the midst of this deeply troubling situation, he receives a donation from a philanthropist he uses to make a magnificent theater show in New York City.

Sadness for sadness increasingly adds to his life, making him even more inspired to create crazy ideas in the theater that he will build. The idea is that he would make a theater that tells about the replicas of his life and the people around him. So, he creates the most realistic set possible with the city where he grows up and had a family. He doesn't forget to cast people who are similar to real people who fill their lives. Through the theater he tries to tell the world what his life was like and what sadness he had been through.

This is the meaning of the word Synecdoche, which is something small to describe something big. The theater is like a synagogue, where performances performed on the stage present events that occur in a real life, and vice versa where real life can be seen only as a theater and life is just a mere

performance. Like the replica of the city of New York that has built by Cotard is the synecdoch of his life; it is not clear whether the incident that occurred in his life was merely a mere performance or the performance actually happened in real life.

We will be brought in an atmosphere where we will find it difficult to distinguish which ones are real, dreams or just imagination. Yes, Kaufman makes the boundary between imagination and reality feel blurred, fading and as if united. If we see that the Cotard theater performance and the storyline in this film look messy and random, it's because life is so. Nothing is static. The movie also highlights a person's life journey, especially about the dark side in someone who continues to haunt.

Some parts of the movie seem very unrealistic even if figuratively captured what they mean. Synecdoche, New York is actually a type of film that is difficult to understand. The style of storytelling is typically fantasy. This film delivers the material it contains well in the middle of abstractness.

The second postmodernism movie is Mulholland Drive 2001 written and directed by David Lynch, will leads us into the surrealist world Mulholland Drive. In the 145-minute this movie will bring the audience in circles in a world of real, surreal, dream, and illusion. It begins with an accident that occurs at night in Mulholland Drive, Los Angeles. A black-haired woman played by Laura Harring is threatened by a gun by two men in the car, but her car crashed and the black-haired woman survived despite suffering from amnesia. After the accident, she walks to get to a house and then stays there.

The next day, a cheerful blond comes to the house, woman who aspires to be an actress named Betty in this movie as an innocent woman, she looks very geeky. Eventually, they then got acquainted, the amnesia woman claimed to be named Rita. Betty and Rita then establish a close relationship and continues to sexual relations while trying to find clues about who Rita really is. Then various strange and absurd things accompany the course of their investigation.

In the second chapter we are brought to question where reality is, where dreams are, which are illusions. Mulholland Drive has a very complicated storyline. In this movie David Lynch brings us into illusion. Between dreams and reality. The abstractness that occurred in this movie is able to make the audience dizzy and confused.

The third postmodernism movie is Donnie Darko 2001, was directed and written by Richard Kelly. Donnie Darko itself is a strange combination between the science fiction genre that links time travel, life philosophy, juvenile delinquency and school life love life.

Donnie Darko also slightly "confuses" the audience through illusions or fantasies or dreams and also Donnie's situation, making it one of the biggest questions in the film. Donnie Darko tells the story of a teenage boy named Donnie Darko. Donnie Darko has the experience a series of strange events.

One day, Donnie's house hits by the plane that fell right in Darko's room. Fortunately, at that time he is not in the room until he can survive the accident. This habit of walking while sleeping is what saves Darko's. The sleepwalking experienced by Darko is because he has an imaginary friend named Frank, a strange figure in a rabbit costume the size of a creepy-looking human. This rabbit figure admitted that he came from the future, something that Darko had difficulty believing and people he knew, until Darko is considered too has a mental illness.

Darko mental disorder seems to bear fruit in a series of misbehavior that he did in school, such as flooding his school. Not only that, Darko ever burns a motivator's house. What Darko has done is not necessarily his will, but all he has done is under the control of Frank, the creepy rabbit.

Donnie Darko is a smart and tense movie, and this one of movie that classified as a heavy movie, it is heavy because it needs to think to be able to understand the storyline. This ambitious movie has become a cult movie that have many meanings for each individual.

The fourth postmodernism movie is Birdman 2014. Birdman is American black comedy movie directed by Alejandro G. Birdman tells the story of an

actor named Riggan Thomson who in his middle age struggled to reclaim his golden age.

Birdman is full of surreal connotations, especially Riggan Thomson's sarcastic alter-ego, which makes Riggan "as if" possess telekinesis superpower and capable of floating in the air. This second personality conflict seems a metaphor for the inner struggle of the main character who wants to escape from the shadow of his glory in the past, and how he wants to present his existence again after becoming Birdman. As an implementation of this anxiety, he is often haunted by hallucinations by his alter ego, the role of the birdman superhero that he plays in a blockbuster movie in the past.

Satir who speaks through the medium of this film is not only through dialogue, a surely about Riggan's imagination of the Birdman character also fills his days by becoming a voice on the head who criticizes him out loud and sharp. Trying to give enthusiasm and confidence that he is an original Birdman with super great telekinesis abilities.

Birdman story is indeed simple, but it looks complicated. This movie also is strong, so is the touch of comedy which often goes into the dark comedy.

At the end of the movie, plot-twist amusing appears. On the opening night, Riggan used a real gun for the last scene where his character committed suicide, and shots himself in the head on stage, he shots his nose. He gets a standing ovation from all the audience. Then he gets rush to the hospital. In the hospital, the atmosphere is described as being happy and contradictory to all the problems that have been presented. Then, Riggan jumps from the hospital window, followed by Samantha's happy view towards the sky, as if seeing Riggan actually fly (Yes, fly. As has been described as Riggan's hallucinations throughout the movie). This ending raises many opinions about what really happened to Riggan. Between that he really flying to the sky or he is died of suicide. This absurd element makes Birdman more attractive.

The fifth postmodernism film is Pulp Fiction 1994 this movie was made by Quentin Tarantion. Tarantino's Pulp Fiction is well known for its

postmodern attributes including its irregular narrative course and its many intertextual references.

The movie has many rich dialogues and uses unique vocabulary, a mixture of humor and ironic violence, and the inclusion of various film references and pop culture. The most interesting side of this movie is the game of plot and its characterization that is 'not normal' but still fun and a bit crazy for conventional viewers. This one Tarantino movie can be identified from several unique things, such as: non-linear storyline, intelligent dialogue, satire and irony, and some absurd things.

It's a little difficult to explain the story or explain the story of Pulp Fiction in a writing, the non-linear flows is more comfortable to witness directly.

The nuances of dark humor are indeed felt in Pulp Fiction, seemingly consistently presenting scenes that can actually be laughed at. Not only satire but also irony. This nuance feels in the prologue as well as the epilogue; when two robber couples, Pumpkin and Honey Bunny had a heated discussion at a Coffee Shop about robbing in the easiest way, without killing, without the risk of being killed. They argue about the possibilities that occur if they rob banks, supermarkets, or beverage shops. Taking into account the small risks and almost impossible resistance factors, they finally decided to rob the Coffee Shop that they stopped by that morning. Of course, it's a bit strange if the coffee shop is the target of robbery.

The movie also tells about two hitmen named Vincent Vega and Jules Winnfield who work for Marcellus Wallace. Vincent along with Jules are two assassins assigned by Marsellus Wallace. Vincent and Jules are sadistic but careless assassins. Both of them have long partnered to do the dirty work. The carelessness shows when they got the assignment from Marsellus Wallace to kill someone until they were involved in a complicated situation when Vincent killed a man in a car and covered in blood all over the car, so they had to dress brightly with T-shirts and shorts because of their mistakes make it yourself.

Vincent also got an equally interesting assignment, which is to accompany Mia the boss's wife to dinner at a place with the nuances of the 50s, then win the dance competition. Mia is a beautiful and seductive person. Obviously, a job is difficult considering Mia is not an easily arranged woman. Instead of wanting to carry out the task perfectly, without having to end up on the bed of the wife of the big boss. When they return home, they are alone at home, no one else. However, like a movie with a ending that is twist, Tarantino manages to destroy the minds of most of his audience when it turned out. Vincent trapped in a complicated night when Mia was lying down due to an overdose of heroin.

On other hand there are also many absurd scenes full of humor that are actually satirical and irony. Pulp Fiction is often rated by observers as the beginning of the best post-modern films.

The sixth postmodernism movie is Blue Velvet 1986 was directed and written by David Lynch. Tells about a young man named Jeffrey Beaumont who found a piece of ear in a field after visiting his father who has been being treated in a hospital, Jeffrey then gives the ear piece to and he meets the detective's daughter named Sandy, Sandy then tells a suspicious woman who works as a singer and had something to do with the mysterious ear piece, Dorothy Vallens. Jeffrey then investigated with Sandy and he himself sneaks into Dorothy's apartment. Unwittingly, Jeffrey's curiosity dragged him towards a new, bigger problem and associated with a crime in the small town. In the apartment he caught by Dorothy who threatened him with a knife and strangely enough to force Jeffrey to have sex, but at that moment also comes Frank, a chairman of a psychopathic criminal gang who likes to force Dorothy to do every wish because gang Frank Booth kidnaps a child from Dorothy.

A little later in the film, as Jeffrey and Dorothy perform intercourse, he fulfils her request for physical pain by slapping her repeatedly. Dorothy responds with outward expressions of elation: a wide-mouthed and chipped-tooth smile.

Blue Velvet shows abstract features of postmodernism in its illusive story, the differences between good and evil, the gap between different social hierarchies and an open question to the world and self. Looking deep into the story of Blue Velvet, one can easily find some of the very common postmodern features like the dark theme, unrepresentable sexual violence, brutality, masochism and wild ways of expressing the story. To me, Blue Velvet is no doubt a very good and concrete example of postmodern film, having all the postmodern elements from beginning to end of the movie.

Blue Velvet exposes a very dark and violent side of life that the audiences are drawn to. The nostalgic mixture of time periods in Blue Velvet, is a deliberate construction by Lynch to express the illogical and absurd manner of existence. There is a faded boundary between the past and the present exists in Blue Velvet.

The whole point of the postmodernism movie discussed above in broad outline of postmodernism films seems absurd and abstract. Postmodernism holds the techniques and ideas same as modernism, but emphasizes on parody, playfulness and irony. Postmodernists focuses on the role of exploring the universal system by creating what is known as the truth itself.

Postmodern is a period that occurs in the present, where when humans no longer see modernization as an effort that can satisfy their needs. When humans are struggling with technology that is growing rapidly, the desire arises in humans to master other individuals with technology, intelligence or even with their money. Globalization is a contemporary phenomenon that brings various social changes and new understandings to the creation of patterns of social interaction, especially due to the support of the advancement of computerized technology and the internet.

Postmodernism has penetrated many aspects of life, such as posmo art, postmo literature, postmo films, postmo architecture, postmo ideology, postmo culture, and even posmo theology are some examples of the rise of the idea of "postmodernism" in various aspects of contemporary life.

In postmodernism, the mind is replaced by desire, reasoning replaced by emotion and morality was replaced by relativism. The fact is nothing more than a social construct. Truth is equated with power or authority. Identity emerged from group.

Postmodernism in the fields of Cinema describes as an expression of Arts, and in Films or movies, it may be perceived in various styles comprising the manner of twisting the mindset of not only the actor portraying a certain character in a particular movie. It may also affect the judgement and reasoning of a moviegoer. Toying with their capacity to weigh down and identify the difference between the real truth from the fabricated truth and from what is only just an “acting” from what is already a real life. Postmodernism in movies approach may tend to bend a “lie” and make it appear as though it is an out-crying truth, thus making everyone believe and anchor on that crooked truth that is only offered by a film.

In Indonesia, the concept of postmodernism can be seen in the lifestyles of the people of big cities that are increasingly modern over time. Without realizing it, postmodernism increasingly spread even to the smallest things. In this case, it will discuss postmodern that occurred in the Indonesian television world. Television is a tool used by films to invade the daily lives of millions of people. Television is able to show facts directly and is able to mention film productions. Many social observers consider TV as a mirror of the psychological condition and postmodern culture. Like television, postmodern movies and films are a mainstay of mass-market American culture. The range of independent films to big budget Hollywood blockbusters all exhibit (and build off of) many of the Postmodern motifs shared by other art forms.

Movie is one of the pillars of postmodern aesthetics in addition to television and other art media. Through the film, the principles and aesthetics, postmodern cultural theory and belief appears intact mesmerizing. Through the film, the principles of postmodern culture can be read easily. Movie becomes a media that describes about human life and all aspect of problem, and it can retell a story or event in the last time. Movie can reflect the culture

of a nation and influence the culture itself. Movie presents as a historical process or process of a community culture presented in the form of vivid images. Through the movie, people can visualize what is happening in a particular society at a particular time. By watching movie, we can know about habit, culture, and language in the world. It can be said because movie is universal form for communication. Movie can be informative and educative functions, persuasive events. The reality, movie has great influence on audience's life but it is neglected. It happened because of the people do not understand of the movie itself and the elements behind them.

There are the generally characteristics of Postmodern movie are : draws attention to the plot letting the spectators see different conclusions, plot constructed in the way of storytelling, involves people in the plot that the spectators forget to separate themselves, use of hyper reality in the sequences, creating relationship by using genre and intersexuality as a reference to make plot.

Nowadays, general people assume that postmodernism can be found only in literary works such as novels and short stories. Whereas, it can also be found in the movie, especially in the *Suburbicon* movie that actually that contains some of the characteristics of literary work in postmodernism and has a positive meaning for the audience.

Western movies in the representation of postmodernism can be observed from the subtitle and the script of the film. Subtitle presents images at once writing of the dialogue in the movie, while the movie script presents only the entire text dialogue from the beginning until the ending of movie without the included images. With the subtitle and movie script the analysis characteristic of postmodernism will be more easily identified.

On this occasion, the researcher will study about characteristics of postmodern film that are presented in *Suburbicon* movie. This study uses postmodernism theory on Denzin's state for analyzing and employed a descriptive qualitative method since it emphasized on describing the characteristics of literary work in postmodern that are presented in

Suburbicon movie. Previous study was become one of the researcher's references in conducting research so that the researcher can expand the discussion in reviewing the research conducted. The first previous study entitled "Kajian Postmodernisme Pada Novel "Maryaman Karpov" written by Andrea Hirata in 2017. In this author's previous study author analyzed characteristics of postmodernism in a novel. This study used postmodernism theory on Jean-Francois Lyotard's state for analyzing and employed a descriptive explorative. This study uses a postmodernism approach with a focus on research on aspects and characteristics of postmodernism revealed in the novel "Maryamah Karpov" by Andrea Hirata. In this cultural literary non-fiction work, Andrea Hirata reveals a thick culture of postmodernism. With this study of postmodernism, the researcher aims to study this novel more comprehensively, especially in terms of aspects and characteristics of postmodernism. And the second previous study entitled "Identitas Budaya dalam Novel Kembar Keempat" by Sekar Ayu Asmara: Postmodernism Study". This study uses Lyotard's postmodernism approach by using aspects of postmodernism to reveal the cultural identity in novel Kembar Keempat. This study employed to examine cultural identity in novel Kembar Keempat written by Sekar Ayu Asmara by exposing postmodernism characteristic. This study uses descriptive-analysis method that is used to review postmodernism from Jean-Francois Lyotard.

1.2 Statement of Problems

From the background above, the writer found that the *Suburbicon* movie is a movie which representation of postmodernism, although has a little different characteristic from the postmodernism movie's characteristics in generally. Therefore, it can be concluded there are two research questions of the statement problems are will be analyzed in this study as follows:

1. How does the postmodernism unique characteristics in *Suburbicon* movie?
2. What are the characteristics of postmodernism in *Suburbicon* movie?

1.3 Research Objective

1. To find out how does the postmodernism unique characteristics in *Suburbicon* movie.
2. To find out what are the characteristics of postmodernism in *Suburbicon* movie.

1.4 Research Significance

The results of the research are expected to give contribution to the theoretical and practical uses of language.

1. Theoretically, the research findings are expected to enrich the comprehension and understanding of pragmatics learning, especially about postmodernism in literary work.
2. Practically the research findings will be useful for:
 - a. The students of English Literature
This research can be used as another reference for the students of English Study Program who want to conduct research on pragmatics, particularly subject to subject based on the theory of postmodernism in literary work especially in movie.
 - b. Other Readers
This research hopefully Gives a preview about postmodernism representation in movie for other students.
 - c. Other Researchers
This research hopefully can help companies researcher who wants to analysis representation of postmodernism in movie.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

In order to minimize misinterpretation on the key terms used in this research, the researcher clarifies some key points:

- a. **Black Comedy** is also known as dark comedy or gallows humor, is a comic style that makes light of subject matter that is generally considered taboo, particularly subjects that are normally considered serious or painful

to discuss. Comedians often use it as a tool for exploring vulgar issues, thus provoking discomfort and serious thought as well as amusement in their audience. (Blake Hobby,2018)

- b. **Non-linear** is a narrative technique, sometimes used in literature, film, hypertext websites and other narratives, where events are portrayed, for example, out of chronological order or in other ways where the narrative does not follow the direct causality pattern of the events featured, such as parallel distinctive plot lines, dream immersions or narrating another story inside the main plot-line. It is often used to mimic the structure and recall of human memory, but has been applied for other reasons as well (Blum, Richard A 2001).
- c. **Plot-twist** is a literary technique that introduces a radical change in the direction or expected outcome of the plot in a work of fiction. When it happens near the end of a story, it is known as a twist or surprise ending (Judith Kay; Rosemary Gelshenen,2001).
- d. **Postmodernism** is a broad movement that developed in the mid- to late 20th century across philosophy, the arts, architecture, and criticism and that marked a departure from modernism. The term has also more generally been applied to the historical era following modernity and the tendencies of this era (Ruth Reichl,1989).

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