Semiotic Analysis of Space and Time in the Film

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Abstract— Time Machine is a science-fiction film produced in 2002, which is an adaptation of the same novel titled HG Wells written in 1895. Time Machine film tells of a scientist, and inventor named Alexander Hartdegen living in Manhattan, New York who is determined to prove that time travel is something that is possible to do. The determination to make the journey across time itself is caused by the despair of the past personal tragedy that prompted him to change the past. Through testing a number of theories ultimately Hartdegen found the time machine and can travel time began to return to his past until gliding into the next 800,000 years and find new reality and new realities that are much different from his time. In this research, the writer will review and analyze Time Machine film through semiotic method, especially Space and Time Semiotics. In the application, the author will select some scenes in the film to be analyzed. This research is important to do as an effort to know the existence of space and time as a marker and marker in a film work.

Keywords—Semiotic, Space, Time, Film, Machine

I. INTRODUCTION

Film is a form of narrative that is built by sequences of scenes that form a story. As a product of popular culture, film is one of the favorite pastimes of the people. Films usually tell things that have happened or will happen. The telling of time in the film can be through forward or backward grooves. Some films even directly tell things in the past and in the future through a combination of back and forth grooves.

One film that tells the past and the future is a Time Machine. This film is a science fiction film produced in 2002 and is an adaptation of the same titled novel by HG Wells (1895) published by the publisher William Heinemann.

Fig. 1. First Edition Cover Novel Time Machine

Time Machine film tells the story of a scientist and inventor named Alexander Hartdegen (played by Guy Pearce) who lives in Manhattan, New York who is determined to prove that time travel is something that is possible to do.

Determination of traveling across time alone is caused by a desperate attitude because of a bad personal tragedy in the past that encouraged him to change the past. The bad tragedy was the death of her lover named Emma who was shot by a robber in 1899 in a park. Through testing a number of theories, Hartdegen finally found a time machine that could travel time back to its past. Not only in the past, the time machine can also bring it to the next few years like 2030, 2037 to 800,000 years into the future, where it finds reality and new realities that are far different from its time. This film is very interesting to watch because there are many leaps of space and time.

Fig. 2. Time Machine Film Poster

The article, entitled “Semiotic Analysis of Space and Time in the Time Machine”, will analyze the phenomenon of space and time experienced by Alexander Hartdegen. A journal entitled “Perjalanan Fantasi Menembus Ruang dan Waktu” written by Sudjadi Tjipto R [1], actually raised the same thing. But in the journal, the research only focuses on the space and time that occurred in 2030 and did not elaborate on the overall flow of the film. In addition, research on time space that is a reference is research conducted by Siswanto [2], and Tandyonomanu & Bahfiarti [3]. This research will use semiotics methodology specifically related to space and time. It is hoped that with this methodology, it can be seen how Time Machine's film as a narrative builds messages from many
spatial signs and phenomena and their relationship to the
phenomena of life today. Some other studies on films that use
semiotics include Roszainora with the title Semiotic Analysis
of a Media Text of The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of
the Ring published by Canadian Social Sciences Vol. 5 No.4
2009 [4], and Alvier [5], titled Semiotic Analysis on James
Cameron Selected Science Fiction Movies.

II. METHOD

In this study, the author will use semiotics. The word
semiotics comes from the Greek, which is "Semeion" which
means sign. Semiotics itself is a study of a sign. Semiotics is
the study of signs and the way the sign works (John Fiske,
2007). Semiotics studies systems, rules, conventions that
allow signs to have meaning. Understanding the sign itself is
something that can conventionally replace or represent
something else. According to F. de Saussure, the sign has 2
(two) entities namely signifier (sign) and signified (sign) or
means of sign and meaning [6]. The relationship between
the marker and this marker is arbiter (free). In general, semiotics
is divided into 3 basic concepts, namely pragmatic semiotics
(describing the origin of the sign, the sign function by the
implementer, and the effect of the sign for interpreting, within
the limits of subject behavior), synthetic semiotics (describing
the combination of signs without regard to their meaning or
relationship towards subject behavior) and semantic semiotics
(describing the meaning of a sign according to the 'meaning'
conveyed). Semiotics, as a sign of science, was chosen as a
methodology for analyzing Time Machine films because in
general films were designed with several signs. These signs
work together in an effort to achieve the expected impact by
the filmmaker in the form of a specific message to the
audience.

The first stage in this study was to collect data in the film
of "Time Machine" (2002) produced by DreamWorks &
Warner Bross Pictures. The first approach is observation or
direct observation of Time Machine films by watching it. In
observation or direct observation, researchers will record and
record some important things in the film. Researchers will also
document several important scenes by capturing them. The
next approach used is literature study. Literature study is the
study of data collection using media such as books, articles
and scientific research on the design of visual communication,
films, signs and related research methodologies. Some articles
from related print and internet media sources are also used.
After data is collected, the next step is to process data by
selecting, classifying and preparing data. At this stage, the
writer will choose several scenes that represent space and time
marks in the film. The selected scene will be analyzed in the
next stage. [7]

The film analysis process will be carried out by identifying
changes in space and time markers in several scenes. Changes
in time and space will arise from the visual differences that
arise where the figure (Alexander Hartdegen) is like
architecture, life, and so on. Visualization of space and time is
a representation of the era visited by Alexander Hartdegen
using the time machine he made[8]. The author will select
several scenes selected from the film. After the object data is
analyzed, and obtained temporary results, the next thing to do

is to check the validity of the results. The purpose of this is so
that the research carried out results in objective and scientific
data, so that results can be accounted for and useful.

III. RESULTS

Time Machine is a film (narration) that presents several
different space and time settings. This is because the main
characters in the film make several time trips for both the future
and the past. The story of time travel itself began when
Alexander Hartdegen (the main character & inventor of the
time machine) made his first trip back to the past 1899 (4 years
back) using a time machine from his findings from his office
in Manhattan, New York. to correct a grim story about the
death of her lover Emma. [9]

Unfortunately, Alexander Hartdegen's efforts were in vain
because it seemed destiny could be changed and his lover still
died in a different way (hit by a train)[10]. This tragic event
made Hartdegen look for answers to the death of his lover by
sliding into the future (in 2030) with his time machine. In 2030,
his sought information in the City Library of New York and met
with Vox 114 (Orlando Jones) a human form of holographic
library guard who explained that attempts to break through
time to change historical destiny were impossible. Not quite
satisfied with the fact Alexander explored the time until 2037
when the condition of the earth was almost damaged by the
moon which exploded because of the human colonies that
inhabited it[11]. In an attempt to save him, he was accidentally
thrown in 802701 years after the incident and saw the fact that
a new evolution on earth had taken place, giving rise to two
remaining humans, namely Eloi who lived on the ground and
Morlock who lived on the stomach[12]. The decision to
destroy Über-Morlock and the cannibal monsters that eat
humans was done by destroying the time machine, this effort
was made to make the history of the new Eloi human
civilization even better. At the end of the film Alexander was
told that he finally settled in the primitive era and intended to
rebuild his research laboratory.

Based on film analysis, the following results are obtained:

A. Use of Time Machine Technology

Conflicts and achievements in this film were caused by the
use of time machine technology created and used by the main
character, Alexander Hartdegen. The time machine in this film
acts as a medium for leap space and time to change the
situation.

B. Space Change

In Time Machine, there are some changes in the
dimensions of space. Space changes occur due to space jumps
when characters leap from one time to another (1899, 1903,
2030, 2037, 802.701 and 635.427.810) using a time machine.
Markers of changing time settings are known through markers
that look like buildings, environment, weather, and so on.

C. Time Change

In this film there are some changes in time settings because
of the time jump from one time to another. Markers of
changing time settings are known through visible markers such
as numbers, technology, life culture artifacts and so on.

IV. DISCUSSION

In a previous study conducted by Sudjadi (2015), it was
revealed that in each shot of the film The Time Machine there
was reality and imagination deliberately combined so that the science fiction stories compiled by the director looked scientific. Some elements shot machines with time bubbles, visible horizon lines, and the life of a new human colony on the moon are basically false imaginations of space and time.

A. 1899

In 1899 was the year the film began. This year, the main character Alexander Hartdegen plans to propose his girlfriend Emma in a park. Unfortunately, at that time the two were robbed. The robbery resulted in the death of Emma who tried to defend the fiancé ring given by Alexander Hartdegen.

Fig. 3. Emma was shot by a robber in a park

In the end, Emma's death made Alexander Hartdegen's life change and became a starting point for conflict in this film.

B. 1903

Four years after Emma's death, a time machine created by Alexander Hartdegen as an attempt to return to 1899 was created to change the fate of his lover's death. A time machine consisting of chairs and numbers is created with full confidentiality.

Fig. 4. Alexander Hartdegen with Time Machine

When the first time the engine is used, the camera frame highlights a classic clock whose clock rotates rapidly backwards.

Fig. 5. Illustration when goes back to 1899

It also looks at the time-numbered machine in the setting to go back to 1899.

Alexander Hartdegen managed to return to the time when he could meet his girlfriend again and avoid the robbery in the park. Unfortunately, Emma's destiny could not be changed where she was still hit by a train.

C. 1899 to 2030

Emma's death for the second time disappointed Alexander Hartdegen. He decided to go to the future where he tried to find answers to destiny there. When Alexander Hartdegen headed for the future using a time machine, there was a change around it. One sign of change is the spider web that is seen interwoven around the machine.

Fig. 6. Numbers on a Time Machine

In addition, the camera also highlights the changing shape of the city to modern and sophisticated. This can be seen from the sign of the emergence of tall buildings and airplanes.

Fig. 7. Spiders that build their nests

Fig. 8. Illustration of changes in the shape of the city

D. 2030

When Alexander Hartdegen and his time machine landed in 2030, it was seen how environmental changes occurred. This was further strengthened by the sign of the emergence of digital billboards with the words "The Future is Now".
Buildings in 2030 also look more minimalist and modern. Very busy human life is also raised with the crowds of people who walk and use bicycles in their activities.

Another thing that marks the time difference between Alexander Hartdegen and the people at that time was clothing. Public clothing in 2030 is more minimalistic and functional than what is worn by him. This is also reinforced by conversations in the film.

E. 2037
The space travel of Alexander Hartdegen, which continued to 2037, led to a state of war. This is marked by the condition of the city being destroyed with cars and buildings damaged and burned.

F. 2037 to 802,721
To avoid the war, Alexander Hartdegen hurried away with his time machine. Unfortunately his journey to the future became unsuccessful because the time machine he created could not be controlled. Alexander Hartdegen went too far into the future in 802,721.

G. 802,721
The journey of time that is too far results in the visualization of extreme changes in the environment around the time machine. Changes are marked by the growth of trees, climate change, changes in topography of the earth and so on.

But the time travel that was too far and great made him unconscious. When he realized, he found that he had been in a community called Eloi with the uniqueness of the house he lived in. In addition to buildings, the Eloi community also uses clothes and language that have actually been past.

At this time, Alexander Hartdegen became acquainted with Mara. Mara is a woman who finds herself and her time machine. Besides Emma, he also met with Kalen and the entire population of Eloi. Unexpectedly, the Eloi community turned out to store past artifacts in the form of building inscriptions containing the letters of the building's name. Alexander Hartdegen's encounter brought him to remember the past he had passed.
On the other hand, the Eloi community turned out to face threats from the Marlock people who kidnapped and preyed on it. In this condition, Alexander Hartdegen finally intended to help and fight the Marlock nation. The only way he can do is to use a time machine.

**H. 635,427.810**

To change the fate that occurred in 802,721, Alexander Hartdegen slid into the future to see what happened using his time machine. As a result of an increasingly uncontrollable time machine, he reached the year 635,427,810 but in the same space.

In that time and space, he saw the destruction that occurred at the Murlock nation’s headquarters. This can be seen from the visual sign of the destruction of the place.

**I. Time Machine Ends**

To change destiny and destroy the Murlock nation, Alexander Hartdegen was forced to destroy the time machine. The destruction of a time machine is characterized by a great light explosion.

After the destruction of the Murlock nation and the engine of his creation, Alexander Hartdegen decided to remain in his future with Mara and the Eloi community. At the same time and place, colleagues (Mr. Philby) and Mrs. Watchit are worried about their existence.

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