CRITICS TOWARD METANARRATIVES
IN THE MOVIE BABEL
VIEWED BY JEAN FRANCOIS LYOTARD’S THOUGHT:
A STUDY OF POSTMODERNISM

A Thesis
Submitted to Letters and Humanities faculty
In partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
The Strata one Degree

WaOde Fadhilah Fitriah
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ENGLISH LETTERS DEPARTMENT
LETTERS AND HUMANITIES FACULTY
STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY SYARIF HIDAYATULLAH
JAKARTA
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SYNOPSIS

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ABSTRACT


The goal of this research is to find and understand the critics toward metanarratives that are reflected in the movie of Babel based on the condition of each country—USA, Japan, Mexico, and Morocco. These critics will be analyzed using postmodernism study by Jean Francois Lyotard’s thought. The research tries to describe what the metanarratives and little narratives are. The metanarratives in Babel whose have power, authority and high technology. The metanarratives are USA, Japan and Old generation in Japan. Whereas the little narratives describe as poverty, crime, and under pressure. They are pressed by metanarratives. The little narratives are Mexico, Morocco and Young Generation in Japan. Based on those conditions the writer found some critics toward metanarratives viewed by Lyotard’s thought. Firstly, little narratives critic metanarratives in Babel that are divided into three parts, such as Little narratives have a right to speak and to be listened by others, Mexico and Morocco show their good side although they are include in little narratives, and Young Generation in Japan rebels the old generation. Secondly, Language Game. Through language little narratives can show their unique language and identity. Language Game in Babel divided into two parts, such as: there is no universal language and language game can be used as jokes and satire to the ideology.

The result of analysis shows that the differences are not supposed to be the press and let other people down. Our planet has become just like the biblical town of Babel, only on a larger scale. We all speak different languages, have different culture, beliefs, and communicate poorly (if at all) with those who aren't like us. Thus, the postmodern appears to free human from shackles of ideology and injustice and let this world coloured by differences.
APPROVEMENT

CRITICS TOWARD METANARRATIVES IN THE MOVIE “BABEL” VIEWED BY JEAN FRANCOIS LYOTARD’S THOUGHT: A STUDY OF POSTMODERNISM

A Thesis
Submitted to English Letters Department
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for S1 Degree

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ENGLISH LETTERS DEPARTMENT
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JAKARTA
2010
LEGALIZATION

The thesis entitled “Critics toward metanarratives in the movie “Babel” viewed by Jean Francois Lyotard’s thought: A study of postmodernism” has been defended before the Letters and Humanities Faculty’s Examination Committee on March 2010. The thesis has already been accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the strata one degree.

Jakarta, June 2010

Examination Committee

Signature Date

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Jakarta, June 2010

WaOde Fadhilah Fitriah
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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May Allah bless us. Finally, writer realizes that this thesis is far from being perfect. Accordingly, writer hopes any suggestion and criticism for this thesis.

Jakarta, June 2010

The Writer
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## ORGANIZATION EXPERIENCE

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CHAPTER I

A. INTRODUCTION

The modern society didn’t bring human as an individual who was enlightened. There are many problems that couldn’t be solved by them. Like essential human value that had been lost. According to John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, American authors and public speakers in the area of future studies, have made an estimation in their book that contains their research in various world phenomenon in one decade, *Megatrends 2000*, that is in this millennium era “terobosan paling menggairahkan dari abad ke-21 akan terjadi bukan karena teknologi, melainkan karena konsep yang meluas dari apa artinya menjadi manusia” (1990:6). The great concern to the humanism caused by the changing of the structure of world society.

The second millennium ended by modernism and industrialism that caused that Capitalist society started to lose its credibility. These societies didn’t recognize “the other” which consists of small communities, low cultures and the third worlds. Therefore, the postmodern appeared to collapse the gap between metanarratives and little-narratives which were created by modernism. Postmodern era was born due to the missing concept of the “universe”. Postmodernists appreciate difference more than uniformity; they respect more to something that has a local and particular character. Postmodernists live in a social group that accepts all the differences in language, belief, and values. Postmodern tends to be called as antihuman because it opposes to the authority that actually
protects the suppressed human. This rebel criticism brings some changes in several fields such as: Philosophy, Theatre, Culture, Art, Literature, Architecture, Film, and many more.

*Babel* is a 2006 film which reflects the problems and gap between metanarratives and little narratives like powerful of developed country to the small country. *Babel* has four interrelated sets of situations with many events which are revealed out of sequence. It also has multiple stories taking place in Morocco, Japan, Mexico and the United States where in each of the country are shown their internal problems. Moreover, the country has to face other problems regarding their external problems with other countries. The film is inspired by the myth that included in bible. Dawn of that myth, human speaking in a single language, but God confounded their language into many languages. It was caused by the construction of Babel Tower whose top went straight to heavens. However, the Tower of Babel was not built for worshiping and praising the God, it was actually dedicated to the glory of man. God disliked what the people were doing, and then God made everyone suddenly spoke different languages. As a result of not being able to communicate, the people couldn’t cooperate productively and weren’t able to finish building the Tower of Babel.

Therefore in this film there are four languages and four cultures from different countries. Just like the people in Babel, not one character in the movie is a particularly good communicator—especially when trying to interact with someone from a different culture. All of the countries represented in this movie are at the time portrayed as “mean and scary.” Japan, as a developed country
which is superficially good, was portrayed as a country with cold and stand-offish people and culture, with a lot of problems such as; drug abuse, free sex in teenagers, high suicide numbers, individualist; while Mexicans are seen as a barbaric, uncivilized people who are well known also for their drunk habit and the problems of illegal worker because this country is developing country.

Morocco depicted as a third world, reflects the poverty and considered as “terrorist” just because it is a “Moslem” country and the accident which was accidently committed by a child who was shooting his gun at a bus filled innocent Americans. Even USA, as a superpower country that can judge whatever they like to everyone or country, also has problems. The Americans are described as an individualist and materialist. It can be concluded that none of the countries is perfect. These facts bring the consciousness into our mind that there is no view universal world or monoculture society in this world and a fanatic belief that there is a culture that is better than others. Nevertheless, every nation surely has weakness and strength but these create the variety in this life.

Based on the background of the study, this research will be focused on the exploring the concept of postmodernism that critic metanarratives which reflected in Babel. Therefore the writer wants to analyze this film as a postmodern study that oppose the metanarratives and offer little narratives which did not necessarily add up, but which may be woven together. In addition, the writer is interested in analyzing Babel using Jean Francois Lyotard thought, because this film relates to his famous thought that “Postmodernism is incredulity towards metanarratives which critic of universals and central authority.
Based on the background of study above, the writer makes research questions as follows:

1. How are Metanarratives and Little narratives depicted in film *Babel*?

2. How do the Little narratives critic the Metanarratives in the film *Babel*?

In general, this research is aimed to prove if *Babel* written by Guillermo Arriaga through its condition of each country and conflict can be analyzed by using the theory of postmodernism that reflected in Lyotard’s thought.

**B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology includes several important aspects of a research such as method of the research, objective of the research, technique of data analysis, the unit of analysis and place of the research:

Concerning with the Method of the Research, the writer uses the qualitative method. Since the writer uses the qualitative method, the data which taken are complete, deeper, credible and meaningful so that the objective method of the research can be obtained.

Meanwhile regarding with the Objective of the Research, In general, this research is aimed to prove if film *Babel* by Alejandro Gonzales Inarritu is feasible to be analyzed using the theory of postmodernism.

For the technique of data analysis, the collected data uses a number of sources of concerning the theory of postmodernism. The research began by watching *Babel* carefully for several times. It is aimed to learn the contents of film
intensively so it can prevent misunderstanding in the analyzing. Then, the research continued on finding related theories using Jean Francois Lyotard’s thought.

For the unit analysis in this research is a film *Babel* directed by Alejandro Gonzalez and it written by Guillermo Arriaga. Babel was released in 2006 by Paramount Home Entertainment.

This research has taken place since May 2009 in English Letters Department, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, States Islamic University *Syarif Hidayatullah* Jakarta. All materials are taken from some libraries, such as; Library of Adab and Humanities Faculty, Center Library of State Islamic University Jakarta, Library of FIB University of Indonesia and also taken from the internet.
CHAPTER II

In analyzing Film *Babel*, the writer uses some theories. Such as: Film, Postmodernism, and Jean Francois Lyotard’s thought.

A.  **Film**

Either film or literary work contains fabricated story which brings messages, criticisms, or new aspiration toward a particular set of social values. Film is another alternative of media for narrating a story. The story refers to a fabricated story which is created based on either imagination or reality.

B.  **Postmodernism**

How we see postmodernism, and its relation to film theory, depends very much on whether we see it. Postmodern films often manage only a play with multiple, or heavily ironic, perhaps ‘unfinished’ or parodic endings. But before all that, we should know more explanations about modernism which was a cause of postmodern movement.

According to some theorists, the 20th century can be divided into two distinct periods; one characterized by the modernism movement and the other by postmodernism. Some believe that postmodernism was a response to modernism and hence consider them as two aspects of the same movement. There are some major differences between modernism and postmodernism. These distinctions make clear, the basic difference in the ways of thinking that led to these movements. The difference between modernism and postmodernism highlights the difference in the approaches towards life. Modernism describes a collection of
cultural movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It consists of a series of reforming movements in art, architecture, literature, music and applied arts. Modernism was characterized by a dramatic change of thought, whereby human intellect sought to improve their environment. There was a trend of improving every aspect of life by involving science and technology into it. Modernism brought about a reform in all spheres of life including philosophy, commerce, art and literature, with the aid of technology and experimentation. It led to progress in all the aspects of life by changing the approach of mankind of looking at them.

The fundamental difference between modernism and postmodernism is that modernist thinking is about the search of an abstract truth of life while postmodernist thinkers believe that there is no universal truth, abstract or otherwise. Modernism attempts to construct a coherent world-view whereas postmodernism attempts to remove the difference between high and low.

In sketch of postmodernism, we can find the theory of social postmodernism. Like Jean – Francious Lyotard’s work which the title *The Postmodern Condition: A Report On knowledge*, is a value guidance to explain the basic assumption from social postmodernism theory. In Postmodern society is a society in which no one narrative – big or little – no one language games dominates. In Postmodern society, little narratives are jammed together. And this carnival of narratives replaces monolithic of metanarratives. It is called Liberation of the human soul.
C. Jean Francois Lyotard’s thought

Jean-Francois Lyotard is one of the famous thinkers who describe completely about postmodernism as a larger culture phenomenon. Lyotard has defined postmodernism as “incredulity toward metanarratives”. Lyotard’s notion that people stopped believing in metanarratives because such narratives marginalize minorities assumes that people universally believe in justice.

Hence what might be called the ethnics of The Postmodern Condition, in Lyotard’s book, can be summarized as follows: ‘little’ is better than ‘big’. For it is not just narrative, but ‘little’ narratives. Nevertheless it is a case ethically or in other ways to big ones, because it is the smallest little narratives whose rules and producers are least determinable and determining. Postmodernism in its positive mode celebrates the present and is far more accepting of late capitalism and technology. It also celebrates the fact that mass communication and electronics have revolutionized the world.

In Lyotard's works, the differend, Lyotard gave the term 'language games'. He began to see that there are many different language that there are many different language game that we play. For instance -praying, singing, telling jokes, gossiping, swearing, making a promise, taking a vow, pronouncing a couple man and wife, telling a lie. He see that there are many different language games that we play. Hence, Lyotard argue that there is no universal language. Justice and injustice can only be terms within language games. Lyotard was a frequent writer on aesthetic matters.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH FINDING

In analyzing Babel, Firstly, the writer will describe metanarratives and little narratives which appear in Babel movie. Secondly, the writer will reveal and explain how little narratives critic the metanarratives using postmodernism approach based on Lyotard’s thought.

A. Condition of Metanarratives in Babel

Modernists became optimistic that by using the universal values of science, reason and logic, they could make freedom, happiness, universality and progress. This situation produced a progression of technology that more increasingly in each day. In Babel, the writer found the using of technology like mobile phone and television and they become important unsure to the people in developed country as metanarratives. They use it to legitimize their authority to other countries.

In Babel, metanarratives reflected in two powerful countries, as the first worlds that have an authority to press the third worlds or small communities. Those metanarartives are USA, Japan and Old Generation in Japan.

Firstly, USA, as a superpower country that can judge whatever they like to everyone or country, also has problems. The Americans are described as an individualist and materialist.
Secondly, Japan, as a developed country which is superficially good, was portrayed as a country with cold and stand-offish people and culture, with a lot of problems such as; drug abuse, free sex in teenagers, high suicide numbers, individualist.

Lastly, Old Generation in Japan. Generation gap also colours the conflict in Babel. As a dominant communities, Old generations are described as talk, no deaf, has a power. Old generation think that every development and successful that had been reached in Japan is because of the old generation’s efforts and it was not because of the young generation.

B. Condition of Little narratives in Babel

Little narratives in Babel are small communities or countries that are pressed by the domination and authority of metanarratives. Those little narratives are Morocco, Mexico and Young Generation in Japan

Firstly, Morocco depicted as a third world, reflects the poverty and considered as “terrorist” just because it is a “Moslem” country and the accident which was accidently committed by a child who was shooting his gun at a bus filled innocent Americans.

Secondly, Mexicans are seen as a barbaric, uncivilized people who are well known also for their drunk habit and the problems of illegal worker because this country is developing country.

Lastly, Young Generation in Japan. Teenagers in Japan are describes as dumb and deaf. Deaf and mute means that young generation is forbidden to talk to convey their aspiration and it is may the old generation who can convey and give
aspiration. They need to be accepted and recognized in their environment with just the way they are. Thought that only their friends can understand their selves and their needs. Because of that young generation doesn’t want to hear the old generations.

C. Incredulity toward Metanarratives

Lyotard has defined postmodernism as “incredulity toward metanarratives”. The refusal of Metanarratives is for let “other narratives or little narratives” appear to speak freely for their selves. Nevertheless, every nation surely has weakness and strength but these create the variety in this life. Therefore the writer wants to analyze this film as a postmodern study that oppose the metanarratives and offer little narratives which did not necessarily add up, but which may be woven together.

1. Little narratives Critic the metanarratives in Babel

Those critics are, first, little narratives have a right and to be listened by others. Little narratives like Moroccan and Mexican, they can talk firmly what they want and they should do. Second, Mexico and Morocco show their good side although they are include in little narratives. Anwar as a Moroccan and a Moslem, helped them sincerely. Mexicans are reflected as people with close family relationship. Although Mexico and Morocco are described as developing countries and minority cultures but they can show their humanity values in their hard life. The condition of young generation in Japan include in critics toward metanarratives. Not only because They describes as can’t talk and deaf but also they are pressed by old generation. Therefore young generation rebels and fights
the pressure from the old people because the old people think that only they who
can only talk and control.

2. Language Game

Critic towards metanaratives are also find in language game. Postmodern
offers language game term. There are many different language games that we
play. For instance - praying, singing, telling jokes, gossiping, swearing, making
a promise, taking a vow, pronouncing a couple man and wife, telling a lie.
However, Language game gives a room to other languages to show their
identities. Babel also describes about language game. There are two findings in
Babel that included in language game. Such as; There is no universal language,
because in Babel there are four different languages. And Language game is used
by little narratives as jokes and satire to the ideology. Like about west and Islam
culture.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous analyzes, the writer could draw a conclusion that is in Babel, it can be found some critics toward metanarratives that are reflected by little narratives. In the film Babel, Alejandro González Iñárritu wants to convince the viewers about differences shouldn’t be a problem to make something become easier. But he describes it in another way that he reflects many problems in each country and gives portraits a gap between developed and developing countries. Therefore in this film there are four languages and four cultures from different countries where every country has special characters.

Babel is a film that has four interrelated sets of situations with many events which are revealed out of sequence. Babel also has multiple stories taking place in Morocco, Japan, Mexico and the United States where in each of the country are shown their internal problems. Moreover, the country has to face other problems regarding their external problems with other countries.

Babel implies many prudential messages for the viewers. Through Babel, the viewers understand that differences are not supposed to be the press and let other people down. In today's world it's easier for us to sympathize with our own kind than it is to other people from other cultures. Our planet has become just like the biblical town of Babel, only in a larger scale. We all speak different languages, have different values, and communicate poorly (if at all) with those who aren't like us. And a good film has universal meanings as a bridge to across all differences. Thus the thought from
postmodernist, Lyotard, is the suitable theory to analyze this film because postmodern free human from shackles of ideology and injustice. Postmodern gives a room for little narratives to show who they are. It esteems of voices from the margins, minority cultures, are finding spaces within contemporary culture.
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A. Background of the Study

The modern era brought human became more advanced in the 20th century. In this century, technology and industry had changed the life condition of human from traditional into modern and everything became more practical. But the modern society didn’t bring human as an individual who was enlightened. There are many problems that couldn’t be solved by them. Like essential human value that had been lost. According to John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, American authors and public speakers in the area of future studies, have made an estimation in their book that contains their research in various world phenomenon in one decade, *Megatrends 2000*, that is in this millennium era “terobosan paling menggairahkan dari abad ke-21 akan terjadi bukan karena teknologi, melainkan karena konsep yang meluas dari apa artinya menjadi manusia” (1990:6). The great concern to the humanism caused by the changing of the structure of world society. Events that happened in the 20th century, gave evidences that although science explosion had positives sides, it didn’t make a utopia.¹

¹Stanley J.Granz. A Primer on postmodernism. (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Andi Yogyakarta. 1996.) P: 270. Utopia is a name for ideal community or society, that is taken from Of the Best State of a Republic, and of the New Island Utopia, a book written in 1516 by Sir Thomas More, describing a fictional island in the Atlantic Ocean, possessing a seemingly perfect socio-political-legal system. The term has been used to describe both intentional communities that attempted to
The second millennium ended by modernism and industrialism that caused that Capitalist society started to lose its credibility. According the Daniel Bell modern culture has influenced new life values. Bell saw hedonism, lack of social identification, narcissism, and decline. These societies didn’t recognize “the other” which consists of small communities, low cultures and the third worlds. Therefore, the postmodern appeared to collapse the gap between metanarratives and little-narratives which were created by modernism. Postmodern era was born due to the missing concept of the “universe”. Postmodernists appreciate difference more than uniformity; they respect more to something that has a local and particular character. Postmodernists live in a social group that accepts all the differences in language, belief, and values. Postmodern tends to be called as antihuman because it opposes to the authority that actually protects the suppressed human.

This rebel criticism brings some changes in several fields such as: Philosophy, Theatre, Culture, Art, Literature, Architecture and many more. As a culture symptom, postmodernism includes various dimensions. Film is one of create an ideal society, and fictional societies portrayed in literature. “Utopia” is sometimes used pejoratively, in reference to an unrealistic ideal that is impossible to achieve, It has spawned other concepts, most prominently. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utopia/access in October 27, 2009

Daniel Bell is a sociologist and a professor emeritus at Harvard University. He is best known for his contribution to post-industrialism. His most influential books are The End of Ideology (1960), The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism (1976). en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel Bell/access in October 27, 2009

In critical theory, and particularly postmodernism, metanarrative, sometimes also known as a master- or grand narrative is an abstract idea that is thought to be a comprehensive explanation of historical experience or knowledge. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Francois Lyotatd. Accessed on July 20, 2009

Little narratives means small communities that is pressed by grand narratives


Ibid. p:155
media culture which has a high dimension. As stated by Joseph M. Boggs and Dennis W. Petrie on their book, The Art of Watching Films. According to them, film has a strong influence because it combines paint, motion picture, technology, music, literature and drama into an interesting watch. On the other hand, film also reflects political and social pressures and issue indirectly in many complex and contradictory ways.

Babel is a 2006 film which has four interrelated sets of situations with many events which are revealed out of sequence. Babel also has multiple stories taking place in Morocco, Japan, Mexico and the United States where in each of the country are shown their internal problems. Moreover, the country has to face other problems regarding their external problems with other countries. The film is inspired by the myth that included in bible. Dawn of that myth, human speaking in a single language, but God confounded their language into many languages. It was caused by the construction of Babel Tower whose top went straight to heavens. However, the Tower of Babel was not built for worshiping and praising the God, it was actually dedicated to the glory of man. God disliked what the people were doing, and then God made everyone suddenly spoke different languages. As a result of not being able to communicate, the people couldn’t cooperate productively and weren’t able to finish building the Tower of Babel.

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9 John Howard Lausen. Film the creative process. 1964p. 108  
10 Genesis 11:4-5 : And they said ‘let us bulid ourselves a city, and tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, let we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole world. ‘5 But the lord come down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had bulid. 1:28 God blessed them and said to them;’Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it . http://en.bible.org/genesis/ accessed on June 30, 2009
Therefore in this film there are four languages and four cultures from different countries. Just like the people in Babel, not one character in the movie is a particularly good communicator—especially when trying to interact with someone from a different culture. All of the countries represented in this movie are at the time portrayed as “mean and scary.” Japan, as a developed country which is superficially good, was portrayed as a country with cold and stand-offish people and culture, with a lot of problems such as; drug abuse, free sex in teenagers, high suicide numbers, individualist; while Mexicans are seen as a barbaric, uncivilized people who are well known also for their drunk habit and the problems of illegal worker because this country is developing country.

Morocco depicted as a third world, reflects the poverty and considered as “terrorist” just because it is a “Moslem” country and the accident which was accidently committed by a child who was shooting his gun at a bus filled innocent Americans. Even USA, as a superpower country that can judge whatever they like to everyone or country, also has problems. The Americans are described as an individualist and materialist. It can be concluded that none of the countries is perfect. These facts bring the consciousness into our mind that there is no view universal world or monoculture society in this world and a fanatic belief that there is a culture that is better than others.

It can be seen clearly that Babel reflects the problems and gap between metanarratives and little narratives like powerful of developed country to the small country. Nevertheless, every nation surely has weakness and strength but these create the variety in this life. Therefore the writer wants to analyze this film
as a postmodern study that oppose the metanarratives and offer littlenarratives which did not necessarily add up, but which may be woven together. In addition, the writer is interested in analyzing *Babel* using Jean Francois Lyotard thought, because this film relates to his famous thought that “Postmodernism is incredulity towards metanarratives which critiques of universals, essential subjectivity and the fixing of meaning has much radical potential.

**B. Focus of the Study**

There are many things that can be analyzed from this film; however, to make this research focus, the writer limits this research only to analyze the critics to the metanarratives which reflected in the movie *Babel* and it will be critiqued use Lyotard’s thought.

**C. Questions of the Research**

Based on the Focus of the Study Above, the problem will be discussed in the research are:

1. How are Metanarratives and Little narratives depicted in film “*Babel*”?

2. How do the Little narratives critic the Metanarratives in the film *Babel*?

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D. Objectives of the Research

Based on the Research Question above, the objective of this research is to describe the condition in each country and explain how the condition gives critics to the metanarratives which reflected in film *Babel*.

E. Significances of the Research

Through this research, the writer hopes that it would be beneficial to readers in terms of it is information and knowledge. It is also hoped that the result of this research can be used for the English Department, Faculty of Humanities of State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta as one of the references in the studying of narrative in different medium. Besides, the writer expects that this research can give understanding about the postmodernism study, especially about Lyotard’s thought.

F. Research Methodology

1. Method

The writer uses qualitative method in doing this research. The writer will applies qualitative method, which is analyzing the relation among words, sentences or pictures which produces particular meaning.

2. Technique of Data Analysis

The writer will explain the data qualitatively. First, the writer watches the film carefully for several times. This is aimed to learn the contents of film intensively so it can prevent misunderstanding in the analyzing. The writer gives
annotations about the film. Finally, the writer relates it to the postmodern study use Lyotard’s thought.

3. Unit of Analysis

Analysis unit that is used in this research is the DVD film by Paramount Home Entertainment. Babel is directed by Alejandro Gonzalez Innaritu released on 2006.

4. Instruments

In collecting data, the writer uses herself as instrument by watching, understanding, identifying, classifying and analyzing the information related to the data.

5. Place and Time of the Research

The research started at the academic year 2009 in English Letters Department, Adab and Humanities Faculty, State Islamic University Jakarta. All the materials are taken from some libraries, such as, Library of Adab and Humanities Faculty, Center Library of State Islamic University Jakarta, Library of FIB University of Indonesia and also taken from the internet.
CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the writer will explain the theories that will be used in this research. Those theories are Film, Postmodernism, and Jean-Francois Lyotard’s thought.

A. Film

According to Oxford learner’s Dictionary, film is a series of moving pictures recorded with sound that tells a story, shown on television or at the cinema or movie theater. Film is another alternative of media for narrating a story. The story refers to a fabricated story which is created based on either imagination or reality. Either film or literary work contains fabricated story which brings messages, criticisms, or new aspiration toward a particular set of social values. The possibility of noticing symptomatic meanings reminds us that all meaning, whether referential, explicit, or implicit, is a social phenomenon.
B.  **Postmodernism**

How we see postmodernism, and its relation to film theory, depends very much on whether we see it as (1) a paradigm shift: the end of Enlightenment meta-narratives of Progress and Revolution discursive/conceptual grid; (2) a corpus of texts (both those which theorize postmodernism –Jameson, Lyotard, etc.\(^3\)). Postmodern films often manage only a play with multiple, or heavily ironic, perhaps ‘unfinished’ or parodic endings.\(^4\) But before all that, we should know more explanations about modernism which was a cause of postmodern movement.

According to some theorists, the 20th century can be divided into two distinct periods; one characterized by the modernism movement and the other by postmodernism. Some believe that postmodernism was a response to modernism and hence consider them as two aspects of the same movement. There are some major differences between modernism and postmodernism. These distinctions make clear, the basic difference in the ways of thinking that led to these movements. The difference between modernism and postmodernism highlights the difference in the approaches towards life. Modernism describes a collection of cultural movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It consists of a series of reforming movements in art, architecture, literature, music and applied arts. Modernism was characterized by a dramatic change of thought, whereby human intellect sought to improve their environment. There was a trend of improving every aspect of life by involving science and technology into it.


Modernism brought about a reform in all spheres of life including philosophy, commerce, art and literature, with the aid of technology and experimentation. It led to progress in all the aspects of life by changing the approach of mankind of looking at them.

Postmodernism means 'after the modern’. It was a reaction to modernism and was influenced by the disenchantment brought about by the Second World War. Postmodernism refers to the state that lacks a central hierarchy and one that is complex, ambiguous and diverse. The developments in society, the economy and the culture of the 1960s were impacted by postmodernism.

One of postmodern theorist, Ihab Hassan⁵, offers a table of differences between the two movements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modernism</th>
<th>Postmodernism</th>
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<tr>
<td>Form (conjunctive / closed)</td>
<td>Antiform (Disjunctive / open)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
<td>Anarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Object/ Finished work</td>
<td>Process / Performance / Happening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence</td>
<td>Absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centering</td>
<td>Dispersal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre / Boundary</td>
<td>Text / Intertext</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root / Depth</td>
<td>Rhizome / Surface</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The fundamental difference between modernism and postmodernism is that modernist thinking is about the search of an abstract truth of life while postmodernist thinkers believe that there is no universal truth, abstract or otherwise. Modernism attempts to construct a coherent world-view whereas postmodernism attempts to remove the difference between high and low.

Both modernism and postmodernism are offering narratives. Modernism admires metanarratives or grand narratives which consist of great philosophies or great thoughts. In the postmodern world there is no room for metanarratives.

Narratives consist of various thoughts, philosophies, theories, works, communities, or countries. The narrative relies upon in order to legitimize itself. All form kind of social bond - a social group that legitimize itself. It defines what has the right to be said and done in the culture. In Lyotard's term, It means a story or narrative that is presumed to have great generality and represents a final and apodictic truth. Because of the great thinkers’ era, men such as generalized critical intellect – in fact the very idea of an intellectual – was a product of enlightenment. Intellectuals were called “philosophers” who enjoyed celebrity and prestige. Lyotard calls Metanarratives or Grand narratives.

In postmodernism, there are grand narratives or metanarratives. They called grand or metanarratives because they saw the effects from modernism that was not creating the progression. In add the big countries or communities are more legitimize the little ones by their science and authority. In general postmodernism term, they are called with grand narratives. This term was created through Friedrich Nietzsche’s thought who was the first thinker that gave many contributions of thinking for other postmodernists about a world without center which was creating a world from global into local. It is suitable with the concept of postmodernists that is they refuse the universal world. Therefore they give a

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6 Users. Sfo.com/arathbone/loed 4/. han


8 *Ibid.* p:10
room for little narratives to speak freely and show what they are. Whereas Lyotard use ‘metanarratives’ to call them. Between grand narratives and meta narratives are have same meanings. Meta-narrative - sometimes 'grand narratives' – 'sublime narrative’- are grand, large-scale theories and philosophies of the world, such as the progress of history, the know ability of everything by science, and the possibility of absolute freedom. The opposite of grand or metanarratives are little or micro narratives. In postmodernism condition, little or micro narratives have right and room to show their identity. Same with grand or metanarratives, between little or micronarratives have same meanings too. little narrative - Lyotard's term for a narrative in which key terms are being defined locally and the meaning of these terms is local and provisional. Hence, the writer will use ‘metanarratives and little narratives’ for the next step of this research. Because these words are came from in the same term that is postmodernism, which will not make doubt or different argument to other readers.

After seeing the reality that metanarratives praise for only one voice, and it is just making the minorities more marginalized. So postmodern appear as a rebel form of modern. Postmodern, in this sense of the term, are eclectic and gather their beliefs from a variety of sources while treating the resulting compilation as tentative. Therefore postmodernist offers the little narratives concept. little narrative - Lyotard's term for a narrative in which key terms are being defined locally and the meaning of these terms is local and provisional.

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10 Ibid
11 Ibid
Postmodernism is fond of terms which connote openness, multiplicity, plurality, heterodoxy, contingency, and hybridity.\(^{12}\) Postmodernism has made space for minority cultures, has brought about a fragmentation of culture that is positive. In its rejection of universal norms, postmodernism refutes generalizations that exclude, and advocates a plurality of individualized agency (Nicholson, 1990, 13). In this respect, therefore, gender and race are no longer dichotomized. Postmodernism represents, then, a cultural liberation.\(^{13}\)

Small surprise that for some groupings – particularly those who had previously been excluded by the high principles of modernism – postmodernism is seen as liberating and celebratory. Voices from the margins, minority cultures, are finding spaces within contemporary culture. In the western world this has meant hearing, among others and in differing degrees of volume, the voices of Blacks, women, women of colour, gays, lesbians, ecologists, animal rights supporters, disabled people and so on. Some of these voices are finding their way on to film. Since the 1980s, for example, there has been an emergence of Black men and women film-makers and Black stars, gay and lesbian film-makers are coming on mainstream – marking the beginnings of a pluralism therefore in this highly competitive arena.\(^{14}\)

Some of these concerns of the postmodernism have to do with language: with how we constitute and are constituted by language; with the power

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\(^{14}\) *Ibid.* p:283
interpretation of language (who takes a control meaning). Postmodernism is about language. About how it controls, how it determines meaning, and how we try to exert control through language. About how language restricts, closes down, insists that it stands for some thing. Postmodernism is about how ‘we’ are defined within the language, and within specific historical, social, cultural, matrices. It’s about race, class, gender, erotic identity and practice, nationality, age, ethnicity. It’s about difference. It’s about power and powerlessness, about empowerment, and about all the stages in between and beyond and unthought-of.

In cultural analysis the postmodern challenge to universals is useful, as is its focus on openness to and respect for difference. Yet more important is an understanding of the oppressive power relations that produce difference. 

That is what the postmodern world is all about. In sketch of postmodernism, we can find the theory of social postmodernism. Like Jean – Francious Lyotard’s work which the title The Postmodern Condition: A Report On knowledge, is a value guidance to explain the basic assumption from social postmodernism theory. In Postmodern society is a society in which no one narrative – big or little – no one language games dominates. In Postmodern society, little narratives are jammed together. And this carnival of narratives replaces monolithic of metanarratives. It is called Liberation of the human soul.

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15 Ibid p:2  
16 Ibid. P:220  
17 Ibid. P: 41
C. Jean-Francois Lyotard’s thought

Jean-Francois Lyotard is one of the famous thinkers who describe completely about postmodernism as a larger culture phenomenon. Lyotard were indeed claiming that modernity reduces reason to understanding and that postmodernity opens the space of playfulness and inventiveness\textsuperscript{18}. Lyotard has defined postmodernism as “\textit{incredulity toward metanarratives}”. Lyotard’s notion that people stopped believing in metanarratives because such narratives marginalize minorities assumes that people universally believe in justice. And that is metanarrative. Yet, despite is inadequacies, lyotard’s definition of postmodernism as incredulity of metanarratives continue to have great influence.\textsuperscript{19} The writer also take other definition, Incredulity-disbelief or skepticism. We are incredulous when we are skeptical or disbelieving. So from those explanations, Lyotard made this an important concept for postmodernism by saying that postmoderns are \textit{incredulity toward metanarratives}, that is, they are skeptical about claims that are overgeneralized.\textsuperscript{20} The narrative function is losing its functions, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal. Postmodernism in its positive mode celebrates the present and is far more accepting of late capitalism and technology. It also celebrates the fact that mass communication and electronics have revolutionized the world (Hawthorn, 1992, 111).

\textsuperscript{20} Users. Sfo.com/arathbone/loed 4/. han
The Postmodern Condition, first published in French in 1979 and in English in 1984. In it Lyotard opposes the heterogeneity of “little narratives” to the dogmatism of “meta narratives,” whose reign he unequivocally proclaims is over. 21 The refusal of Metanarratives is for let “other narratives or little narratives” appear to speak freely for themselves. Lyotard reject an effort which make a single paradigm and explain about another paradigm, perspective to see a reality of world.

Hence what might be called the ethnics of The Postmodern Condition can be summarized as follows: ‘little’ is better than ‘big’. For it is not just narrative, but ‘little’ narratives. Nevertheless it is a case ethically or in other ways to big ones, because it is the smallest little narratives whose rules and producers are least determinable and determining.

Indirect Lyotard opens and gives a room for the narratives which was repressed, unknowledgeable, get rid of, dominated. He incredulity toward modern metanarratives and asked its legitimacy together with validity of science, sole truth, universalism, and humanism discourse. He was suspicious about authorities which would claimed to legislate what was ‘good’ and ‘right’ for others. He was concerned to establish a vision of the postmodern which would give a space for others who had been silenced and shamed through the arrogance of a dominant reason which presumed to be able to speak on behalf of others. Lyotard insist these differences are not accidentally but structurally repressed by an

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enlightenment vision of modernity which praise to the high culture and produce the blooming of technology.

Postmodernism in its positive mode celebrates the present and is far more accepting of late capitalism and technology. It also celebrates the fact that mass communication and electronics have revolutionized the world (Hawthorn, 1992, 111). Postmodernism delights in and is fascinated by technology. Technology is one of impacts from increasing of knowledge. Knowledge is one of important unsure in postmodern society—a society which live in late capitalism. Lyotard proclaimed that, technological changes would have a major impact on knowledge. Lyotard adds that, scientific knowledge is not the only kind of knowledge. Thus, in 1974 He predicted that no knowledge will survive that cannot be and storage of information will no longer depend on individuals put on computers. Information will be produced and sold. Nations will fight for information the way they used to fight for territory. Taking the place of place, huge multinational corporations will dominate.

In Lyotard's works, the differend, Lyotard gave the term 'language games', Here Lyotard is drawing upon the work of philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein. In his early work Wittgenstein looked for the perfect, logical language that could state everything with clarity and precision. Any other of language – such as telling a joke, reciting poetry – he would have seen meaningless. But then he changed his mind. He began to see that there is much

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23 Ibid. P:23
different language game that we play. For instance - praying, singing, telling jokes, gossiping, swearing, making a promise, taking a vow, pronouncing a couple man and wife, telling a lie.  

Language game sometimes also called 'phrase regimens', denotes the multiplicity of communities of meaning, the innumerable and incommensurable separate systems in which meanings are produced and rules for their circulation are created. He began to see that there are many different language games that we play. Hence, Lyotard argue that there is no universal language. Justice and injustice can only be terms within language games, and the universality of ethics is out of the window. Lyotard argues that notions of justice and injustice do in fact remain in postmodernism.

Lyotard was a frequent writer on aesthetic matters. He was, despite his reputation as a postmodernist, a great promoter of modernist art. He favored the startling and perplexing works of the high modernist avant-garde. In them he found a demonstration of the limits of our conceptuality, a valuable lesson for anyone too imbued with Enlightenment confidence. As Lyotard says:

“Let us wage a war on totality; let us be witness to the unpresentable; let us activate the differences and the honor of the name.”

So lyotard questions the claims to representation that are encoded within an Enlightenment vision of modernity.

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27 *Ibid* p.82
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH FINDING

This chapter will provide the research finding of the examination. Firstly, the writer will describe metanarratives and little narratives which appear in Babel movie. Secondly, the writer will reveal and explain how little narratives critic the metanarratives using postmodernism approach based on Lyotard’s thought.

A. Condition of Metanarratives in Babel

A metanarrative - Lyotard's term means a story or narrative that is presumed to have great generality and represents a final and apodictic truth. Metanararives are also world constructions which include entire problems, fix the truth criteria and knowledge and technology. Metanarratives has purpose to legitimate their authority. In Babel, metanarratives reflected in two powerful countries, as the first worlds that have an authority to press the third worlds or small communities.

1. Technology colors metanarratives in Babel

Modern era also known as the Age of Enlightenment or the Age of Reason. The main value of the age, besides reason, was the idea of progress. Modernists became optimistic that by using the universal values of science,
reason and logic, they could make freedom, happiness, universality and progress. ¹ This situation produced a progression of technology that more increasingly in each day. The blooming of technology in telecommunication like mobile phone and electronic media such as: television and computer have been giving a significant developing. It cannot be apart for the society modern. In Babel, the writer found the using of technology like mobile phone and television and they become important unsure to the people in developed country as metanarratives. They use it to legitimize their authority to other countries.

Lyotard adds scientific knowledge is not the only kind of knowledge. Thus, in 1974 He predicted that no knowledge will survive that cannot be and storage of information will no longer depend on individuals put on computers. Information will be produced and sold. Nations will fight for information the way they used to fight for territory. Taking the place of place, huge multinational corporations will dominate.²

Based on lyotard’s statement, the writer correlate it with the situation that happen in Babel where America use technology as an information like news in TV to make other countries believe that Morocco as an terrorist country. And America asked Japan to help America to find the terrorist when

¹ Jim Powell, Postmodernism for Beginners. (New York: Writers and Readers. 1998.)
² Ibid. P:23
the accident that one of tourist Americans got shot. Because based on scene
that Gun which as used for shooting was given by Japanese, Yasujiro Wataya
as a gift for Moroccan, Hassan Ibrahim. From this situation, the writer
concluded that information by technology is used for corporation huge
multinational.

2. United State of America

USA is the wealthiest and most powerful nation in the world. In
*Babel* most of condition USA isn’t described in USA territory but how their
power dominate in other countries. Therefore the writer can see the condition
of USA.

a. Center and Powerful

> Richard Jones: *What do you mean, there’s no other ambulance? What do you mean? Fucking move! Fucking find me an ambulance! Find me an ambulance!*

> Anwar (Guide): *He wants to know how he will get his wife out of here.*

> Moroccan Police: *Tell him they said his embassy will deal with it.*

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Anwar (Guide) : Your embassy will deal with it. what can my embassy do?

Richard Jones : This is your fucked-up country! It’s your responsibility! You do something!

American Police : Nevertheless the government of the United States has deemed that you are in seriously breaking the law, and is determined to immediately and definitively deport you. I can assure of you, you’ll only be prolonging the inevitable. I recommended you accept voluntary deportation.

(BABEL DVD, 01:28:39)

In this film the writer argues the American people way of thinking about their country as a superpower country. That terms them to determine into arrogance people. As a superpower and developed country, America has a strength to dominate the world with their mind. America also has a political immunity. America as the icon of the countries in the world, sometimes claim the country as a center of the world. It can be concluded from the pictures and text above that America has unlimited power wherever they are.

They can force even insult the periphery country like Morocco and Mexico to fulfill what they want. It can be seen in this text (What do you mean, there’s no other ambulance? What do you mean? Fucking move! Fucking find me an ambulance! Find me an ambulance!).

Moreover they think they are right, they will show their arrogance more. We can see in this text from the scene that happen in Morocco (Your embassy will deal with it. what can my embassy do? This is your fucked-up country! It’s your responsibility! You do...
something!) and this text is happen in Mexico (Nevertheless the government of the United States has deemed that you are in seriously breaking the law, and is determined to immediately and definitively deport you. I want to talk to a lawyer. If you attempt to take this trial, I can assure of you, you'll only be prolonging the inevitable. I recommended you accept voluntary deportation). Thus, American can dominate world by their mind and power.

As a superpower country, USA dominates and presses the small countries in many ways. One of the ways is by Judging through language game.

**News in Morocco**: Today, near Tazarine, there was an incident. An American was shot. Authorities say it could have been a robbery. But, the American government was quick to suggest a terrorist link.

(BABEL DVD, 00:58:46)

Since the tragedy of grey September, the American generally claimed Muslims as terrorist. The arrogance of America can be seen from the world history about the aggression to Iraq. The writer also quoted Bush’s speech concerning the incident of September 11th, 2001; he promised that America will be an icon of countries in the world, the center of technology, security, even the centre of entertainment area that influences people’s life-style in the world.

In Babel, a judgment of terrorist country is not pointed to Iraq, but to Morocco. It is caused by the accident of shooting that happen in Morocco with a child as the shooter. This child thought that a gun is
like a toy and because of his thought made an American, Susan Jones, got shot. This accident made USA judge Morocco as a terrorist country without any investigation before (*But, the American government was quick to suggest a terrorist link*). That USA’s statement used language and it contains universal language that grand narratives use to press little narratives more.

With the authority that USA has, of course USA can judge whatever they like to the Moslem countries including Morocco in *Babel*. USA can also make the world believe with their paradigm about terrorist link.

### b. Individualist

**Amelia:** Can’t anyone come to take care of the kids? It’s just one day, sir

**Richard Jones:** How do you expect me to find someone from here?

**Amelia:** Susan’s still recovering, and Rachel can’t make it to take care of the kids.

*(BABEL DVD, 00:11:40)*

**American Tourist:** Don’t you push me! Fuck that! We’re leaving!

**Richard Jones:** If you leave, I’ll kill you. I’ll kill you.

*(BABEL DVD, 01:29:20)*

Individualist culture in USA is more self-centered and emphasizes mostly on their individual goals. Usually, they only think about themselves as individuals and as “I” distinctive from other people. In *Babel* many American characters are described as really *individualist*. Such as;
When Susan Jones got shot, Richard calls Amelia, their nanny who take care their children, and he ask her not to go to Mexico because Rachel, Susan’s youngest sister cannot come to substitute Amelia to take care of Richard’s children. From that accident it can be said that Rachel as Susan’s youngest sister prefer to handle her own business than to take care her niece. Richard also force Amelia to understand his condition in Morocco but in the other side Richard doesn’t understand what Amelia want. Because Amelia really wanted to go to his son’s wedding (Can’t anyone come to take care of the kids? It’s just one day, sir/ How do you expect me to find someone from here?/ Susan’s still recovering, and Rachel can’t make it to take care of the kids). It proved that the egoism of Richard and Rachel as “I” looked. They just think for their business and how they can reach it without care somebody else.

Another case when Richard’s wife, Susan, got shot, all of the American tourist who were in a bus must go to the nearest village in there to find a doctor, but when they arrived in there, they decided to leave Richard and Susan because they think that village was not save. They didn’t think that their friends, Richard and Susan, got an accident and needed some help, but another American tourists only think about their own business (Don’t you push me! Fuck that! We’re leaving!/ If you leave, I’ll kill you. I’ll kill you.). From explanation above the writer
concluded that individualism becomes the characteristic and culture of the American.

c. Materialist

Famous as a liberal country and the capitalist economic system, America becomes one of the biggest countries that has a strong influence in economy to this world. Albert and Williams said that Americans money is a measure of one’s success. In Babel, it can be seen how American, especially the character Richard use money to press and solve his problems.

Amelia: But today is my son’s wedding, sir.
Richard: Cancel your son’s wedding. I’ll pay for another one. I’ll pay for a better one. I need you to this, Amelia.
Amelia: Everything is ready, sir.

(BABEL DVD, 00:11:30)

That is why the material or economy become the reference to judge someone even material can be use to accelerate in every their business. It can be seen from the text where Richard try to force Amelia to cancel her son’s wedding with offer a better one (Cancel your son’s wedding / I’ll pay for a better one.) Richard thinks with offers some better one for Amelia son’s wedding, it can make him to purse his children’s nanny to follow what he wants.
Another scene when the way of Richard say “thank you” by using “money” to Anwar, the Guide, because he has helped him, it can be seen on the pictures above. Richard as an American thinks that money can solve everything.

3. Japan

In *Babel*, the condition in Japan is described almost same with USA but Japan is more complex. And it is not different with the reality that Japan in *Babel* is also described as a friend of USA.

a. Developed Country

Japan appears as an “Asia Tiger” and Japan becomes one of the countries that has the highest technology in the world. Japan is also one of the countries in Asia that become “the darling of the west” of USA. From the figures above it can be seen clearly that Japan is a developed country that uses high technology for their daily activities. The high skyscraper buildings which dominated in big cities in Japan, strengthen the people’s opinion about Japan as a developed country. Japan call itself as a “Sunrise Country”, of course this slogan contains philosophy
meaning that is like a sun which always rises early to sign of a new day, related with that slogan, Japan proves itself to always be a superior in every fields.

b. Individualist

Yasujiro Wataya: Chieko, I waited for you. I have a meeting so I’ll be back late. I left you a bento box. Papa.

(BABEL DVD, 00:46:10)

The characteristic of almost all people in developed country is individualist, the Japanese in Babel are describes as an individualist. From the dialogue above it is shown that relation between Chieko and her father is not very close. It happens Chieko’s father is busy with his business and Chieko spends most of her time with her friends.

In addition Chieko’s mother who took a suicide to end her life without thinking how can her family be without her as a mother. From those situations it can be concluded that every character in “Babel” especially Japanese just think about their own self and life, in other word they are selfish.

c. High Suicide Number

Chieko: “my father had nothing to do with my mother’s death”

(BABEL DVD, 01:32:17)

Detective Kenji Mamiya: Excuse me. I heard from your daughter ... about your wife on the balcony. I’m very sorry.
Yasujiro Wataya
Detective Kenji Mamiya

Yasujiro Wataya

: What balcony?
Detective Kenji Mamiya

: About how your wife killed herself by jumping off the balcony.
Yasujiro Wataya

: My wife never jumped off a balcony. She shot herself in the head. My daughter was the first to find her. I’ve explained it to the police many times. Don’t bother us with that anymore.
Detective Kenji Mamiya

: I’m very sorry sir, we won’t bother you anymore.

(BABEL DVD, 02:05:31)

Japan holds the first rank as a country which has the highest suicide numbers in the world. More than 30,000 Japanese have committed suicide each year for the past 11 years.\(^4\) Suicide throughout Japan become newsworthy and appear becomes a culture. Japan’s rates remain among the highest in the world for industrialized countries, yet, depression, ennui, hopelessness.\(^5\) In *Babel*, a character who kills herself is Chieko’s mother, she committed by suicide by shooting her head with a gun. Although, in this film there isn’t any explanation why Chieko’s mother shot herself. But it really is an irony, Japan is a developed country which has a developed economy, but why many of its people chose to end their life with suicide. It can be said that there has been in the term of a degradation “suicide”. According to the Japanese’s history, suicide was considered as an honorable form to reserve self respect culture in Japan that is in Japan’s history which is called “seppuku or harakiri”. But in this modern era, suicide is


\(^5\) *Ibid*
performed the stressfulness, depression, or something else which do not have any relation with a prestige.

d. Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency is also depicted in Babel. Drugs, Alcohol and Free Sex are becoming the main problems for teens in Japan. The cause of these is that of teenagers are still labile even tends to be temperament. Here are the lists of figures and texts about Juvenile delinquency which is portrayed in Babel.

1. Drugs and alcohol

![Image of people drinking]

**Chieko’s friend**: It’s whisky…. Do the cops come around here?

**Chieko**: sometimes

*(BABEL DVD, 01:03:47)*

2. Free sex

![Image of people in a bar]

**Chieko’s friend**: She’s always in a bad mood because nobody’s fucked her yet

**Chieko**: I’m gonna fuck your dad to get rid of my mood.

*(BABEL DVD, 00:20:20)*

**Chieko’s friend**: Idiot. Did you put on some panties?

*(BABEL DVD, 00:47:43)*
3. Temperament

Referee : That was out.
Chieko : I’m deaf, not blind
Referee : You’re out.

(BABEL DVD, 00:19:35)

Chieko’s friend : you shouldn’t have lost your temper. We lost the game. Why are you in a bad mood?

(BABEL DVD, 00:20:01)

Juvenile delinquency, furthermore, correlates with parental criminality. This view stems from a belief that there has been a breakdown in family life and that consequences young people have become more amoral.6 Drugs, alcohol, free sex, temperamental are the problems which dominated juvenile delinquency. It as if gradation there has been in the modern society life. According the Daniel Bell7 modern culture has influenced new life values. Bell saw hedonism, lack of social identification, narcissism, and decline.

4. Old Generation In Japan Which Has An Authority To Press The Young Generation

6 www.allacedemic.com /meta/p200237_in.. accessed on June 30, 2009
7 Daniel Bell is a sociologist and a professor emeritus at Harvard University. He is best known for his contribution to post-industrialism. His most influential books are The End of Ideology (1960). The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism (1976). en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel Bell/access in October 27, 2009
Generation gap also colours the conflict in *Babel*. The gap between the old and the young generation is called the *generation gap*.

Referee : *That was out.*  
Chieko : *I’m deaf, not blind*  
Referee : *You’re out.*  

(*BABEL DVD, 00: 19:35*)

From the figure above, it can be seen clearly that the character as an old referee who is unfair and does not side to the young athletes. He doesn’t want hear the argument from the young athlete, he just think that he is a right one. As a dominant communities, Old generations are described as talk, no deaf, has a power.

Old generation think that every development and successful that had been reached in Japan is because of the old generation’s efforts and it was not because of the young generation. The old generation thinks that young generation is stubborn, emotional, temperamental, and trouble maker. They think that the young generation just want to be have fun. That is why the old generation in *Babel* is described as the ones who can talk, hear, and has an authority within themselves even to the young people.
B. Little Narratives That Are Appeared In Babel

Little narratives in Babel are small communities or countries that are pressed by the domination and authority of metanarratives.

a. Morocco

Morocco (Arabic: بَرْغِبُ, al-Maġrib), officially the Kingdom of Morocco (Arabic: مَغْرِبُ, Ṣaḥāla al-Maġrib), is a country located in North Africa. In Babel, Morocco is described as a country that has to live under pressure of Developed countries, like USA.

1. Periphery:

Morocco has roughly rectangular in shape, Morocco is a land of fertile plains, high mountains, and barren desert. As we know that almost countries in the Africa are living under poverty line. Although there is no text which show that Morocco is describes as periphery, but from the pictures above it can be seen clearly that areal in Morocco

which is taken as setting in *Babel* is periphery where near hills and desert area.

2. **Poverty**

   Anwar  : *This is the doctor*
   Richard Jones  : *What kind of doctor is he?*
   Anwar (Guide)  : *He's a veterinarian. But he is good.*

   (*BABEL DVD, 00:41:43*)

Moroccans are still depend to an inordinate degree on agriculture and livestock\(^{10}\). This condition is one of the causes of the poverty in Morocco because to face a challenge of the world globalization depending on the two sectors won’t be enough since the life necessity keeps on increasing. Furthermore, the human resources that show in the text are still limited (*this is the doctor. / What kind of doctor is he? / He’s a veterinarian. But he is good*). Thus, the poverty is still become a main problem in Morocco.

3. **Starvation:**

   Ahmed’s mother: *What are you doing here?*
   Ahmed  : *Something we ate gave us a stomachache.*

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\(^{10}\) *Ibid.*
Like the two sides of a penny, poverty and starvation are related to each other. In the Babel, Morocco is described as a poor country where the people still live in starvation. We can be see in the pictures and text above, there is a family who eat together in one plate with a kind of food which can cause stomachache. That is why the writer concludes that starvation in Morocco is an effect from the poverty.

2. Islam Majority Country

Morocco is a monarchy state where conceived various forms of beliefs, from paganism, Judaism, and Christianity to Islam. But almost all of the citizens are Moslems. Morocco is the seventh big Moslem country in the world.


Ahmed : I killed the American. I was the only one who shot at you.

They did nothing... nothing. Kill me, but save my brother, he did nothing ... nothing. Save my brother. He did nothing.

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11 Ibid
12 Metro files, 10 Negara Muslim Terbesar di Dunia.9 On September 23rd 2009 in Metro TV.
Hassan Ibrahim: *I don’t have a weapon. This is just my knife.*
Mexican Police: *Get on the ground*
Hassan Ibrahim: *But what did we do?*
Mexican Police: *Get down on the ground….. face down. Don’t look at me.*
Hassan Ibrahim: *But what did we do?*

*(BABEL DVD, 00:50:13)*

Cruelty and Poverty are always appeared in developing countries or the third worlds. It is because they have to face the cruelty of the real life in their own country where laws and rules are not enough to protect the people who are suppressed. It can be seen clearly from the pictures above where children were taught that children have been taught how to use a gun which in the end they think that a gun was not dangerous for them to kill even they think it is like a toy. In other side, one of the reasons why the criminality increases in the third worlds like Morocco is the law and rules which are created by government can’t defend the poor people. The poor people were treated harshly even worse if they are guilty. The apparatus always oppress the people without considering before the cause and the effect of the problems. They can press the people because they get the pressure from the center worlds, especially USA.
a. Mexico

There are five conditions of Mexico described in “Babel”. They are: developing country, criminality, border patrol, illegal workers, and Christian majority country.

1. Developing country

In Babel, Mexico is described as a developing country. From the figures above we can see clearly that the life in Mexico is really hard where the people mostly works as laborers. Limited opportunity of employment becomes one of the reasons why they have to work hard to fulfill their life necessity.

2. Crime

Mike : Is this Mexico?
Santiago : Yes, this is Mexico
Mike : My mom told me that Mexico is really dangerous.
Santiago : Yeah … it’s full of Mexicans.
Amelia : Don’t talk like that. It’s not true.
Santiago : I mean yeah….. it’s full of Mexicans, but …..

Luis : Mom, stay here tonight.
Amelia : I can’t, I have to get these kids home. It’s almost
dawn.
Luis : But this fucking guy is really drunk.
Santiago : Drunk my ass. I’m fine. I’ll be right back
Luis : Stay a little while, the party’s just starting

The hard life in Mexico as if represents the character of the
Mexicans who have barbarian background. It can be seen from the
figures above such as; prostitution that appears frankly at noon, run
around drunk, the massive usage of gun in their society, slaughter an
animal with an extreme way, rude words that become their daily
language. All of that become common in Mexican society. Even many
people consider that Mexico as appear text above represented by
character Mike’s words, a child who is looked after by Amelia, when
his first time came to Mexico (my mom told me that Mexico is really
dangerous”).

3. Offense of border

Santiago : I’ll cross the border through Tecate……. That will
get us to San Diego fast.

(BABEL DVD,01:18:37)
American Police: You know how many kids die every year trying to cross this border?

(BABEL DVD, 01:54:55)

Mexico is bordered on the north by the United States. It causes a problem that is territory border offense which becomes a conflict between USA and Mexico. The American Dream and the perception that Americans enjoy high social mobility, play a key role in attracting immigrants. America as a developed country and Mexico is a developing country. These factors make a significant gap between the American and Mexican’s economy and life style. Due to the condition of each country’s America as a developed country and Mexican as only developing country. That’s why Mexican determined to cross the border illegally in order that they can get a better life in America.

4. Illegal worker

Santiago: I’ll cross the border through Tecate……. That will get us to San Diego fast.

Amelia: Sir, I’ve been here for 16 years. I have my things here. I rent a house. I made a life here, Sir.

(BABEL DVD, 01:55:56)

Economic problem is one of the reasons why many Mexicans decide to work even illegally in USA. Mexicans believe that they will get a better opportunity in the United States. Most American Mexican

1Ibid
settlement concentrations are found in metropolitan and rural areas across the United States, with the highest concentrations in the Southwest, the Midwest, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Dallas. These particular areas for large Mexican American communities. In those places there are several cases findings about illegal Mexican who got caught and rested then they are treated rudely and finally they get a deportation out from USA. On the contrary, Americans in the order hand use this illegal Mexicans’ weakness to give more pressure to them.

5. Christian majority country

From the figures and the text above, it can be concluded that Mexico is a fanatic country in professing Christianity. It can be seen from some city symbols which use Christian cross, many pictures of Maria, and Jesus statue. However, in spite of the official religious character of the Mexican family, there was a large disparity between religious fervor and the practice of religious values in everyday life. Many people did not practice the religion they profess.

b. Young Generation In Japan
In *Babel* the teenagers in Japan are described as dumb and deaf. Deaf and mute means that young generation is forbidden to talk to convey their aspiration and it is may the old generation who can convey and give aspiration.

Chieko: *Is he deaf-mute like us?*

*(BABEL DVD, 01:03:05)*

Officer: *She’s deaf-mute… Face her when you speak so she can read your lips.*

*(BABEL DVD, 00:44:57)*

It can be seen clearly that they need to be accepted and recognized in their environment with just the way they are. Thought that only theirs friends can understand their selves and their needs. Because of that young generation doesn’t want to hear the old generations.

C. **Incredulity Toward Metanarratives**
Lyotard has defined postmodernism as “incredulity toward metanarratives”. Incredulity-disbelief or skepticism. The refusal of Metanarratives is for let “other narratives or little narratives” appear to speak freely for their selves. Babel reflects the problems and gap between metanarratives and little narratives like powerful of developed country to press the small country. Nevertheless, every nation surely has weakness and strength but these create the variety in this life. Therefore the writer wants to analyze this film as a postmodern study that oppose the metanarratives and offer littlenarratives which did not necessarily add up, but which may be woven together.

1. Little Narratives Critic The Metanarratives in Babel

In Lyotard’s book, The Postmodern Condition: The Report on Knowledge, He wrote that Postmodern refuse to see history as linear that contains flat history and one paradigm that was created by metanarratives whose purpose is to legitimate their authority. This condition makes every community to lose its power. It is because there are so many human errors that happens in it. It proved that even the condition of a developed country cannot construct a utopia. The disappearance of metanarrative means we don’t to seek out a myths system that can unite the human into one “nation” or one “world”. The postmodernists gives a room for the local narrations to speak up for themselves which in this film are represented by the small communities like Morrocco, Mexico, and Young generation in Japan.
a. Little narratives have a right to speak and to be listened by others.

Indirectly Lyotard opens and gives a room for the little narratives which are repressed, isolated, and unknowledgeable. The refusal of metanarratives is to let “other narratives or little narratives” appear to speak freely for themselves.

**News in Morocco**: Minister Hassan Hazal has said that terrorist cells have been eradicated in our country and one act of vulgar banditry followed by superficial evaluations the U.S. places on it cannot ruin our image or the economy.

(*BABEL DVD, 00:58:46*)

**American Police**: Nevertheless the government of the United States has deemed that you are in seriously breaking the law, and is determined to immediately and definitively deport you.

**Amelia**: I want to talk to a lawyer

(*BABEL DVD, 01:55:46*)

From the texts above, the writer sees that little narratives speak out about their opinion and argument bravely. For example; USA judge Morocco as a terrorist country just because this country is a Moslem country. But Morocco gives another response firmly to evade the USA’s statement (*Minister Hassan Hazal has said that terrorist cells have been eradicated in our country and one act of vulgar banditry followed by superficial evaluations the U.S. places on it cannot ruin our image or the economy.*). And the character of Amelia, a Mexican nanny sitter, who is brave to ask what should be her right when American police try to arrest her (*I want to talk to a lawyer*). These scenes that happens in Babel
proved that although being as little narratives like Moroccan and Mexican, they can talk firmly what they want and they should do. Therefore postmodern give chance for the little narratives open and gives a room for them.

b. Mexico and Morocco show their good side

Nevertheless, from the pictures above, we can see the good side that the writer found from the little narratives. Such as: the character of a Moroccan, Anwar who helped the Americans, Susan and Richard Jones, when Richard’s wife got shot. Anwar brought them to his village and found them a doctor to cure Richard’s wife. Anwar also deny firmly when Richard give some dollars as his thanks to Anwar. It can be said that Anwar as a Moroccan and a Moslem, helped them sincerely.

Another positive side which is depicted in Mexico, Mexicans are reflected as people with close family relationship. It is reflected by Amelia’s character who takes care of her employer’s children like her own children. Amelia takes the risk of bringing Mike and Debby to cross the border of Mexico and America bravely just for attending his
son’s wedding, because she cannot believe someone else to substitute her to take care of her employer’s children.

c. Young Generation rebels to the old generation in Japan.

Yasuiro Wataya : Why do you want to fight? I miss your mother, too. I’m doing the best I can.

(BABEL DVD, 00:21:20)

A character, Chieko, who always quarrel with his father, because Chieko thinks that his father never gives her any attention and never understands her.
There is one scene that describes old man who is walking home after he work but he is crashed by a gang of teens who are playing with their friends. From those explanations, it can be seen clearly that young people rebel and fight the pressure from the old people because the old people think that only they who can only talk and control.

d. Language Game

Some of these concerns of the postmodernism have to do with language. Postmodernism is about how ‘we’ are defined within the language, and within specific historical, social, cultural. Language game denotes the multiplicity of communities of meaning, the innumerable and incommensurable separate systems in which meanings are produced and rules for their circulation are created. Based on those explanations, the writer also analyzes the various languages and cultures that include in *Babel* by language game. Because language game is a part of postmodernism which has related to critic the legitimization of metanarratives.

1. There is no universal language

In Lyotrad’s book, *Differend*, He said there is no universal language. Because the world consists of different languages. These
differences in languages create in the way of life. Human does not only have different language and ideology, but also in fact, they live in different identity, time, and place. Therefore, *Babel* accepts variety languages from four different countries. As stated by postmodernists that postmodern, shows that of incredulity the universal usage. And postmodernist focus on the opening and they respect to differences.

From the pictures above, it can be seen clearly that in *Babel* there are four different languages, such as: American English, Mexican, Japanese, and Arabic.

2. **Language game can be used as jokes and satire to the ideology**

Lyotard began to see that there are many different language games that we play. For instance -praying, singing, telling jokes, gossiping, swearing, making a promise, taking a
vow, pronouncing a couple man and wife, telling a lie.\textsuperscript{2} The writer takes the words “telling jokes” to correlate language game in \textit{Babel} as a satire whose purpose is to tease the ideology of each country.

Raymond Williams defines ideology as a “relatively formal and articulated system of meanings, values, and beliefs, of a kind that can be abstracted as a ‘world view’ or a ‘class outlook’.”\textsuperscript{3}

From definition above, the writer found beliefs and values from Moroccan culture and west culture. These beliefs and values can be seen from the dialogue below. It shows on how the society or individual view their world through their belief or social system.

The way the Moroccan view the western country that is represented by USA and east culture especially Islam in Morocco can be found in these dialogue between Anwar and Richard.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Richard Jones & \textit{is that your daughter?} \\
Anwar (Guide) & \textit{Yes. The third of five. Do you have kids?} \\
Richard Jones & \textit{Yeah} \\
Anwar (Guide) & \textit{Just Two} \\
Richard Jones & \textit{Yeah} \\
Anwar (Guide) & \textit{You should have more.} \\
\end{tabular}

\textit{(BABEL DVD, 01:27:18)}

In these dialogues Anwar tease the family system in west specially about their numbers of family that the western family usually have only a small number of children which is contrary to

\textsuperscript{2} Jim Powell. Postmodernism for Beginners. (New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc.) p:26

the Muslim family who usually have a large amount of children. Because in Islam there is a *Hadits*, Muhammad SAW, a prophet in Islam said that he will be proud if on the judgment day, there will be with large amounts of Moslem as his fellowship. In the contrary, west culture think that if they have many children they will face the social problems, such as: increasing the cost of life, health, education, and assurance.

Furthermore, the writer found another satire that is pointed to Islam culture, especially to Morocco. The satire is about Poligamy practice in Islam. Polygamy is a man who has more than one wives, and it is legal in Islam because it is in stated in verse of Al-Qur’an: “If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, Marry women of your choice, Two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice.”

Because of these beliefs, polygamy becomes a common thing in Moslem countries. It is very contrast to the western culture like USA where polygamy is such an embarrassing behavior for men in their culture. Western choose a monogamy system.

Richard Jones : Yeah
Anwar (Guide) : You should have more.
Richard Jones : What about you? How many wives you have?

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Anwar (Guide) : *I can only afford one.*

*(BABEL DVD,01:27:18)*
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

Either film or literary work contains fabricated story which brings messages, criticisms, or new aspiration toward a particular set of social values. And a good film has universal meanings as a bridge to across all the differences. In the film *Babel*, Alejandro González Inárritu wants to convince the viewers about differences shouldn’t be a problem to make something become easier. But he describes it in another way that he reflects many problems in each country and gives portraits a gap between developed and developing countries.

*Babel* is a film that has four interrelated sets of situations with many events which are revealed out of sequence. *Babel* also has multiple stories taking place in Morocco, Japan, Mexico and the United States where in each of the country are shown their internal problems. Moreover, the country has to face other problems regarding their external problems with other countries. The film is inspired by the myth that included in bible. Dawn of that myth, human speaking in a single language, but God confounded their language into many languages. Therefore in this film there are four languages and four cultures from different countries where every country has special characters. From those different backgrounds, the writer tries to correlate *Babel* into postmodernism thoughts, and
the writer takes Lyotard’s theory to define the postmodernism and correlate into

*Babel.*

Postmodernism refers to a general human condition in the late capitalist (post-1950s) world that impact on society at large, including ideology. Postmodernism represents, then, a cultural liberation. It is to some small surprise that for some groupings – particularly those who had previously been excluded by the high principles of modernism – postmodernism is seen as liberating and celebratory. It esteems of voices from the margins, minority cultures, are finding spaces within contemporary culture. Postmodern gives a room for little narratives to show who they are. According to Jean Francois Lyotard, Postmodernism is incredulity towards metanarratives. From Lyotard’s thought, the writer find in *Babel* some critics toward metanarratives that are reflected by little narratives.

Those critics are, first, little narratives have a right and to be listened by others. Little narratives like Moroccan and Mexican, they can talk firmly what they want and they should do. Second, Mexico and Morocco show their good side although they are include in little narratives. Anwar as a Moroccan and a Moslem, helped them sincerely. Mexicans are reflected as people with close family relationship. Although Mexico and Morocco are described as developing countries and minority cultures but they can show their humanity values in their hard life. The condition of young generation in Japan include in critics toward metanarratives. Not only because They describes as can’t talk and deaf but also they are pressed by old generation. Therefore young generation rebels and fights
the pressure from the old people because the old people think that only they who can only talk and control.

Critic towards metanaratives are also find in language game. Postmodern offers language game term. There are many different language games that we play. For instance -praying, singing, telling jokes, gossiping, swearing, making a promise, taking a vow, pronouncing a couple man and wife, telling a lie. However, Language game gives a room to other languages to show their identities. Babel also describes about language game. There are two findings in Babel that included in language game. Such as; There is no universal language, because in Babel there are four different languages. And Language game is used by little narratives as jokes and satire to the ideology. Like about west and Islam culture.

B. Suggestion

Babel implies many prudential messages for the viewers. Through Babel, the viewers understand that differences are not supposed to be the press and let other people down. In today's world it's easier for us to sympathize with our own kind than it is to other people from other cultures. Our planet has become just like the biblical town of Babel, only in a larger scale. We all speak different languages, have different values, and communicate poorly (if at all) with those who aren't like us. And a good film has universal meanings as a bridge to across all differences. Thus the postmodern is a suitable theory to analyze this film because postmodern free human from shackles of ideology and injustice.
In analyzing film or literary work, Firstly, all researchers should use the right theory or approach in order to have the right comprehension of the film or literary work itself. In this occasion, writer uses postmodernism research in analyzing *Babel*, but it is possible for other researches to use other theory or approach in analyzing this film. Other researchers who want to analyze this film can also use some other theories such as film, semiotics, or theories from other postmodernists like Derrida.
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**Modernis**

**Lyotard**

**PostModernity**

**Metanarratives that are depicted in *Babel***

1. Technology colors metanarratives
2. USA (Center & Powerful, Individualist, Materialist)
3. Japan (developed country, high suicide numbers, juvenile delinquency)
4. Old Generation in Japan that has an authority to press the young

**Incredulity Towards the metanarratives**

**Little narratives that are depicted in Babel**
1. Morocco (periphery, poverty, starvation, Islam majority country, violence and the under pressure among poor country)
2. Mexico (developing country, criminal, offense of border, illegal worker, Christian majority country)
3. Young generation in Japan that is repressed by Old generation

**Little narratives critic metanarratives**

1. Little narratives have a right to speak and to be listened by others
2. Mexico and Morocco show their good side
3. Young generation rebels to old

**Language**

1. There is no universal language
2. Language game can use as jokes and satire to the
generation in Japan