

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED HEROINE: AN ANALYSIS ON WOMAN CYBORG IN ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL FILM

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Abstract

This study closely examines the character of Alita in the film *Alita: Battle Angel* to determine whether she represents women's empowerment. Heroines are often portrayed as powerful and independent figures who challenge traditional gender roles. To analyze Alita's character, this study utilizes Greimas' actantial model of narrative structure and Donna Haraway's concept of the cyborg from *A Cyborg Manifesto*. Greimas' model helps dissect the narrative roles and relationships, while Haraway's concept aids in understanding the intersection of technology and gender. The analysis reveals that Alita embodies certain elements of women's empowerment. She displays physical strength, resilience, and a sense of autonomy that are typically associated with empowered female characters. Alita's journey of self-discovery and her fight against oppressive forces resonate with themes of independence and empowerment. However, a deeper examination of the film's narrative structure and character dynamics uncovers underlying patriarchal elements. Despite Alita's strengths, the film presents a technological hierarchy where male characters, particularly Dr. Dyson Ido and Vector, hold significant control and influence over Alita and other female characters. This dynamic suggests that while Alita is portrayed as a powerful figure, her agency is still constrained within a male-dominated technological framework. Furthermore, the film's depiction of Alita as a cyborg complicates the narrative of empowerment. Haraway's cyborg theory suggests that cyborgs can transcend traditional gender boundaries and challenge patriarchal structures. Yet, in *Alita: Battle Angel*, the cyborg nature of Alita is used to emphasize her otherness and dependence on male characters for her identity and purpose. This reinforces traditional gender hierarchies rather than subverting them.

Keywords: cyborg, representation, women empowerment, actantial model, posthumanism

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, when action films dominated Hollywood blockbusters, the heroine's body has symbolized the evolving struggle between female empowerment and containment. From muscular, masculinized figures to dangerous sex objects to young and waiflike avengers, the depiction of action heroines has transformed. Despite these changes, one

constant remains: female characters are still portrayed with idealized, flawless bodies. While male action heroes are often portrayed as embodying ideal masculine traits, female heroines are expected to display ideal feminine bodies, even if their actions diverge from traditional femininity. As a result, the presence of a heroine as a film's lead is often interpreted as a form of women's empowerment (Brown, 2011).

In recent years, with the rise of fourth-wave feminism, which began around 2012, there has been a push to challenge societal norms, including rape culture, violence against women, sexual harassment, and the underrepresentation of women in technology. This wave of feminism is characterized by its use of social media to combat misogyny and promote gender equality (Brunell & Burkett, 2024; Peng, 2019). In line with that, the presence of heroines in films nowadays often represents women in central roles rather than being subordinate. These characters fight villains, lead wars, and defy patriarchal expectations of femininity. Their varied representations have made female characters in film increasingly diverse. In the science fiction genre, female robots have also emerged as leading characters. Films like *Her* (2013), *The Machine* (2013), *Ex Machina* (2015), *Mind and Machine* (2017), *Ghost in the Cell* (2017), and *Alita: Battle Angel* (2019) which released shortly after the Women's March of 2018, showcase this development (Peng, 2019)

Alita: Battle Angel (Cameron & Rodriguez, 2019) is a notable example of a film where a cyborg becomes a heroine. Set in the 26th century, a time when humans and machines coexist and society is a hybrid of both, the story takes place in Iron City, a post-apocalyptic urban area. Hovering above the city is Zalem, an elite society. When Dr. Ido, a scientist, discovers a disembodied cyborg in the trash from Zalem, he rebuilds her and names her Alita. Alita quickly rises to prominence as the most powerful cyborg in Iron City, becoming a "hunter-warrior" and a skilled athlete in the Motorball tournament, a competition for cyborgs and hybrids. By the end of the film, Alita is determined to win the tournament to gain access to the mysterious city of Zalem, a place no one from Iron City has ever reached. She also seeks to confront Nova, a shadowy scientist who oversees Iron City from Zalem (Moviepedia, 2023).

The representation of female leads in film is always an engaging topic, particularly in terms of how it reflects feminist messages (Citron et al., 1999). However, not all heroines in film explicitly promote women's empowerment. In some cases, they reinforce patriarchal ideologies. Despite advancements in technology, the association between women and technology can be seen as a means to control or manipulate women. This challenges the notion that women have no role in the technological sector (Cahyo & Suryaningtyas, 2020). While male heroes are often portrayed as inherently strong and capable, heroines are not always depicted in the same way. Cahyo & Suryaningtyas (2020) found that, although Major, the female cyborg in *Ghost in the Shell*, relies on her team to solve crimes, her presence still represents a shift toward depicting women as subjects through their affiliation with technology.

This study focuses on the character of Alita in *Alita: Battle Angel* (Cameron & Rodriguez, 2019), analyzing whether she embodies women's empowerment or reinforces patriarchal ideals. Additionally, this research will examine the role of male sidekicks and helpers, an

aspect that has been overlooked in previous studies. Drawing on Murdock's *Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness*, this study will explore the patriarchal framework that exists before a female character can become a true heroine. As Ruben (2012) notes, a female cyborg fighting enemies does not necessarily equate to women's empowerment—it may, in fact, reinforce patriarchal structures. The role of the female lead can be easily appropriated by certain groups, using the term "women's empowerment" to advance agendas that may ultimately be harmful.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Donna Haraway's Cyborg Manifesto

In her essay, *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1991), Donna Haraway presents the cyborg—a hybrid of biological and mechanical elements—as a paradigm for modern consciousness and political activism. The figure of the cyborg blurs the boundaries between human and animal, organism and machine, physical and non-physical, as well as male and female (Cahyo & Suryaningtyas, 2020). For Haraway, the cyborg represents a hybrid or fluid identity that challenges the hegemony of binary oppositions in both political and personal spheres. Haraway emphasizes the cyborg's imagery as a powerful rejection of dualism, while also remaining deeply feminist (Bell, 2007). She proposes a non-binary, "post-gender" model, using the cyborg as a metaphor to critique the binary system, which perpetuates patriarchy (Evans, 2016). Haraway suggests that the distinction between science fiction and social reality is an "optical illusion," arguing that cyborgs facilitate the blurring of binaries that have sustained Western cultural hierarchies, including male/female, self/other, and culture/nature (Schueller, 2005).

Women in Media and Technology

Toffoletti (2007) argues that men use technology to maintain their authority over women, portraying them as passive victims in a patriarchal society. This perspective suggests that men isolate women from their essential connection to nature and the body by excluding them from technological advancements. Judy Wajcman, as cited in Toffoletti (2007), asserts that technology has traditionally been biased against women, with its definition favoring men. In this view, technology is seen as inherently patriarchal and incompatible with women. Additionally, Leina Green, also cited in Toffoletti (2007), emphasizes the link between technology, privilege, and power, stressing that those who develop technology benefit from it. As men dominate technological development, they extend their dominance over society.

Haraway's concept of the cyborg critiques a feminist movement known as goddess feminism, often associated with ecofeminism, which emphasizes the connection between women and the natural world (Bell, 2007). According to Toffoletti (2007), this movement promotes a bond between women and their bodies while opposing the merging of women and technology, which is seen as threatening the essence of femininity. In contrast, this study explores how media representations depict women's distinct relationship with technology. It aims to investigate whether these portrayals reinforce or challenge feminist ideals in

contemporary society, particularly questioning if technology acts as a tool of empowerment or an obstacle to feminist progress.

METHOD

In analyzing *Alita: Battle Angel* (Cameron & Rodriguez, 2019), this study applies Greimas' actantial model of narrative. The analysis begins by selecting key plot elements—rising action, conflict, climax, falling action, and resolution. Characters and situations are then categorized into Greimas' (1983) six actants: sender, receiver, subject, object, adjuvant, and opponent. The functional model connects the roles and actions of the characters in their pursuit of the object. Actantial schemes are used to explain the stages of exposition, transformation (rising action, climax, falling action), and resolution, highlighting how these elements shape the film's narrative and reveal its underlying motives and beliefs. After analyzing the data using actantial narrative model, Haraway's cyborg concept from *Cyborg Manifesto* is used to further interpret the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Rising Action: Re-build Cyborg Alita

In the first actantial scheme of *Alita: Battle Angel* (Cameron & Rodriguez, 2019, 00:06:01), Alita, a female cyborg, is found by Dr. Ido in the scrapyard of Zalem. Dr. Ido, a cybersurgeon in Iron City, regularly scavenges the scrapyard for cyborg components. After finding Alita's remains, he rebuilds her with the help of his assistant. The next day, Dr. Ido introduces Alita to the world, teaching her about food and accompanying her around Iron City. This sequence serves as the rising action and exposition, providing critical background on Alita's origins. The characters and situations based on Greimas' (1983) are described below.

Sender

In this scheme, the sender is Dr. Ido's desire to find cyborg components in the scrapyard, which leads him to discover Alita. The sender initiates the connection between the subject and object (Hébert, 2007), and here, it is Dr. Ido's intent that drives the narrative forward.

Receiver

Alita is the receiver in this scheme. According to Greimas' axis of transmission (Hébert, 2007), the receiver is the character who benefits from the sender's actions. Dr. Ido rebuilds Alita, teaches her, and reintroduces her to the world, making her the recipient of his efforts.

Subject

Dr. Ido acts as the subject in this scenario. He is the character who fulfills the task of rebuilding Alita, which aligns with his desire to help and protect her. As the subject, he also influences other characters and events in the narrative, taking on a crucial role in bringing Alita back to life and guiding her, similar to a paternal figure.

Object

The object in this scheme is the reconstruction of Alita and her care after waking up. Dr. Ido's goal is to bring Alita back to life, not only by rebuilding her but by nurturing and protecting her, partly motivated by the loss of his daughter, after whom he names Alita.

Adjuvant

Dr. Ido's assistant is the adjuvant, or helper, in this scheme. She aids in the physical reconstruction of Alita and supports Dr. Ido in taking care of her afterward. According to Hebert, the adjuvant assists in the subject's journey toward the object, and the assistant plays that role here.

Opponent

Dr. Ido also serves as the opponent in this scheme. While protecting Alita and treating her like a daughter, he inadvertently becomes a barrier to her independence. His protective behavior, particularly when he pulls her away from Hugo, reflects the patriarchal tendencies of dominance and control, which serve to restrict Alita's freedom (Barker, 2004).

Conflict: Alita's First Fight

The second actantial scheme deepens character identities and serves as the rising action. In this scene (Cameron & Rodriguez, 2019, 00:43:02), Alita becomes suspicious of Dr. Ido's motives, believing he might be harming cyborgs. She secretly follows him and discovers that Dr. Ido is a hunter-warrior, someone who hunts cyborg fugitives for a reward. During a fight against these fugitives, Alita confronts a large cyborg named Grewishka and defeats him, which marks the beginning of her realization of her powers, though her origins remain unclear. The characters and situations based on Greimas' (1983) are described below.

Sender

The sender is Dr. Ido's desire to hunt the fugitives. Hunter warriors, including Ido, are tasked with capturing fugitives in Iron City for a reward. This mission is overseen by Vector, a proxy of the villain Nova, who controls the city. Ido's motivation for hunting is to earn this prize, despite being human rather than a cyborg like most other hunters.

Receiver

Alita is the receiver in this scheme. Her curiosity about Dr. Ido's motives drives her to secretly follow him. She not only discovers his role as a hunter-warrior but also learns about her own fighting abilities (Panzer Kunst) and starts to recall fragments of her past.

Subject

Alita is the subject, taking action by following Ido to uncover the truth behind his nighttime activities. Her pursuit of knowledge about Ido's intentions serves as her goal in this actantial scheme, and her actions trigger the rising conflict of the story.

Object

The object in this scheme is Alita's curiosity about Dr. Ido. By following him, she learns that Ido is hunting cyborg fugitives and uncovers her own hidden powers during a battle. Her quest for knowledge serves as the driving force of this scheme.

Adjuvant

The fugitives, particularly the female cyborg who traps Dr. Ido, unknowingly help Alita in her discovery. As Alita intervenes to save Ido, she begins to unlock her potential as a warrior. Additionally, Zapan and Grewishka, who appear later, also contribute to her self-realization, helping her remember her true abilities during their conflict.

Opponent

Dr. Ido acts as the opponent in this scheme, as he tries to prevent Alita from following him and engaging in the fight. His protective nature and reluctance to involve her reflect patriarchal views, suggesting that women are too weak to handle dangerous tasks (Gavin & Porter, 2014). This highlights the gender dynamics at play in the story, as Dr. Ido's actions restrict Alita from fully embracing her abilities.

Climax: Alita is Defeated by Grewishka

In (Cameron & Rodriguez, 2019, 01:01:03), Grewishka returns to Vector and Dr. Chiren, revealing that a small female cyborg has defeated him. Dr. Chiren, who knows Dr. Ido's connection to Alita, realizes the cyborg is from Dr. Ido. Nova, through Grewishka, orders Dr. Chiren and Vector to rebuild Grewishka to capture Alita, promising Chiren access to Zalem in return. Meanwhile, Alita goes to Kansas Bar, trying to rally the hunter warriors to fight Grewishka. However, they dismiss her because she's a small, innocent-looking female cyborg, and Grewishka isn't on their fugitive list. Grewishka arrives at the bar to confront Alita, and though she fights back, no one helps her, leaving her gravely injured. Dr. Ido and McTeague intervene to save her. This scene serves as the climax of the film, showcasing Alita's power and marking her first major battle against a villain. The characters and situations based on Greimas' (1983) are described below.

Sender

Nova, the main villain, through Grewishka and Vector, sends Grewishka to kill Alita. Unlike previous schemes, Nova here is a direct sender without engaging personally, making him a single-actant.

Receiver

Alita, unaware that Nova is behind Grewishka's attack, receives his intention indirectly. Her only knowledge is that Grewishka seeks revenge after their prior battle.

Subject

Grewishka serves as the subject, carrying out Nova's order to kill Alita. Despite nearly succeeding, his attempt is thwarted by the intervention of McTeague and his cyborg dogs.

Object

The object is Grewishka's mission to kill Alita, driven by Nova's desire. Alita fights alone after being ignored by the hunter warriors, making her struggle more challenging.

Adjuvant

The hunter warriors at the bar serve as adjuvants by refusing to help Alita. Their lack of intervention makes Grewishka's attack easier.

Opponent

Dr. Ido and McTeague act as opponents to Grewishka, intervening just as Alita is close to death. McTeague's anger over the killing of a dog motivates him to fight Grewishka, while Dr. Ido saves Alita, foiling Nova's plan.

Falling Action: Alita's Fight Against Vector

This scheme represents the falling action (Cameron & Rodriguez, 2019, 01:43:00), where Alita successfully confronts the villain and prevails. It's a crucial moment in the story, revealing that Vector is merely a proxy for Nova. This moment also demonstrates Alita's strength and her capacity to combat the crimes plaguing Iron City. The conflict begins when Dr. Ido informs Alita of Nova's true intentions, explaining that Nova is a manipulator. Contrary to popular belief, people in Iron City cannot ascend to Zalem unless they win the Motorball competition. Moreover, Nova is the one secretly controlling Iron City. Dr. Ido tells Alita that only she can confront Nova and his minions, prompting her to challenge Vector, Nova's proxy, and eventually defeat him. The characters and situations based on Greimas' (1983) are described below.

Sender

In this scheme, the sender is Dr. Ido, who reveals Nova's true motives to Alita and affirms that only she is capable of standing up to Nova. Dr. Ido's revelation gives Alita the determination to confront and defeat Vector, as well as uncover Nova's manipulations. Additionally, Dr. Ido discloses his own past, revealing that he once lived in Zalem before being exiled due to his daughter's illness, further connecting him to Nova. Dr. Ido's faith in Alita stems from his understanding that, as a URM cyborg from 300 years ago, Alita possesses the power to defeat Nova, even though URM cyborgs were once considered enemies of the citizens of Iron City.

Receiver

The people of Iron City are the receivers in this scheme. Dr. Ido reveals that Nova has been deceiving them, and despite their wealth or status, they will never be able to ascend to

Zalem. Alita recognizes that Nova, through Vector, is the one spying on Iron City, and she resolves to fight this deception for the people. She confronts the social inequality between Iron City and Zalem, particularly the desperation people, like Hugo, feel about reaching Zalem. Alita's actions are aimed at exposing the truth and protecting the people of Iron City from Nova's manipulations.

Subject

Alita takes on the role of the subject in this scheme, motivated by Dr. Ido's claim that she is the only one capable of defeating Nova. With the knowledge of Nova's true motives, she sets out to confront Vector, who serves as Nova's proxy. Alita's resolve stems not only from a desire to protect Iron City but also from the personal realization that Nova has manipulated the city into targeting her. As a powerful URM cyborg, she aims to end Nova's control over Iron City, showing that she can overcome his schemes.

Object

The object in this scheme, as part of the axis of desire, is Alita's goal to defeat Nova and his proxy, Vector. Driven by her determination to uncover the truth and liberate Iron City from Nova's manipulation, Alita confronts Vector. During the battle, Grewishka arrives to support Vector. While fighting them, Alita's memories of her past as a URM cyborg resurface, including her involvement in a rebellion against Zalem 300 years ago. This recovered memory strengthens her resolve to destroy Zalem and fuels her determination to defeat Nova and his minions. Despite sustaining injuries, Alita regenerates and ultimately triumphs over both Vector and Grewishka.

Adjuvant

Alita's unwavering determination serves as the adjuvant in this scheme. Her ambition acts as a driving force, helping her to continue fighting, even when Grewishka arrives to aid Vector. Alita's growing awareness of her true identity as a URM cyborg further fuels her desire to defeat Nova. The words of her comrades from the past, urging her to destroy Zalem, inspire her to persevere. This internal motivation empowers Alita to face her enemies head-on, overcoming the odds and emerging victorious.

Opponent

The opponents in this scheme are Vector and Grewishka, both of whom Alita defeats. While Vector initially presents himself as the main adversary, Alita soon learns that he is merely a puppet for Nova. Throughout the fight, Vector's role becomes clear—he is Nova's proxy, and Nova is the true mastermind behind Iron City's suffering. Grewishka, who has previously defeated Alita, also returns to aid Vector, but this time Alita is able to overpower him as well. Through these battles, Alita gains a deeper understanding of Nova's intentions, learning that Nova's fear of URM cyborgs stems from the fact that they once fought against

Zalem. With her newfound strength and determination, Alita prepares to confront Nova directly, solidifying her role as the most powerful force in Iron City.

Resolution: Hugo's Determination to Go to Zalem

This scene serves as the resolution after Alita defeats both Vector and Grewishka (Cameron & Rodriguez, 2019, 01:52:01). It sets the stage for Alita's next steps at the film's conclusion. Hugo, who has been revived with a cyborg body, remains unwavering in his determination to reach Zalem. He begins to ascend the pipe that leads to the sky city, despite Alita's attempts to stop him. Nova, a mysterious figure from Zalem, watches from above. Using his control over Zalem's technology, Nova deploys a spinning gear aimed at Hugo. Tragically, Hugo falls to his death, leaving Alita devastated and guilt-ridden. Sometime later, she becomes the strongest Motorball player in Iron City, determined to win and uncover the truth behind Zalem's secrets. The characters and situations based on Greimas' (1983) are described below.

Sender

The sender in this scheme is Hugo's ambition to go to Zalem. Throughout the film, Hugo dreams of reaching Zalem, believing that it holds the key to a better life. His ambition is fueled by a deep belief that Zalem offers peace and opportunity, motivating him to chase this dream even after near-death. Alita shares in his desire, but Hugo's ambition is the driving force behind his decisions, even leading him to trust Nova and Vector, who promise him passage to Zalem.

Receiver

Nova is the receiver in this scheme, as he benefits from Hugo's determination. Nova, through Vector, manipulates Hugo by promising him the chance to reach Zalem. Nova's goal is not only to control Iron City but to eliminate Alita, who represents a threat to his rule. By leveraging Hugo's ambition, Nova seeks to lure Alita into danger. Hugo's desire to reach Zalem directly serves Nova's interest in using the Motorball tournament to kill Alita.

Subject

The subject is Hugo, as he is the primary actor in this scheme. His unwavering determination to reach Zalem, even after becoming a cyborg, drives the action. Hugo believes that with his new cyborg body, he has the strength to climb the pipe and fulfill his dream. However, he remains unaware of the manipulation at play. Hugo's innocence and blind trust in Nova and Vector lead him down a path of self-destruction, making him the key figure in this resolution.

Object

The object of this scheme is Hugo's goal to reach Zalem. This is the "axis of desire" (Hébert, 2007), as everything Hugo does is aimed at achieving his dream of reaching the sky

city. His determination is so strong that he ignores the risks and even Alita's warnings. Hugo's desire blinds him to the truth, as he fails to realize that Nova's promises are false, and no one from Iron City is ever allowed into Zalem.

Adjuvant

The adjuvant in this scheme is Nova's manipulation. Nova, through Vector, promises Hugo a path to Zalem in exchange for getting Alita to compete in the Motorball tournament, which is designed to kill her. Hugo's ambition makes him susceptible to Nova's manipulation. He believes that by fulfilling Nova's conditions, he will achieve his dream, not realizing that he is being deceived. Nova's ability to manipulate Hugo plays a crucial role in driving Hugo's actions forward.

Opponent

The opponent in this scheme is Alita, who tries to prevent Hugo from reaching Zalem. Alita learns that Nova's promises are lies and tries to convince Hugo that Zalem is not the paradise he imagines. She becomes an obstacle to Hugo's goal when she attempts to stop him from climbing the pipe. Despite her efforts, Hugo's resolve does not waver, and Nova's intervention ultimately results in his death. Alita's role as the opponent is heartbreaking, as her attempts to save Hugo from his own ambition led to tragedy.

Discussion

In modern patriarchal society, men have long been identified as the masters of technology, a notion highlighted by thinkers like Toffoletti (2007). This concept is illustrated in *Alita: Battle Angel* (Cameron & Rodriguez, 2019), particularly through the character of Dr. Ido, a male cybersurgeon who creates and brings cyborg Alita back to life. According to Toffoletti, men use technology to assert and retain their dominance over women, who are often treated as passive victims in patriarchal systems. Examining the relationship between Alita and Dr. Ido reveals that the film continues to reinforce male authority, as Dr. Ido exerts control over Alita, symbolically separating women from their natural form by excluding them from active participation in technology. The interference of male dominance in the development of the heroine is evident from the outset.

In the relationship between Dr. Ido, a man, and Alita, a woman, there exists a clear power hierarchy. Without Dr. Ido's intervention, Alita, as a cyborg, would not exist. This dynamic aligns with traditional patriarchal structures, where men possess the authority to create, control, and guide women. However, this depiction conflicts with Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto*, which posits that women are not victims of technology, but can instead harness its power. Haraway's vision of cyborgs as representations of a new relationship between women and technology is absent in the early stages of the film. Here, Alita is depicted as reliant on Dr. Ido for her very existence, reinforcing the notion that male authority remains integral to her identity.

Toffoletti (2007) expands on these ideas by referencing scholars such as Judy Wacman, who argues that technology is inherently biased in favor of men. Wacman suggests that technology, in its traditional definition, reflects patriarchal values, positioning men as its natural masters and excluding women from the technological domain. Andreas Huyssen, as quoted by Toffoletti, echoes this sentiment, asserting that women are marginalized by technology, often portrayed as exploitable objects under male control. In *Alita: Battle Angel*, this dynamic is portrayed when Dr. Ido, in his role as creator and protector, seeks to separate Alita from Hugo, a young man she befriends. Dr. Ido's actions illustrate the broader patriarchal theme of male dominance, with men acting as protectors and decision-makers, while women remain dependent.

Barker (2004) defines patriarchy as a system that positions men as heads of households, masters of their domains, and natural leaders. Dr. Ido's actions toward Alita, particularly his efforts to protect her from harm by separating her from Hugo, underscore this dynamic. He treats Alita as though she were his daughter, assuming the role of her protector. This paternalistic attitude aligns with traditional notions of female inferiority, where women are seen as vulnerable and in need of male protection. Despite her strength and technological prowess as a cyborg, Alita is initially portrayed as inferior due to her dependence on Dr. Ido for her survival and well-being.

Patriarchal societies have long associated women with traits such as grace, politeness, and submissiveness, qualities that align with traditional femininity. Hume (1997) notes that a woman who embodies male moral standards by acting heroically is often perceived as unladylike. This tension between femininity and heroism is evident in *Alita: Battle Angel*, as Alita exhibits traits of self-assurance, love for others, and sensitivity—qualities that Peng (2019) argues are the ultimate markers of femininity. These attributes, while traditionally feminine, also serve as the driving forces behind Alita's heroism, allowing her to challenge the patriarchal expectations placed upon her.

Alita's actions demonstrate that femininity does not have to conform to patriarchal ideals. Her decision to rescue a dog, for example, reveals her compassion and humanity—universal traits that transcend gender. Haraway's concept of the cyborg, which blurs the boundaries between nature and technology, masculinity and femininity, is exemplified in Alita's character. She is not confined to traditional gender roles but instead embodies a fusion of traits that challenge the dualism inherent in patriarchal structures. Alita's actions, such as fighting to protect those she cares about, blur the lines between male and female heroism, suggesting that heroism is not limited to one gender.

Haraway's vision of the cyborg as a force that transcends gender boundaries is further explored in the film. Cyborgs, she argues, disrupt the binaries that have long defined Western cultural hierarchies, such as male/female, self/other, and culture/nature. In *Alita: Battle Angel*, Alita's character exemplifies this disruption. She does not conform to the stereotypical image of a male action hero—muscles, guns, and stoicism—but neither does she fully align with traditional femininity. Instead, she occupies a space that transcends these categories, embodying both masculine and feminine traits.

The portrayal of Alita challenges patriarchal views that position women as inherently weaker or more passive than men. When Alita fights against the antagonists Zapan and Grewishka to protect Dr. Ido, she demonstrates her ability to transcend the limitations traditionally imposed on female characters. As a cyborg, Alita's artificial body enhances her physical capabilities, allowing her to overpower cyborgs that are much larger and seemingly more powerful. In this way, Alita defies the patriarchal hierarchy that places men above women, proving that she can be both feminine and powerful.

Despite this, the film continues to depict a hierarchy where men hold a dominant position over women. Leina Green, as cited by Toffoletti (2007), links technology to power and privilege, arguing that those who control technology also control society. In *Alita: Battle Angel*, Dr. Ido's technological expertise grants him power over Alita. He attempts to control her actions by ordering her to avoid dangerous situations, reflecting the broader patriarchal theme of male authority. However, Alita defies these orders, asserting her independence and demonstrating that she is not bound by the limitations imposed on her by male figures.

The film also explores the role of physical appearance in reinforcing gender stereotypes. Monro & Huon (2005) argue that women are often judged based on their physical appearance, with slim, tubular figures representing traditional ideals of femininity. Alita's artificial body conforms to this ideal, as it is slender and feminine, reinforcing the notion that women's value lies in their appearance. This is further emphasized by the fact that Dr. Ido, a man, is responsible for creating Alita's body. Her physical form is thus a product of male domination in the realm of technology, reflecting the broader patriarchal theme of male control over women's bodies.

In scenes where Alita is dismissed by the other hunter-warriors, her femininity is portrayed as a source of weakness. The male warriors underestimate her because of her small, feminine frame. However, Alita proves them wrong by single-handedly defeating Grewishka, a powerful cyborg antagonist. This scene highlights the duality of Alita's character — while she may appear feminine and delicate, she possesses strength and resilience that defy the expectations of those around her. Alita's ability to challenge these perceptions aligns with Haraway's concept of the cyborg, which allows women to transcend the limitations imposed on them by patriarchal society.

Yet, despite her strength, Alita is still portrayed as dependent on male figures at key moments in the film. When Grewishka nearly defeats her in their first battle, it is Dr. Ido and McTeague who come to her rescue, reinforcing the idea that women, even powerful ones, still need male assistance to survive. This reliance on male characters suggests that, while Alita may be a strong female protagonist, she is not entirely independent. This reflects Cahyo & Suryaningtyas (2020) argument that women in technology are often depicted as unable to achieve their goals without help from men.

This tension between independence and dependence is further explored in Alita's relationship with Hugo. Her desire to save him reflects a more traditional portrayal of femininity, where a woman's actions are driven by her emotions and her need to protect those she loves. Alita's love for Hugo, while noble, also reinforces the idea that women are

inherently emotional and sensitive, characteristics that have long been associated with femininity in patriarchal societies.

In contrast, Alita's participation in the Motorball match challenges traditional notions of femininity. Despite her small frame, Alita proves to be a formidable competitor, defeating opponents who are much larger and stronger than she is. This scene subverts the traditional gender hierarchy, demonstrating that women can possess the same physical prowess as men. Alita's success in the Motorball arena reflects Haraway's vision of the cyborg as a force that transcends gender boundaries, blurring the lines between masculinity and femininity.

While *Alita: Battle Angel* challenges many patriarchal conventions, it also reinforces some of them. Alita's existence as a cyborg, created by a man, suggests that even the most powerful women are still products of male invention and control. However, as the film progresses, Alita begins to assert her independence, taking control of her destiny and challenging the authority of the men around her. By the end of the film, Alita has evolved into a powerful and autonomous figure, embodying Haraway's vision of the cyborg as a symbol of female empowerment.

In conclusion, *Alita: Battle Angel* presents a complex portrayal of gender dynamics, where traditional patriarchal structures are both challenged and reinforced. Alita, as a cyborg, represents the potential for women to transcend the limitations imposed on them by society. However, her reliance on male figures at key moments in the film suggests that these limitations have not been entirely overcome. Nevertheless, Alita's journey from dependence to independence reflects the broader struggle for gender equality in a patriarchal world, offering a hopeful vision of a future where women can fully embrace their power and potential.

CONCLUSION

The portrayal of Iron City in *Alita: Battle Angel* (Cameron & Rodriguez, 2019,) reflects a society shaped by patriarchal structures, which significantly influences Alita's existence as a female cyborg. Throughout the film, Alita is depicted as a powerful cyborg rebuilt by a man, Dr. Ido, who initially views her as an ordinary machine. However, Alita defies expectations by demonstrating remarkable combat skills, earning the fear of Nova due to her potential to complete the URM cyborg mission to destroy Zalem, which began 300 years ago. Despite being underestimated by the Hunter-Warriors, Alita emerges as a figure embodying feminist quality. The interconnectedness of women and technology in it shows that women can perform—careerists, crime-fighters, or super-citizens. This portrayal aligns with Haraway's cyborg concept, which envisions a transcending of traditional gender boundaries and a challenge to patriarchal constructs.

However, Alita's position in many crucial scenes reflects that she is not always the primary initiator of key actions. Her creation by Dr. Ido, a man, symbolizes the persistence of male dominance in the realm of technology, echoing modern patriarchal structures where men still retain control. Alita's dependence on Dr. Ido and her lover Hugo suggests that she cannot achieve full independence and requires assistance from others to succeed. Thus, *Alita:*

Battle Angel film portrays Alita as a subject shaped by male actions. Though she evolves into a formidable entity equal to men, her achievements are influenced by the intervention of Dr. Ido. This highlights the persistent gender hierarchy within technology, where men maintain authority and women, even in advanced technological roles, are often relegated to being passive victims of patriarchal systems.

This research provides insight into the complexity of gender representation in films featuring heroines, showing that not all such films promote genuine women empowerment. It also opens the door for further exploration of social inequalities in *Alita: Battle Angel* film, particularly the divide between Iron City and Zalem. Future research could explore deeper into these themes, addressing the challenges posed by Marxism and inequality in a world of advancing technology, a critical issue Hollywood continues to navigate.

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