

### 6.3. Lely Arrianie

## **The Culture of Technology: Understanding New Media as The Extension of Man in Critical Review**

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Interpreting technological culture in the context of new media technology can be interpreted as a reference to new objects that have sophisticated capabilities. This definition generally includes hardware (hardware) that can be seen and used to meet human needs. One example of an important phenomenon in the field of technology is when the snowmobile was created at a winter sports festival in North America in 1960 (Pacey, 2000). Thanks to this machine around the ski race area, the mobility of people in the snowy area is greatly helped. As a result, sales of snowmobiles at that time soared because of the large market demand. Uniquely, the use of this snowmobile turns out to have a different function in other parts of the country. For example, in Sweden, Greenland, and Canada, snowmobiles have now become part of the main equipment people rely on for their livelihoods. In Swedish Lapland, snowmobiles are used for reindeer herding. On Canadian Bank Island, this machine has allowed trapping Eskimo to continue to provide their families with cash income from the traditional winter harvest of fox fur.

Differences in cultural background and how to use the machine then raise the question associated with technology, namely, is technology actually morally, culturally, and politically neutral? If you look at the basic construction of the machine and its working principle, then “Yes, neutral technology.” But when viewed from the human activities around the machine, its role as a status symbol, and the owner’s skills, the answer is no. For example, residents of the Serawai tribe in Sumatra use a sickle knife to harvest oil palm fruit bunches from their trees. while the Javanese people use sickles to harvest rice in the fields as one of the harvest methods, in this case, it can be said that the function of the sickle as a harvesting technology is neutral because the working principle is the same. It is different if the sickle is used as a symbol of the name of a group whose members are obsessed with a school of thought that becomes the ideology of their movement. Or, for example, it is used as a symbol of power that only a few

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people in a tribe can have, as a representation of a high role in the cultural values held by the group. In this case, technology cannot be said to be neutral because it is associated with moral values or ideology that only apply to a group of people.

The ambiguity of the meaning of technology also often occurs in the use of the terminology itself, namely the words “technical” and “technology”. Referring to the explanation (Pacey, 2000), if you use adjectives that only refer to the technical aspects of practice, such as, “the destruction of the classroom building on the UI campus in Salemba due to age will be carried out with technical repairs”. What is used here is “technical improvement,” not “technological improvement,” as it is an attempt to solve technical problems only and ignores possible changes in practice. On the other hand, when discussing the development of technological practice, which includes aspects of its organization, how to describe it as “technological development” because it shows that they are not limited by technical form. Thus, technology is no longer limited to hardware aspects but also needs to include aspects of liveware, as technology practices in the application of scientific knowledge and knowledge for practical tasks by commanding systems involving people and organizations, living things, and machines.

Citing the views of Marshall McLuhan in his book entitled, “Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man,” the author underlines three major themes, namely, the thesis that media technology is an extension of the human body; the idea of a global village; and McLuhan’s famous adage that the media is the message. Part 1: The Main Theme in Understanding Media is Media as Human Extension (2012) views the media as “an extension of ourselves” (p. 19) and the result of efforts to relieve the stresses and burdens of life. For example, because the legs are not able to cope with the demands of speed in the growth of the monetary economy, humans invented the wheel as an extension of the legs. But, according to McLuhan, humans must automatically amputate their legs to replace them with wheels. This principle of amputation of extension is echoed by Postman (1993) in McLuhan (2012), when he presents media adoption as a bargaining chip “where technology gives and technology lets go”. McLuhan applies his views on technology as body amputation to several media. Thus, “telephones expand our voice, television expands our eyes and ears; computers lengthen our brains, and electronic media, in general, expand our central nervous system.” McLuhan also believes that new technology imposes a type of narcosis on the user. This is how the body shuts down.

## METHOD IN LIFE

The myth of Narcissus, whose name comes from the Greek for narcosis, or numbness, Narcissus fell in love with the reflected image, unaware that it was his own, because “the extension of himself by the mirror made him beguiled by his perception” (McLuhan, 2012). Therefore, humans tend to be “fascinated by the expansion of themselves” (McLuhan, 2012). From Explosion to Implosion: McLuhan also argues in *Understanding Media* that the world is shifting from the individualizing effects of print technology to a global village where electrical technology removes many of the barriers that separate humanity. McLuhan says that “our civilization’s specialist and fragmented middle margin structure suddenly underwent an instantaneous overhaul of all its mechanical bits to the whole “organic labor of the new world in the global village.”

To make his case, McLuhan distinguishes between the “hot” media that historically fueled the global boom (individualism and fragmentation in society) and the “cold” media that are behind the current boom (worldwide integration) into a global village. For (McLuhan, 2012), “hot media is one that gives rise to a single meaning in high definition,” where high definition is a state that is well filled with data. Hot media include radio, print, photographs, and film, which McLuhan says transmit so much data that it limits sensual engagement and is therefore “low in participation.” Cold media, such as telephones, speeches, cartoons, and television, invite sensual engagement because they produce less high-definition data and consequently “high participation”.

For McLuhan, this concept of cold and hot media serves as the basis for the centrifugal and centripetal movements of society under the influence of different media technologies.

## Bibliography

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