Literary Studies

Civil War and Ideology Conflict as Seen in Alex Irvine's *Transformers: Exodus*

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses civil war and ideology conflict represented in Alex Irvine's *Transformers: Exodus*. It aims to analyze how the ideological conflict contributes to civil war in the novel and the moral messages that the readers can learn from the narrative. Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony and Terry Eagleton's theory of ideological features are used to examine ideology's role, and the moral-philosophical approach is used to analyze moral values. The findings suggest the existence of three ideologies: the Cybertronian traditions, the Autobots' ideology, and the Decepticons' ideology. In addition, this study finds that the novel contains moral values related to peace, toleration, and diplomacy.

I. INTRODUCTION

War stories are relatively easy to find. One may find them on the internet, on television, in books, or in other mediums. There are, in fact, many books that describe wars, both in fiction and non-fiction. Many authors have written fictional accounts about the war in the literary world, turning a tragic tale into a compelling story worth reading. One of them is Alex Irvine, the author of a novel titled Transformers: Exodus (2010).

Transformers, as explained by *Transformers Wiki*, is a toyline franchise that began in 1984 and continues to this day. Transformers toys have many versions, but the premise is always the same: transformers are robot-like aliens from Cybertron, a fictional planet. American company Hasbro is the one who owns the rights for the distribution of Transformers-related products around the world. Except in Japan, where Japanese company Takara Tomy owns it. Together these two companies produced items based on the Transformers characters. Transformers products are not limited to toys. Several novels, animated series, movies, and games have been created based on the franchise. *Transformers: Exodus* is among the novels that are written for the Transformers franchise .

In *Transformers: Exodus*, Irvine presents a compelling war story based on the Transformers characters. While the characters in the novel are not physically humans, nor does the story take place on Earth, they are nevertheless sentient beings that possess human-like personalities and experience human-like struggles. The novel itself narrates the history of the civil war in Cybertron. It details how the ideological conflict between two warring factions, the Autobots and the Decepticons, precipitated a civil war that transformed Cybertron into a warzone. In the aftermath, members of the involved parties have to leave Cybertron as the planet has been destroyed.

This research examines the role of ideology conflict in Cybertronian Civil War in *Transformers: Exodus* and the moral lessons that the readers can learn from the narrative. Previously, some researchers had conducted studies regarding civil war, ideology, and morality in literature. Astuti (2017) analyzed how Chinua Achebe's *Civil Peace* portrays the lives of Nigerian people after the Nigerian Civil War. Sacawisastra (2016) researched the ideological features found in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Footstep*. Two years later, Farda (2018) analyzed how the ruling class in J.K Rowling's *Harry Potter Series* used ideology to maintain their position.

Falah (2020) observed hegemony and ideology found in the Indonesian novel *Bidadari Bermata Bening* by Habiburrahman El Shirazy. From a moral perspective. Rachmawati et al., (2020) wrote an analysis of the moral values found in Dan Brown's *Inferno*. The studies mentioned are related to this research, but they only focus on either civil war, ideology, or morality. In contrast, this research covers all of the three topics. In addition, the object of this research, *Transformers: Exodus*, is a work that has not been studied before in the academic field. Based on this gap in the previous studies, this research presents an analysis of the role of ideology in the civil war portrayed in *Transformers: Exodus*, as well as an examination of the moral lessons derived from the narrative consequences of the philosophical conflict as seen in the novel.

This research focuses on two significant problems. Firstly, it focuses on the role of ideology in the civil war in the novel. The analysis pays attention to how the Autobots and the Decepticons' ideologies are born, how the ideological conflict starts the civil war, and why the civil war is prolonged. Secondly, this research also focuses on how the philosophical battle in the novel impacts the narrative and what lessons the readers can learn from it.

This research is conducted to meet several objectives. The primary purpose of this research is to examine civil war and ideology conflict as represented in the novel. Additionally, this research aims to show why ideology-based conflicts should not happen in any form since it is easy to see how differences in opinion divide people even in real life. Significantly, this research may explain why it is important to accept differences and resolve conflicts peacefully instead of prolonging the animosity.

Mimetic criticism is applied in this research. This critical approach views a work under the premise that literature imitates the natural world (Abrams, 1957, as cited in Natalia Kristin et al., 2019). Therefore, this research views *Transformer: Exodus* as the reflection of civil war and ideological conflict, with ideology and morality as the primary focus. The representation of ideology is analyzed based on the ideas of Antonio Gramsci and Terry Eagleton. They both imply that ideology tends to promote the self-interests of a particular group of influential people. On the other hand, morality in this novel is examined by using a moral-philosophical approach.

Gramsci conceptualized his idea of ideology with his theory of hegemony. For Gramsci, ideology justifies power domination, which involves consent between the dominant and subordinate groups (Cox, 1977). Therefore, hegemony refers to the dominance of one group over the others. However, the dominant group's influence is somehow agreed upon in society. It happens because it has become a norm or is seen as something that comes naturally. The less powerful group succumbs to the domination as they only see it as common sense. In other words, they chose to let the dominant group dominate them.

There are several features that characterize ideology. Ideological features allow the doctrine promoted by the influential group to be accepted by the less-influential group. Those features are: *unifying, action-oriented, rationalizing, legitimating, universalizing, and naturalizing*. Ideology is said to be unifying, as seen in its work to unify those who share the same belief. Ideology contains action-oriented practices, which means that it is more than just theoretical ideas but also manifested in actions. Moreover, ideology may rationalize behaviors that are supposedly prone to critics by giving excuses to justify the actions. Ideology also tends to be used to legitimate the self-interest of certain people by turning it into something acceptable. Another ideological feature is how it universalizes specific ideas and values of particular history and location to make them come off as something humanity needs. Lastly, ideology may completely ingrain itself in society, becoming something perceived as natural and ought to happen(Eagleton, 1991).

Additionally, the moral-philosophical approach is applied in this research to observe the moral messages seen in the novel. Moral-philosophical criticism views literature as its function to teach moral values and talks about issues related to philosophies. The approach eliminates the artistic part of the literary works and instead focuses on what the literature teaches(Guerin, 1992). Thus, this research analyses how the impacts of philosophical conflict in the novel teach valuable moral lessons to the readers.

II. METHOD

This research used a qualitative research method to analyze civil war and ideology conflict in *Transformers: Exodus*. The qualitative research method deals with the collection and analysis of

various amounts of mostly non-numerical data (Blaxter et al., 2010), including thoughts, emotions, and data derived from experience (Clark & Vealé, 2018). This approach involves the existence of assumptions and the utilization of an interpretive framework which includes research problems concerning human or social issues found in groups or persons (Creswell, 2014, as cited in Ma et al., 2019). Qualitative research typically involves textual data (Williams, 2007)that can either be texts specifically written for the research, pre-existing texts, or in form of transcripts obtained from interviews(Gale et al., 2013). This research method is used across many disciplines, including sociology, education, health, and anthropology(Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

The research is conducted by following three steps: collecting data, analyzing data, and presenting the result of the analysis. The data was collected by using the library research method. Any research method will involve an application of library research. The library research method is used to locate and identify sources related to the research question. These sources could come in the form of information based on facts, or can also be based on a personal or an expert opinion in regard to the research questions (George, 2008). In order to obtain this information, researchers may rely on controlled vocabulary subject heading or descriptor searches, general or specific full-text searchers on specific topics or searching via keywords, citations, related records and published biographies. They can also use other people's sources. Modifying the search elements through truncating, combining, and limiting them is also among various types of sources used in library research. Lastly, researchers can also focus the searches on the type of literature, by means, the sources are found by focusing on the distinctive types of reference sources expected within the desired field (Mann, 2015). In this particular research, the data are collected from first and secondary sources. The first source is *Transformers: Exodus*, a novel by Alex Irvine. Meanwhile, the secondary sources were books, websites, and articles that were relevant to this research.

This research uses descriptive research in analyzing the data and presenting the results of the analysis. The descriptive method refers to a body of methodologies most suitable to use when trying to understand what the observed phenomena mean (Leedy, 1980). Descriptive research has several purposes. Among its functions is to discuss and determine the variations as well as the trends found within communities, invent new measures of crucial phenomena, and discuss research samples from research whose objective is to identify causal effects (Loeb et al, as cited in Mohajan, 2020).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Ideology in Cybertronian Civil War

Cultural Hegemony in Pre-Civil War Cybertron

Orion Pax (later becomes Optimus Prime) and Megatron (also known as Megatronus) are the future leaders of the Autobots and the Decepticons, respectively. Orion Pax is a lower class clerk, while Megatron is an industrial transformer turns gladiator who belongs to a class lower than Orion Pax. As the members of the lower castes, they are both at the bottom of the social ladder. They become friends out of the mutual desire to abolish the Cybertronian caste system.

Since before Optimus Prime and Megatron are even born, ideology has played a significant role in the Cybertronian civilization through the caste system. Newborn transformers are assigned to certain castes by the time they emerge from the Well of AllSpark. Once they are set to a particular caste, the transformer will function according to their castes. They are not allowed to aspire to be anything else. The caste system, along with the leadership of a "prime"—the title for the highest-ranked leader in Cyberton—are the crucial parts that constitute the Cybertronian traditions.

The caste system itself results from a long-established rule supported by a powerful group called the Guilds. The Guilds have the power to decide to which caste a transformer would belong. With the Guilds' influences, the caste system becomes ingrained in the Cybertronian society, successfully naturalized and accepted as a part of traditions that needed to be accepted by everyone. Therefore, the Cybertronian traditions itself is an ideology that is used to legitimate the caste system. Meanwhile, the Guilds, the High Council—Cybertronian rulers—and Sentinel Prime—the ruling Prime at the time—are the governmental institutions that solidified and prolonged that ideology.

The way the dominant group utilizes their power in this scenario is something that Gramsci would

define as cultural hegemony. The Cybertronian government has successfully imposed the idea of the caste system into the Cybertronian civilization. The caste system becomes unquestionable, perceived as natural because no one has ever remembered a life without it. There is no need for outright coercion because everyone consent to it as part of the norm. Most transformers may seem to follow the traditions of their castes willingly, but in reality, they have been manipulated by the institutions that perpetuate the existence of the caste system. Such display of acceptance shows the naturalizing feature of ideology, in which the belief of a particular group has become successfully accepted as common sense (Eagleton, 1999, p.58).

This blatant display of hegemonic society is the root of the problems in the Pre-Civil War Cybertron. Those who could recognize how much they suffered injustice under the caste system started to rebel against the ruling group and renounced the teaching of the traditions. Thus, they have realized that they are being deceived and tricked into accepting the status quo. According to Gramsci when one becomes aware of the existence of hegemonic apparatus, it will be possible for them to recreate the ideology. He believed that to combat hegemony's deceptive nature, and the oppressed might choose to create a new hegemonic society themselves (Gramsci & Forgacs, 1988). Thus, the governed group can change the status quo by dismantling the current hegemony and installing their own.

In *Transformers: Exodus*, the desire to change the status quo unite Megatron and Optimus Prime together. However, it turns out that their ideological differences are incompatible. For Orion Pax, he believes in peaceful advocacy through talking and mediation, to which Megatron disagrees. For Megatron, society can only achieve fundamental changes by doing actions, not just talking like Orion Pax suggests. For Megatron, direct actions are needed for changes to happen, even if they require a violent approach.

The strikingly different philosophies between Megatron and Orion Pax are heavily influenced by their different social backgrounds. Orion Pax's experience with inequality is where his caste constrains him, and he cannot aspire for anything beyond being a clerk. On the other hand, Megatron has to live a rather harsh life where those of his caste are prone to death due to work accidents.

He also lives a rather traumatic life as a gladiator, killing other transformers so he will not be the one getting killed. Megatron also has to deal with the fact that he is forever chained by his status as the lowest caste, no matter how strong he is. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Orion Pax has noticeably more positive attitudes toward the traditions of his caste, whereas Megatron has abandoned his caste altogether and has no qualms about not following traditions.

Autobots vs Decepticons: The Political Implications

The philosophical differences between Orion Pax and Megatron finally turn into a conflict when the High Council decides to elevate Orion Pax to become a prime under the name Optimus Prime. Orion Pax's firm belief in Cybertronian traditions has led him to accept the new title, but Megatron refused to acknowledge him. On the other hand, when Megatron refuses to accept him as his leader, the newly renamed Optimus Prime insists that he cannot take such a display of disobedience toward the ideals of Cybertron. Neither side is willing to back down, as do their followers. This dispute shows that the two characters have led their ideological differences to affect their sense of judgment. The conflict that follows is no longer a battle against hegemonic apparatuses but becomes the civil war between Optimus Prime's Autobots vs Megatron's Decepticons.

While Optimus Prime and Megatron may appear as the leading figure that unites each group together, judging from how the war starts, the essence of the conflict seems to be boiled down to a conflict of philosophies between the leaders. Optimus Prime believes that all sentient beings deserve freedom, which in his view, is the ability to choose what they can be. Meanwhile, Megatron believes the only way to maintain justice is by instilling order through tyranny. He believes that a competent autocrat will allow a just society where everyone will feel important because they can do something they are good at rather than being told what to do at birth (Irvine, 2010). These contrasting philosophies of the two leaders heavily influenced their respective groups.

Influenced by the philosophies of their leaders, the Autobots and the Decepticon ideologies are massively different. The Autobots' ideology emphasizes freedom and is characterized by a libertarian philosophy, a slightly conservative view concerning traditions, opposition toward

the caste system, and while initially avoiding the use of violence, they eventually resort to using it. On the other hand, the Decepticons' ideology emphasizes order. It is characterized by an authoritarian philosophy, opposition toward the caste system, rejection towards traditions, violent tendencies, and a Machiavellian leader, Megatron. These philosophies are fundamentally different. The Autobots who advocate for individual freedom are against tyranny, but the Decepticons follow and idolize a leader who wants to rule Cybertron as a tyrant. However, the government chooses Optimus Prime as the current ruler of Cybertron. Considering this political climate, it suffices to say that disagreement between these two groups is inevitable.

Furthermore, one may take a better look at Optimus Prime's and Megatron's philosophies and notice that both attitudes are formed around what is the most convenient for each of them. Optimus Prime used to have his life restricted to a clerk due to caste, so his ideal Cybertron is without the caste system. He did not necessarily want to make a radical change. Therefore, when High Council wanted him to be the prime, he obeyed because he still believed in the ideals of Cybertron. On the other hand, Megatron knows how it feels misplaced, believing that he is destined for more incredible things rather than being an industrial transformer. He believes that only *he* is competent enough to make fundamental changes in Cybertron and choose what he deems the best for his people. For that to happen, he needs to gain power by securing the leadership role. Therefore, he has to be the new prime. Since the High Council had given the title to Optimus Prime, Megatron gathered his followers and declared war to take power himself. For Optimus Prime, Megatron's defiance is an act of rebellion against the foundation of the established Cybertronian norms. As someone who respects the traditions, he cannot just let Megatron get what he wants and step down from his position as a prime.

From this observation, the ideological conflict between the two characters seems to be based on personal desires to establish their visions of the ideal Cybertron society. They may share the same idea about disrupting the current hegemony, but they differ in how they want to construct a new one. For Optimus Prime, he wants a more egalitarian society that assimilates some aspects of the previous administration. Meanwhile, Megatron wants an authoritarian society that fixes what he does not like of the prior administration. This situation makes their battle becomes more egocentric, as neither of them is willing to let go of their ideals or come to a compromise. Therefore, the whole discourse behind civil war can be summarised as a political debate to decide which one is supposed to be the leader, Optimus Prime or Megatron.

Furthermore, the Autobots and the Decepticons faction knowingly support the ideologies that promote the political agenda of their respective leaders. It happens because the leaders believe in what their leaders promoted. Thus, their willingness to follow is based on consent rather than coercion. Their leader's ideology unifies them, giving them something to believe and uniting them with people who think the same. This revelation showcases the unifying feature of ideology.

While ideology unites people, it is also prone to divide people whose ideologies do not align. Following the emergence of war, the caste system has no longer been taken seriously(Irvine, 2010). Neither Guilds nor High Council held power anymore. Thus, technically the previous hegemonic society has been destroyed. The best course of the event should be resolving all tensions between the Autobots and the Decepticons, bounding together to create a new and just society. However, society has become divided into the Decepticons territories and the Autobots territories. Instead of recreating a better society that their leaders once envisioned, the Autobots and the Decepticons keep fighting each other in an endless war. This neverending fight happens because neither Optimus Prime and Megatron have won the battle and seized control of Cybertron. Until that happens, their followers will continue to fight alongside them. This power struggle is one of the factors why the civil war is prolonged.

Both groups are loyal to one leader and willingly endorse their ideology shows a consensual justification of one's power over the other. The subordinate groups, in this case, the followers, are willing to commit to the leaders' interests. They have legitimated the leaders' power and allowed themselves to be commanded. It shows that ideology may function to gain legitimation.

Furthermore, the legitimation of one power over the other entails some form of rationalization. It is worth noting that the majority of the Autobots and the Decepticons come from different social

backgrounds. Irvine's description implies that the Autobots mostly come from lower to upper castes and the Decepticons mainly from the lowest caste. As a result, they have contrasting viewpoints due to their different treatments under the caste system. These different viewpoints explain why they have other ways to rationalize their leaders' power.

Megatron does not have the backing of the High Council and comes from nothing, yet, the Decepticons legitimized his power and are willing to support his interests. The fact that Megatron comes from the lowest caste is crucial to his legitimation as the leader of the Decepticons. The novel shows that the Decepticons are often mistreated, but their sufferings are often brushed aside by the higher castes. Megatron appeals to their suffering. As a fellow lowest caste transformer, he knew how it felt to be oppressed like them. He also walks alongside them and motivates them to take over Cybertron for themselves (Irvine, 2010). Thus, the Decepticons see Megatron as a symbol of hope and tend to idolize him. Therefore, Megatron's power is legitimized by believing that he would be a great leader who would bring the oppressed Decepticons to its glory. They want him to be the leader because—as Megatron himself told Optimus Prime—unlike the previous government who made them feel like their lives are worthless, Megatron knows how to make them feel important (p.322). The Decepticons have decided that only Megatron, who claims to fight for them, can make them feel more important than government-endorsed Optimus Prime.

On the other hand, Optimus Prime's power as a leader is legitimized because the High Council endorses him. Still, the followers follow because they find some justification for fighting on his side. When the war broke out, the Autobots rationalized their inclusion in combat as a way to fight against the Decepticon cause, perceiving them as the enemy due to their attacks on Cybertron's cities. According to Optimus Prime, the Decepticons are impossible to reason with (Irvine, 2010). Even if he knows it is wrong to kill fellow Cybertronians, he has to keep doing it to win against the opposition. Optimus Prime even tells his lieutenant to keep living so they can defeat the enemies instead of dying in a fight (Irvine, 2010) .This situation shows that the Autobots' side has given up any possibility of reconciliation due to seeing the Decepticons as a lost cause.

The ways the Autobots and the Decepticons rationalize their consent to support the leader's ideologies imply that class conflict may also play significant role in the civil war. A vast majority of the Decepticons come from a poorer background compared to the members of the Autobots. As a result, they have contrasting life experiences. The Decepticons have had enough of being seen as second-class citizens and believe Megatron will be a better candidate for leadership. Since they never experience living like the lowest caste, The Autobots can only see the Decepticons as violent rebels who disrupted the peace and run amok.

Irvine's portrayal of class conflict in *Transformers: Exodus* is another factor why the civil war is prolonged and explains the action-oriented practices the group engaged in. Irvine describes that the Cybertronian higher classes enjoy seeing the fights in gladiator pits, and even the Cybertronian government deliberately turn blind eyes on it (Irvine, 2010). Even lower-caste Transformers like Optimus Prime himself admitted that he did not particularly want to know about the part of Cybertron that allowed the suffering of the lowest caste (Irvine, 2010). It gives an idea that the Decepticons despise the Autobots' ideologies because their class difference renders the latter unable to understand the former. Moreover, the Autobots show support toward Cybertronian traditions, thus showing the lack of empathy toward the sufferings of the lowest caste under said traditions.

For Megatron, the only way to fix the unfair society of Cybertron is by becoming a leader himself. His method to do so is by winning the war and seizing power by force. Thus, he and his followers have no interest in reason with the enemy. On the other hand, the Autobots also do not want to let the Decepticons continue attacking them and destroy their homes. As a result, the Autobots also fight back with violence. The war becomes extended because none of the group wins the battle and gains power over Cybertron. Thus, the war itself showcases the Autobots' and the Decepticons' ideological practice, which used violence as a way to achieve their political agenda.

Irvine's portrayal of the Autobots and the Decepticons shows that the conflict between the Autobots and the Decepticons has boiled down to a fight on which one will win the war, those who join the Autobots or Decepticons' causes. The Autobots want Decepticons to lose and vice versa.

Therefore, they will follow what the leaders think will give them the upper hand. It also implies that the followers have universalized Optimus Prime and Megatron's aims to win the fight against what they perceive as enemies into the goal of their respective groups.

As shown in *Transformers: Exodus*, the labelling of the rival group as enemie*s* implies that this practice has become part of their respective ideology. This implication can be observed from how Megatron proclaims that he wants Cybertron in which there are no Autobots left (Irvine, 2010). Meanwhile, Irvine has described how Optimus Prime excludes Decepticons when expressing his sadness toward the lost lives (Irvine, 2010)and eventually labels the Decepticons as an evil force that needs to be destroyed (Irvine, 2010). This perception shows that both leaders no longer perceive each other as fellow Cybertronians but as enemies that need to be extinguished.

As shown in *Transformers: Exodus*, the alienation of one group implies that identity politics is one factor contributing to prolonging the Cybertronian Civil War. Transformers have chosen to label themselves as either the Autobots and the Decepticons. Their identities have been wrapped to Autobots and Decepticons, respectively. Therefore, transformers which are not part of the respective group are enemies or innocents caught in the crossfire. For both groups, enemies have to be fought; in other words, the Autobots and the Decepticons have adapted an Us vs Them mentality.

Lessons from Autobots vs Decepticons

Examining the impact of civil war in *Transformers: Exodus* reveals essential lessons on the consequences of philosophical conflict. Exodus—a mass movement of a group of people—is taken as the last resort in the aftermath of the Cybertronian Civil War. Given that the opposing factions, the Autobots and the Decepticons, both claimed to fight for Cybertron, the fact that they end up having to leave their home gives a sad twist of irony. The planet, their source of disagreement, has no longer sustainable for their visions, and the purpose of fighting in the first place becomes pointless. This irony greatly emphasizes the pointlessness and selfish nature of the war.

In *Transformers: Exodus*, author Alex Irvine demonstrates anti-war messages by showing the pointlessness and selfishness of the civil war. The conflict brings nothing but pain for everyone, not only those engaged in the battle but also the environment and innocent people who get caught in the crossfire. However, the truth is, many people deliberately choose to fight in the war for various reasons. It does not, however, erase the awful consequences of the war. War is inherently selfish because it kills people, including the innocents, and destroys the livelihood to achieve particular political agendas.

Transformers: Exodus implies that war at its core is complex and full of intrigue. It is political. It is done for the sake of the influential people but tricked the powerless into thinking it has to be done. Even the influential people may justify their actions, perhaps in the form of self-deception and denial of the selfish nature of their reasonings. Indeed, in *Transformers: Exodus*, it is shown that the leaders acknowledge that they do not like being at war, yet they keep fighting as if peace is never an option. However, both leaders have personally dismissed the possibility of diplomacy without even trying to do it. Optimus Prime and Megatron appear to have come to believe that their philosophies and objectives are too different to co-exist, so their logic is to destroy one of them, and the last one standing can implement their ideas of better Cybertron. It implies that the conflict of philosophies in the novel stems from the inability to tolerate different opinions.

The narrative of *Transformers: Exodus* leaves a lesson about the importance of toleration. Optimus Prime and Megatron came up with contrasting philosophies influenced by different personal experiences and shared knowledge. What is interesting is that these two characters have started on friendly manners. Their lack of ability to tolerate their philosophical differences becomes the reason the war happens and lasts long. However, as readers, we cannot deny that the ideological conflict in the novel is rather complex. It is not something that can be easily solved unless everyone is on the same page and willing to put their ego aside for the sake of peace.

The depiction of ideological conflict in *Transformers: Exodus* showcases the importance of making peace instead of hostility. The novel shows that it is crucial to resolve a conflict before it becomes even worse, but at the same time, it also acknowledges that sometimes conflict is inevitable. The way to handle said conflict,

however, is the most important thing. It is okay to have different opinions, but it should not disturb the peace. Therefore, it is crucial to have a peaceful discussion and acknowledge each other's points of view instead of prolonging the problems, hence why diplomacy is the key.

Even though diplomacy is crucial to solve a conflict peacefully, Irvine's depiction of the Cybertronian Civil War exhibits a severe lack to attempt such a method. For all Autobots and Decepticons are shown to be opposites, they are not entirely different. They both want a better Cybertron without the caste system to restrict their freedom. They may focus on those similarities instead of fixating on their differences. The fact that the war is declared just shortly after a disagreement emerges implies that the decision happens so fast that they do not have time to think things through in a controllable manner. Thus, there are possibilities for reconciliation if both sides genuinely want to attempt diplomacy when they have the presence of mind. Had they tried to solve this ideological conflict, maybe they could have saved their planet and lived together in peace.

While the majority of us readers are privileged enough not to live in a warzone such as the one depicted in *Transformers: Exodus,* the lessons remain that philosophical differences should not be a reason for conflict. The emphasis of the exodus as a direct consequence of civil war teaches us that every action has consequences, and we may never know the results of our actions until it is too late. Thus, it is crucial never to let personal differences lead to hatred. Moreover, when disagreement appears inevitable, we should solve the actual problem as soon as possible. After all, there is no point in dwelling on negativity.

IV. CONCLUSION

The analysis in this research reveals that ideology contributed to initiating and prolonging the civil war between the Autobots and the Decepticons. The dispute between the two groups stems from the existence of an oppressive ideology called Cybertronian traditions. This ideology has been naturalized and accepted as part of a well-established hegemonic society. While the Autobots' leader conforms to said ideology, the Decepticons' leader is entirely determined to rebel against it. Furthermore, ideological conflict in the novel implies some political issues: a power struggle between Optimus Prime and Megatron, class conflict between the higher classes and the lower classes, and identity politics of Autobots vs Decepticons. These issues are the reasons the civil war lasts as long as it is. Furthermore, the narrative of *Transformers: Exodus* demonstrates the pointless nature of the war and provides valuable moral lessons on the importance of peace, toleration, and diplomacy.

This research analyses the representation of civil war and ideology conflict in *Transformers: Exodus*. It also briefly tackles some aspects related to the real world. However, there is a limitation because the research focuses more on issues found in the book. Future research may try to make a comparison between the novel with the real-life political affair. A psychoanalytical examination of Megatron's possible narcissistic traits will also be an exciting topic to explore.

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