

The Conflicts Between Two Generations Reflected in Thank You Music Video

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ABSTRACT

A song by MKTO which entitled “Thank You” is used by the writer to analyze its music video. The purpose of this study is to do a research about the conflicts between the old and young generation, which is related with social and symbolic power. Theories that are used are textual and contextual theories. The textual theory is used to analyze the verbal aspects (lyrics), aural aspects (music), and visual aspects (clips). Meanwhile the contextual theory is used to analyze the social issues which become the source of the conflicts.

Keywords: song, MKTO, Thank You, music video, political power.

I. Introduction

A video is made to visualize an imagination of person or to record some events, accidents, etc. Even if it is just a picture, with the advance of technology in this era, it will become a moving picture that amazes every person who watches it. One of the kinds of videos that is made by purpose to promote a song is music video. According to *Oxford Online Dictionaries*, music video is a videotaped performance of a recorded popular song, usually accompanied by dancing and visual images

interpreting the lyrics. Beside of song promotion's purpose, the singers from all over the world present a music video in order to interpret the song lyrics to a visual image or a story. A song together with music video also can become a message conveyor to the people about how the singers feel towards their life. The duo American singers, MKTO, make their music video which is titled "Thank You" with many messages contain in it, they use it to express their emotions as the representative of young generations towards the old generations which has destroyed their life in this era. The writer decides to analyze "Thank You" as the object because its music video contains sociological aspects in society and the lyrics also has contents that will make certain people realize about their wrongdoings in this society. The video also shows some acts that MKTO and the mass do to express their emotions and protests.

The purpose of this study is to analyze some poetic elements of the lyrics and sociological aspects that are the conflicts between two generations as portrayed in "Thank You" music video. In regards to this matter, "The Conflicts Between Two Generations Reflected in "Thank You" Music Video by MKTO" has been picked by the writer as the title of the study.

II. Theory and Method

In this study, the writer analyzes song "Thank You" including its textual and cinematography elements, also the contextual aspects which is theory related to conflicts and symbolic power as part of the sociological theories.

II.1. Textual Aspects

In this study, the writer applies the connotation, imagery and some figurative languages to describe the lyric. The writer also adds the element of cinematography to support in exploring the scenes of the music video.

Holman states that diction can be distinguished into two types: denotation and connotation. Denotation is the specific, exact meaning of a word (1960: 134). Meanwhile connotation is the cluster of implications that words or phrases may carry with them, as distinguished from their denotative meaning (1960: 105). In the other hand, imagery is described as a term used widely in contemporary criticism; *imagery* has a great kind of meanings (1960: 233).

For the figurative language, the writer uses metaphor, simile, and personification to analyze the lyric. As According to Perrine in *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry*, figurative language is a language using figure of speech which cannot be taken literally (or should not be taken literally only) (61:1977). In book of *Memahami Film*, Pratista explains that the meaning of the distance is the dimension between the camera and the object in the frame (2008: 14). The kinds of shots are divided into seven parts, which are extreme long shot, long shot, medium long shot, medium shot, medium close-up shot, close up, and extreme close-up (2008: 15).

II.2. Contextual Aspects

The writer uses theories for analyzing the conflicts, Serra states in his paper of *A Conflict of Generations: The Generation Gap*, he says:

The greatest problem in an adolescent's life is himself, the teenage generation sees clearly enough that there are other problems facing the world and they are very much a part of these problems. They see even more clearly how these problems differ from previous generations (8: 1971).

He also explains that as the time changes, the young generations must face the difficulty of obeying the commands from the elder about what they should be done and the world that is made by the elder has been totally ruined because of the elder previous actions (3: 1971).

The writer applies another theory of symbol to support in analyzing the object, as in the music video there are some properties that are used as a tools to help the acts. In book of *Sociology: The Core Second Edition*, symbols are acts or objects that have become and stood for something else. Objects such as flags, paintings, religious icons, badges, and uniforms have functions as social symbols. Symbols are a powerful code or shorthand for representing and dealing with aspects of the world about people (Hewitt, 1979).

The method of study is also applied for this study, which are method of research and method of approach. In method of research, the method that is used is library research, while in method of approach, there are two kind of methods that are used which are objective approach and sociological approach.

III. OBJECT

The objects for this study are the transcript of the speech, the song lyric, and the scene of music video which relates to the theories.

IV. DISCUSSION

IV.1. Textual analysis



Picture 1. MKTO in television

In the lyric, MKTO sing “So raise that bird up high”, the word “bird” has a denotative meaning that is creature with feather and wings, usually is able to fly, while its connotative meaning is a profane gesture in the form of giving the middle finger. The picture above shows medium-long shot with domination of background of the scene shows MKTO on podium with United States flags in both sides, doing an oration inside the TV. They raise their hands up and give their middle fingers along with anger expression on their face as a signs of dissatisfaction toward the rulers. It is also a symbol of responding to the senator says “They’re fuck!” to the nation. There is also an imagery in the lyric that says “Thanks for the ropes you used to hold us down”, here, we can imagine that the singers are tied with ropes like a kidnapping act, but “the ropes” here refer to invincible ropes that is rules which restrict them to say and do whatever they want.

In the second verse, there is a metaphor in line “Thank you for the ropes you used to hold us down”. The real meaning of “the ropes” is piece of very thick string yet in this song it means the rules that restrict them to do anything freely. the line

“This world is too damn jaded” which is a personification. “This world” is a noun and the adjective “jaded” means tired and lacking energy, usually after too much something. “Jaded” is used to describe a human’s feeling which won’t to do nothing and need rest and sleep. It describes that even the people feel exhausted too as the result of so many negative things surrounding them. “My life is just like Vegas” is a simile. It means that the singers’ life is filled with pleasure as they make themselves busy playing around from morning to morning again.



Picture 2. People running in the street

The picture above shows a long shot of a street and it can be seen that the scene has two sides of lighting, people running to the area which is brighter and leave their place which is in darker area.

IV.2. Contextual Analysis

In “Thank You” music video, there are some aspects that show how the conflicts of MKTO toward the old generations. The first appeared scene below shows the MKTO are watching a speech by a senator on TV explaining about people who will lost their job as the effect of nation’s debt. The senator comes with his harsh words and cause anger toward MKTO. They take over the podium by pushing him and call out the old generations by mentioning their identity. This indicates that they want to voice their dissatisfaction towards them.



Picture 3. MKTO managing to take over the podium



Picture 4. MKTO arguing with a man and flying him up

The shot above tells that they have some argues with a man because they block his way then he gets angry here. The duos do not seem to be afraid of the man because they bring their “weapons” which is the balloon to fly that man up. This scene describes that MKTO want to show a warning to old generations or the ones who dominantly hold the most power in society. The eyes of the balloons tell about the old view of the old generations which are very strict and conservative. While the mouth of the balloons sign to eliminate “the old speech” by old generations, along with this scene, there is a line that says “Thank you for feeding us years of lies”, MKTO feels sick with many lies which have been told by the older generations for years and wants to remove it.



Picture 5. A flag symbolizing MKTO’s acts

MKTO also use a flag to show their act and it symbolizes several things like the black color in the balloons portrays the negative sides or dark era of the old generations where there is a dominance of the rulers that restrict people to raise their opinions. It can be seen too that the flag is half-past mounted, it reflects as a symbol of young generation's sorrow.



Picture 6. Two people making a graffiti

Another “weapons” that they use in this music video is spray-paints. They use it to draw a symbol like the ones that are drawn in the balloons and flag. The graffiti which is made by them is useful as a media to communicate their opinions toward the old generations. They make it in the wall of the street, then one of the old generations pass it by and is absorbed by it. They also spray the spray-paint on the mouth of the lecturer who is in the middle of class. This scene shows that even in the field of education, they are still repressed by the old generations. As it is said in the line “Thank you for the times you said, “Don’t make a sound””, it symbolizes the anger of the people for not being able to express their opinions. In conclusion, the symbol on the flag, balloons, and graffiti are described of “vanishing” people or old generations along with their old speeches and old views which are strict and conservative.

V. CONCLUSION

“Thank You” by MKTO is a song which contains some positive messages towards young generations to fight their rights and opinions. From the analysis of the song and music video, the writer finds the contextual aspects related to the sociological elements inside the music video, such as the causes of the conflict between young and old generations and the symbolic power that is portrayed in the music video. From the analysis of the conflicts, the writer finds that the conflicts happen because of the fault of the old generations whom have curbed the young generation’s freedom of speech and leave many lies and wars to fight. Meanwhile, from the analysis of symbolic power, the writer can get the information about the symbols drawn in the music video which contains specific meanings about “the weapons” such as balloons, spray-paints, and flag that they use to support their act to against the old generations.

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