

Antiwar in Black Sabbath's Lyrics of Song "War Pigs"

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Abstract:

This research focuses on how the antiwar in Black Sabbath's Lyrics of Song "War Pigs" exists. This research applies Russian formalism school of literary criticism, especially defamiliarization. The research finding is that the lyrics that Black Sabbath use sound the spirit of antiwar. There are two main ideas of the proofs of the antiwar in the song. Firstly, the antiwar in the song lyrics is described as the war is orchestrated by the leaders of the people, those are the generals and politicians, while the poor people are used as tools to satisfy their greed. Secondly, the war is not holy even though the warmongers try to use holy words.

Keywords: Antiwar, defamiliarization

A. Introduction:

Wars have happened since ancient times. The wars are contested in the name of gods of the primordial tribes, the sacred of nations, and other things, such as, dispute over territory and even lust of the leaders. In history, the world war two killed million people because the dispute over territories. However, the wars cause the heavy losses of human beings, even on the winning side. The human losses of human beings become the tragedy of human beings, so that some people object that wars can be solution for human beings' problems. The wars become the problems, not the solution. Therefore, many people protest the policy of making wars in modern history. This action becomes

more famous by the name of anti war movements.

One of the famous anti war movements takes places during the war of Vietnam. Many artists, activists, civil rightists are among the some modern anti war activists who declare that war is crime. War is triggered by greed of capitalism and imperialism desires. It is the capitalists that gain profits from wars, not the people. The activists claim that the truth motives of the war are nothing but the greed of human beings or to be precisely the leaders that manipulate masses.

The forms of the massive protests can be found in many products of culture in

which songs are one of them. During the Vietnam war, the generations that are very critical to the policy of injustice and hypocrisy spread out in many parts of the world especially the western part of Europe and America, Some of the leading speakers of this idea are the Beatles and the Black Sabbath, both are from the UK. Black Sabbath are a group of band from Birmingham that the members come from the working class. They work hard as menial workers in ports because they start the band. One of the critical song that protests the war is its song entitled “ The War Pigs”.

The song “War Pigs” is written and released in 1970 as a part the album “Paranoid”. The songs in the album has the intention to voice the social protests in which the anti war is one of the them. The band, like others have produced the album as a vanguard of the antiestablishment that occurred at the time after the emergence of the Beatles a ten year earlier. In this research, the lyrics of a song is treated as a poem because since Bob Dylan era in 1960, there is an intention to use the song lyrics as poems and it is proved that Bob Dylan, a singer becomes a Nobel Prize winner because of his song lyrics.

B.The Research Problem

As this research analyzes the antiwar lyrics of the Black Sabbath band in its song “The War Pigs” , therefore the research problem is:

What are the proofs of antiwar in Black Sabbath’s song “The War Pigs”?

C.The Theory of Russian Formalism (Jan Mukarovsky)

Traditionally, literary works are formed in three genres. They are poetry, drama, and prose. Poetry is the oldest form of communication in language art (Elizabeth Drew ,1965:12). As poetry is easy to be said and memorized, the use of poems becomes wider. The advantage of the use of poetry in language art is related also a means of education, in which it is connected through the moral lesson that is conveyed. In such condition, it collides with music, and then the poems become the lyrics of the songs. In Psalms, the poems become part of Holy Bible.

The importance of poems cannot be altered with the coming of drama and prose. When the study of literature works becomes to be too far from the objective life of reality in people’s life, the emergences of new criticism and Russian Formalism cannot be regretted. Both schools are very critical to

see how literary works become the study of biography of authors.

Russian Formalism is a literary critic school that emerges in the early 20th century. Both American New Criticism and Russian Formalism are concerned on examining what was especially literary about a text. Therefore, the literary device becomes the main intention of Russian formalists such as Jan Mukarovsky, Victor Shkolovsky and many others. David Carter even states that because of that the content is secondary attention (Carter,2006:34). However, even though this school is developed by some prominent thinkers, the researcher pays attention only on the idea of Jan Mukarovsky.

Jan Mukarovsky is usually categorised among the structuralists but his roots are in Russian Formalist thought and he is certainly a significant transitional figure. He was a member of the Prague Linguistic Circle, founded in 1926. Mukarovsky developed Shklovsky's concept of 'defamiliarisation' more systematically so that it can be used in this research. Mukarovsky explains that defamiliarisation means 'the aesthetically intentional distortion of the literary components' (Carter, 2006:35). By this device, a literary author can distort the real

intention by using the other words that are not connected. The researcher, therefore finds that defamiliarisation is closely related to the lyrics that are going to be discussed because the lyrics make the connection between "pigs" and the warmongers".

The importance of Mukarovsky also lays on the idea that Mukarovsky states that there is dynamic tension between literature and society where the work is produced. This idea explains that the words that are used in a literary work is closely related to the cultural background of the writer, so that the author must be carefully choose the words during the process of creating the work in order to sharpen the defamiliarisation.

D.Research Method

As it is a study on lyrics of a song, therefore, a qualitative research is done. This research is a qualitative research that is done by describing the object that is studied not by numbers or statistics but by description and explanation. The data that are used in this research are actually the words in the lyrics of the Black Sabbath's song entitled "The War Pig". This song is released in 1970 by the band at the peak of anti Vietnam war.

In conducting the analysis, the researcher uses the Russian formalism way of interpreting data and analysis by understanding each word and then phrase to phrase and then the whole lines of the lyrics that are treated as a poem like many attentions of the Russian formalism. Therefore, it can be said that the close reading technique is used in this research.

E. The Analysis

As it has stated that the song with the title “War Pig” is released as a part of album “Paranoid” that is listened to the public at the peak of the social protest that emerges at the new leftism in the late 1960’s. The lyrics of the song are stated in the following lines:

Generals gathered in their masses,
just like witches at black masses.
Evil minds that plot destruction,
sorcerer of death's construction.
In the fields the bodies burning,
as the war machine keeps turning.
Death and hatred to mankind,
poisoning their brainwashed minds...Oh lord
yeah!

Politicians hide themselves away
They only started the war
Why should they go out to fight?
They leave that role to the poor

Time will tell on their power minds
Making war just for fun
Treating people just like pawns in chess
Wait `till their judgment day comes, yeah!

Now in darkness, world stops turning,

ashes where the bodies burning.
No more war pigs have the power,
hand of god has struck the hour.
Day of judgment, god is calling,
on their knees the war pigs crawling.
Begging mercy for their sins,
Satan, laughing, spreads his wings...Oh lord,
yeah!

The researcher examines that the lyrics of the song contains the spirit of antiwar. The following quotation proves the idea:

Generals gathered in their masses,
just like witches at black masses

The music band want to say that the war is done by the generals of soldiers or army that make their people congregate together. But as it is seen, the Black Sabbath stress that the congregation is not good but it is for the evil intention. It is clearly seen that the band use “just like witches at black masses”. The word “witches” shows that the diction that is deployed by the band shows that the band do not feel sympathy with the war and especially the generals. In other words, The black masses mean the mass is not sacred as it is done during the holy eucharist in Christianity. In Christianity, it is the leader, Jesus that sacrifices himself for the masses (people), but in this case, on the contrary, the band say that the people are sacrificed for the mass. In this way, the band

employ the defamiliarization process as the Russian Formalism requires. The lyrics “witches” represent the evil in the context of generals. The generals are actually not the priests in actual life, but by the method of defamiliarization, the word is used to represent the idea of authority and then manipulate people.

In Mukarovsky’s idea on how literature and culture are closely related, it can be studied that the concept of “witches at black masses” is closely related to the cultural background of the band as culturally Christians. Because of that, the band know the concept of mass or eucharist. The lyrics show that the meaning of holy communion or mass is distorted into black mass.

The next lines state that the generals have :

Evil minds that plot destruction,
sorcerer of death's construction.
In the fields the bodies burning,

The above line describes how the Black Sabbath sound the spirit of antiwar. The band say that it is the evil mind that constructs the war, the destructive war. The Black Sabbath show how they hate war. They emphasize the notion by using the deployment of words that the war is constructed by the evil mind, not good mind, and the mind constructs destruction,

not the charity and good end. The expense of war is also hated by the Black Sabbath. It can be analyzed from the words “In the fields of the bodies burning”. The words express that the war reduces human beings as production machine tools that are killed and burnt for the sake of the evil mind in an evil ritual conducted by evil priests, or in this case the pundit as Chomsky states.

The line also shows how Mukarovsky’s concept can be used in this analysis. The word “evil mind constructs” is a defamiliarisation. The evil mind actually cannot construct, but decompose or destructs. The band deploy two confronting words that create distortion on the level of beauty of the literary device.

The next line describes that people as seen as things not human beings, people are dehumanized by the cruel evil mind plotters:

as the war machine keeps turning.
Death and hatred to mankind,
poisoning their brainwashed
minds...Oh lord yeah!

From the above quotation, it can be studied that the human beings under the cruel and evil spirit leaders must give their life for their leaders. The people are naively

brainwashed. The antiwar spirit can be seen in the word “poisoning”. It is not a neutral word. If it is neutral that should have been “giving the information” instead “poisoning their brainwashed mind”. In the last word of the stanza, the band use “Oh Lord” in which it can be interpreted as the true will of God is the existence of peace not the war agitation as proposed by the evil priests of the black mass.

The word “poison” in this line is also a kind of defamiliarisation. It can be a proof as a defamiliarisation because poison is used not in the real meaning as like a means to kill rats or others. But, the poison is not chemical substance but a teaching. The poison in the form of teaching is more danger and effective to encourage people to die rather than just by killing people by using the real poisons.

As, Mukarovsky states that the concept of “ a church” can have double interpretations, such as a place to worship or an artistic building, the word “poison” can be meant as a chemical substance that can kill things, or it is everything that can brainwash people’s mind. The double meaning is used as a literary device by the author, according to Mukarovksy as a means to distort and confront things with other

things that develop the beauty of the literary work.

The next lines of the song also describe how the Black Sabbath sounds the spirit of antiwar.

Politicians hide themselves away
They only started the war
Why should they go out to fight?
They leave that role to the poor

The above quotation describes how the dictions that are deployed by the band are against the war. The words do not feel sympathy with the leaders. Politicians are regarded as “hide” and they only “started the war” and the duty is passed to the poor people who fight to die for their leaders’ interest, not their own. Therefore, the band condemn the war. The war is greed of leaders that must be paid with the blood and tears of the poor.

Conclusion

The lyrics of the song entitled “War Pigs” describe how the band, The Black Sabbath use that words to sound the spirit of antiwar. The spirit of antiwar deals with the fact that the war is orchestrated by the leaders of the people, those are the generals and politicians, while the poor people are used as tools to satisfy their greed.

The war is not holy at all even though it is used with the holy banner because what actually happens as the intention of the war, and the misled ones are hidden from public. In this, case the band fight for the idea that people must be aware for the real intention of the warmongers, so that the people, especially the poor people can be against the war.

From the analysis above, by using Mukarvosky's ideas on defamiliarisation, the researcher understands that the literary device can help reveal the meanings of the words that are used by the band in promoting the anti war spirit.

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