

Social Criticism in the Songs of Conflict in Palestine

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ABSTRACT

This research was about the song of conflict in Palestine which aimed to find out social criticism portrayed in the songs of conflict in Palestine, Palestine Will Be Free, Forever Palestine, and We Will not Go Down. This research applied descriptive qualitative method in revealing the data. The research based on the based on Barthes' theory about semiotics. The findings revealed that there were some social criticisms toward Israel aggression in these songs, such as political, injustice, and religious issue.

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Descriptive Qualitative, Note Taking, Social Criticism, Semiotics, Conflict in Palestine, Song.

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1. Introduction

Social criticism is one of the important parts in study of literature because social criticism in literature mostly is the representation of human life or society. It is a reaction or criticism toward social condition in the particular environment or society. Social criticism analyzes or criticizes the flawed and deviation of social structure in a society, such as corruption, cruel treatment, assassination, injustice and an attack to society that kill many children and women. Social criticism can be expressed in two ways, they are direct and indirect. Showing criticism by demonstration include in direct way, while expressing criticism through literary works, such as drama, movie, poetry, and music are indirect way. Music is the popular literary work for several reasons. Music is a good way to express someone's feeling, emotion, experience and idea about something in the world. Music as an entertainment can influence people's feeling because music can be enjoyed anywhere and anytime.

When people talk about music, basically they talk about song. Songs contain messages and ideas to convey by the musician to people. Furthermore, Syawar (2004:8) implies that a song is composition of words on a poem which is sung by the readers as one way to express their feeling of the people or to tell something to other people". The musicians or authors convey their idea trough the lyrics of song. Lyric is the important part of song because lyric speaks directly to the listener. Lyric often contains of love, social, economic, political and religion theme as well as aesthetics elements that indicate message of the song. Some lyrics can be considered as a form of social commentary because the author makes a song as his social criticism toward something happen in society. Therefore, the researcher is interested to see the social criticism of the songs about conflict in Palestine, such as *Palestine Will be Free* by Maher Zain, *Forever Palestine* by Sami Yusuf and *We Will not Go Down* by Michael Heart.

The lyrics of the songs about conflict in Palestine released in 2009 as the reflection of real life of Palestine at that time. Moreover, the lyrics the songs about conflict in Palestine criticize the war invasion, government and give the spirit for the victims of war (Palestinian). The songs are described by the authors of songs as their reaction and public statement of conflict in Palestine because the lyrics of songs explain some aspects such as political issue, social and religion issue. Furthermore, these songs are trying to tell and make most of the people in the world see

that war in Palestine just gives a pain for the victims of war, women and children specially. Besides that, the war just carries away children's happiness and future by destroying their homes and schools.

2. The concept of Semiotic by Roland Barthes

Signs are classified in many forms, to study signs people need semiotic. Semiotic comes from the Greek *semion* which meaning *mark* or *sign*. The most common and basic definition of semiotic is "the study of sign". Semiotics is often employed in the analysis of texts because text is an assemblage of signs. The term text usually refers to a message which has been recorded in some ways, such as writing, audio, and video. Hilmi in Fikriyah (2011:7) explains that Barthes developed signification theory from Saussure to be a theory of grammar and its connotation meaning. Barthes interpreting sign can occur in two levels, denotation and connotation. Denotation is first level of signification or primer system. It explains the relation between signifier and signified or reality of the signifier itself and produce explicit meaning. Connotation is second level or secondary system. It explains the relation between sign that develop to new signifier and signified or the social reality, then produce connotative sign. Roland Barthes describes as follow:



Barthes gives an example of connotation and denotation to make it understand easily. It is cover of magazine. At that time, he is in the barbershop and sees a *Paris Match* magazine. There is a picture on the cover (signifier) which is directed to a France uniformed black man giving honored to the France's flag. On the primer system (denotation), the black army is the sign and it is develop to the new signifier or second signifier on the secondary system (connotation). France is a big country which has variety of races. Thereby, the researcher see, explore, and interpret the lyrics of songs to find out the message and social criticism in song by using two level of interpreting sign or signification of Roland Barthes' theory.

3. Findings and Discussion

The three songs of conflict in Palestine, *We Will Not Go Down*, *Forever Palestine* and *Palestine Will Be Free* which analyzed in this research were released in 2009. These songs tell about the event and condition of conflict in Palestine to the world. The researcher found out many codes that were contained in the lyrics of songs as data and interpreted it by using two levels of signification of Barthes' theory as follow:

3.1 Women and children

Woman is adult female human being but in this lyric woman is symbolized of beauty and civilization because with her beauty of heart, affection and strength, a woman can bear, educate and take care of many children by heart. Thus, woman is the important part of civilization. Child is a young human being. The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) (2013:1) as cited in the United Nation Convention on the Right of Child defines child as a human being under the age of 18 years old unless under the law applied to the child, majority is attained earlier. This is ratified by 192 of 194 member countries. Biologically, child is a person between birth and puberty. But what the researcher got here is child signifies young or next generation. While, in the lyric:

Women and children alike

Murdered and massacred night after night (Datum 4, line 15-16)

It expresses how Israel damaged Palestinians mercilessly without paying attention of the target. Israel didn't care about their victims. They didn't differ their targets either women or children. But women and children as weak people became main target instead, Israel slew them violently because Israel wanted to eliminate the generation of Palestine from this world. After women and children were murdered and massacred, it means there were no women anymore to bear young generation and that would decrease amount of society of Palestine.

After analyzing the data by Barthes' theory, the researcher obtained some social criticisms in the songs of conflict in Palestine. They are political, injustice, and religious issue, as follow:

3.2 Social criticism in songs of conflict in Palestine

The Social criticism of conflict in Palestine is about injustice issue. Injustice issue is fact of a situation and condition being unfair. In conflict between Palestine and Israel appeared some injustice, one of them was the seized of human right. It described in the lyric of song :

*what happened to our human right?
what happened to the sanctity of life?*

This is one of the criticism toward Israel in injustice issue. The lyric expressed that Israel lost their sanctity of life. People asked for their sanctity of life due to what Israel had done to Paletinians, how could Israel do such brutal things to the Palestine, especially women and children?. Israel carried away their human right, by dropping bombs and rockets anywhere through day and night, even in the urban area. So it caused many victims and ruined the buildings in Palestine just like in the lyric:

*Taking away everyone dear to my heart.
Destroying my dreams in a blink on an eye*

Israel did their aggression foolhardly, they did not distinguish their targets. Therefore, that aggression or the conflict of Israel and Palestine which took place in Gaza Strip was just like a bad dream for Palestinians, gave them anxiety and sadness because of many Palestinian children lost their parents. Many people lost their beloved people, friends and families. Thus, surely the war was just destroying and treating their life and future, especially for the children. Israel demolished Palestinian buildings, included hospitals, houses, mosques, and schools, and those are the important or the precious buildings of Palestine which would decide their future. Such as school as the essential tool to build children's character. Palestinian children have rights to get a better and good education, every child has his/her own ambition to become a success person someday.

They have their own dreams and those can be reached in the school by reading book and learning particular skill which is guided by the teacher. Moreover, acquiring knowledge and experience for children not only in the school, but also in their environment by interact with society and nature. Those will very helpful for children's development to achieve their dreams. But unfortunately, easily and quickly Israel destroyed their dreams and future by ravaging everything till there was no more place for children to play, no more place to study and gather with family. Thereby, nothing remain except the spilled of blood or the victims and the ruins of buildings caused by the explosion of bombs and rockets. Therefore, Israel had grabbed childrens of Palestine future in a blink of an eye, instantiate.

4. Conclusion

Social criticism in song of conflict in Palestine, *We Will Not Go Down*, *Forever Palestine*, and *Palestine Tomorrow Will Be Free* are about how the situation and condition that happened in Palestine at the time, during the conflict and the writers of these songs expressed their thought based on reality. There are some social criticisms found in the lyrics of songs, they were political issue, which criticized about the law and the countries leader that have responsibility toward the conflict in Palestine. Injustice issue which talked about the human rights that have been seized by Israel. And the last one is religious issue that criticized about religious war in Palestine, reflected in the lyric of songs, which appropriate with the real life of Palestine.

Those songs as social statement of the writers againsts Israel aggression. The writers not only described about all the things that occurred in Palestine but also they put several messages in the song. They suggest people to do not create or minimize any fection among society that can be a problem or conflict, due to conflict or war such Israel and Palestine just give the pain and hurtful, nothing good at all. It also persuade people to do not despire or stop having any hope in even in the worst situation and condition. This study revealed that there were some social criticisms toward Israel aggression in these songs, such as political, injustice, and religious issue.

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