



**EXTENDED ESSAY OF
THE CONFLICTS BETWEEN TWO GENERATIONS
REFLECTED IN “THANK YOU” MUSIC VIDEO BY MKTO**

A FINAL PROJECT

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For S-1 Degree in American Cultural Studies
In English Department, Faculty of Humanities
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PRONOUNCEMENT

I state truthfully that this project is compiled by me without taking the results from other research in any university, in S-1, S-2, and S-3 degree and diploma. In addition, I ensure that I do not take the materials from other publications or someone's work except for the references mentioned in the references.

Semarang, 14 November 2015

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MOTTO AND DEDICATION

Hope. It is the only thing stronger than fear. A little hope is effective. A lot of hope is dangerous. A spark is fine, as long as it's contained. (The Hunger Games (2012))

Friendship is always a sweet responsibility, never an opportunity. (Kahlil Gibran)

Instead of giving up before even trying, I plan on properly going through with it till the end. Even the chances are 50/50. (Kim Shin Hyuk – She Was Pretty)

This final project is dedicated to the writer's beloved parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise be to Allah, who has given strength and spirit to this final project on “The Conflicts Between Two Generations Reflected in “Thank You” Music Video by MKTO” came to a completion. On this occasion, the writer would like to thank all those people who have made their contribution to the completion of this extended essay.

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The writer realizes that this final project is still far from perfect. The writer, therefore, will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this final project better.

Finally, the writer expects that this final project will be useful to the reader who wishes to learn something about sociological-political aspects which are contained in American music.

Semarang, 14 November 2015

Nissa Soraya

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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.

1. 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.

2. 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.

2.1. Theory

The writer applies some theories of textual aspects, which support the contextual aspects of the song and music video.

2.1.1. Textual aspects

The writer uses some elements of poetry to analyze the song lyric. Perrine states that poetry has the pressure per its word and poem, to make the poetry, there are connotation, imagery, metaphor, symbol, etc (10: 1977). However, in this study, the writer only 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.

2.1.1.1. Diction and Imagery

In book of *A Handbook of Literature*, Holman describes that diction on poetry are words chosen for supposedly inherent poetic quality (1930: 361). Diction can be distinguished into two types: denotation and connotation. Denotation is the

specific, exact meaning of a word (1960: 134). For example, in *Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary*, the word "bird" has a denotative meaning that is a creature with feathers and wings, usually able to fly (2008). Meanwhile connotation is the cluster of implications that words or phrases may carry with them, as distinguished from their denotative meaning (1960: 105). The connotation of the word "bird" can be interpreted with the definition from *Urban Dictionary* which is a profane gesture in the form of giving the middle finger (2004). In the other hand, imagery is described by Holman as a term used widely in contemporary criticism; *imagery* has a great kind of meanings (1960: 233).

2.1.1.2. Figurative Language

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 lyric of "Thank You", there are some figurative languages that the writer uses, that are:

1. Metaphor is a means of comparing things, which are actually unlike. The figurative term is substituted for or identified with the literal term (61:1977).
2. Simile has same meaning with metaphor, the distinction between them is that in simile, the comparison is expressed by using some words or phrases, such as like, as, than, similar to, resembles or seems (61:1977).
3. Personification consists in giving the attributes of a human being to an animal, and object, or a concept (64:1977).

2.1.1.3. Elements of Cinematography

The writer uses the camera distance to analyze the song's music video. 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:

1. Extreme long shot means that there are a long distance between the camera and the object, so the physical appearance of the object looks small (2008: 105).
2. Long shot is that the object's physical appearance can be clearly seen yet the background around it is still dominant (2008: 105).
3. Medium long shot shows the body of the object is seen only from knee to head with the body that is balanced with the environment (2008: 105).
4. Medium shot shows the waist to head of the object and the object starts to show some expressions (2008: 15).
5. Medium close-up shot shows the object from chest to head and is usually used for showing dialogue scenes (2008: 15).
6. Close up appears with part of the object like face, hand, foot, or other parts in order to show more detailed way (2008: 15).
7. Extreme close-up shows the closest shots of part of an object in detail, such as ears, eyes, or nose (2008: 15).

According to book of *Film Art: An Introduction*, to support in analyzing a scene there are settings and lighting. Setting is used to show the locations where the scene happens while the lighting is also the aspect to support in visualizing the situations from the scenes (1986: 126).

2.1.1.4. Theory of Music Genre

There are two kinds of music genre of MKTO's song, Thank You, which are pop and rap music.

2.1.1.4.1. Pop Music

Noel Coward (1899) defines pop music as a big genre which includes large varieties of music style. Pop is visualized by its short, vocal catch-phrase or instrumental motif within the song. It can be a potent emotional force. Its music and lyric of the song are mostly an emotional.

2.1.1.4.2. Rap Music

Becky Blanchard on *The Social Significance of Rap & Hip-Hop Culture* said that rap is the rhymes spoken over hip-hop music. Rap usually combined with other forms of traditionally African-American music, such as jazz, blues, and soul. Rap has the powerful meaning to raise the issues about social, economy and politic, it also can be made as a media to voice people's opinions.

2.1.2. Contextual Aspects

The theories related to the conflicts are applied to analyze the content of "Thank You" music video.

2.1.2.1. Theories of The Conflicts

Serra (1971) states that young refers to those people under 30 years of age and old refers to those people 30 years of age or older. Meanwhile the young generation refers to the current generation of adolescence and the young adult under 30 years of age and the older generation refers to previous generation and 30 years of age

or older (6: 1971). 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. It represents other things through the shared understandings people have. 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).

2.2. Method of the Study

Method supports the writer to know how to collect the data from the topic that will be studied. There are two kinds of method which the writer uses, namely method of research and method of approach.

2.2.1. Method of Research

In this study, the writer uses library research to collect the data related to the topic. There are no things like interview and survey in this method of research. The information can be found in library from books, articles or journals.

2.2.2. Method of Approach

The methods are used for analyzing the object related to the topic which are the objective and sociological approach. The objective approach includes close reading, close listening, and close viewing. Close reading is used in order to get to understand the meaning of the song's lyric while close listening is required to find the musical data, and the close viewing is used to explore the visual aspects through the music video. Beside of those methods, the writer also applies the cinematography elements to support both methods.

Meanwhile, the sociological approach is used to analyze the extrinsic aspects of the object. This approach relates the literary work and the condition of society. The study analyzes the politic and social aspects from the lyric and music video, that is the conflicts which happen between old generations and young generations.

3. Singer and Works

This study includes a biography of the singers and some works which they have created and some hits that become famous around the world.

3.1. Singer

MKTO is an American musical duo, whose stand for the members' initial names and surnames, Malcolm Kelley and Tony Oller. They met in 2010 while filming

the Nickelodeon television series *Gigantic*, in which their characters played best friends and later they formed this duo. They said that the name is to elaborate upon their inspiration, "It also stands for what our album kind of is: Misfit Kids and Total Outcasts – just like the kids we were in high school".

3.2. Works

The duo signed to Columbia Records and released their debut single "Thank You" on January 15, 2013. "Thank You" is a crossover between pop and hip hop. The song has gained commercial success, reaching the top ten on both the Australian and New Zealand singles charts. MKTO released their second single, "Classic" along with the music video on June 20, 2013. It was placed at number 18 on the US *Billboard* Hot 100, and the music video has since gotten over 50 million views on YouTube. Their third single, "God Only Knows" was released on November 29, 2013 on YouTube and Vevo. They also become the opening singer for Emblem3's band live Tour and Demi Lovato's "Demi: World Tour" in 2014. In February 2014, their debut album placed in first position in Australia and sixth in New Zealand. During the summer of 2014, MKTO had their first headlining tour, the American Dream Tour. After the tour they released single from their debut album in the United States titled "American Dream". On June 2, 2015, MKTO came back with their new single and music video, "Bad Girls".

4. 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.

4.1. Transcript of the Speech

In a room with MKTO watching a speech by a senator on television.

(On television)

Senator: "Our national debt is at over 15 trillion dollars. If you haven't lost your job yet, you probably will."

Reporter: "Senator, what is the meaning for you to the nation?"

Senator: "Well, they are fuck!"

MKTO: Man, hell no, come on!

4.2. Song Lyric

"Thank You"

Yo, this one right here is for all the drop out-of-schoolers.

The future cougars, the Mary Jane abusers.

The ones that chose to be losers, for all the Misfit Kids and total outcasts MKTO.

This one's for you role models.

We are the ones, the ones you left behind.

Don't tell us how, tell us how to live our lives.

Ten million strong, we're breaking all the rules.

Thank you for nothing, 'cause there's nothing left to lose.

Thank you for feeding us years of lies.

Thank you for the wars you left us to fight.

Thank you for the world you ruined overnight.

But we'll be fine, yeah we'll be fine.

Thank you for the world you broke, like yolk and it ain't no joke.

So cold and there ain't no coat, just me, my friends, my folks and

We better do what we like.

So raise that bird up high and when they ask you why.

Just stand there laugh and smile.

We are the ones, the ones you left behind.

Don't tell us how, tell us how to live our lives.

*Ten million strong, we're breaking all the rules.
Thank you for nothing, 'cause there's nothing left to lose.*

*Na na na na
Na na na na na na
Na na na na
Na na na na na na (Thank you)*

*Thank you for the times you said, "Don't make a sound."
Thanks for the ropes you used to hold us down.
'Cause when I break through I'ma use them to reach the clouds.
We ain't comin' down, we ain't comin' down*

*Look, ma, I finally made it, this world is too damn jaded.
My life is just like Vegas, go big, go home get faded.
Been a problem since '92.
Can't shut me down curfew and them girls I'll take a few.
Do what I wanna do.*

*We are the ones, the ones you left behind.
Don't tell us how, tell us how to live our lives.
Ten million strong, we're breaking all the rules.
Thank you for nothing, cause there's nothing left to lose.*

*Na na na na (hey)
Na na na na na na
Na na na na
Na na na na na na*

*Na na na na (hey)
Na na na na na na
Na na na na
Na na na na na na (Thank you)*

*Thank you from the bottom of my heart.
From head to toe from the soul you ripped apart.
I say, "Thank you", I say, "Thank you."
Yeah oh, thank you*

*We are the ones, the ones you left behind.
Don't tell us how, tell us how to live our lives.
Ten million strong, we're breaking all the rules.
Thank you for nothing, cause there's nothing left to lose.*

*We are the ones, the ones you left behind.
Don't tell us how, tell us how to live our lives.*

*Ten million strong, we're breaking all the rules.
Thank you for nothing, cause there's nothing left to lose. (Thank you)*

*Na na na na (Yo if you don't like what they tell you to do)
Na na na na na na (Don't do it)
Na na na na (If you don't want to be who they want you to be)
Na na na na na na (Screw it)*

*Na na na na (It's your world, it's your life)
Na na na na na na (And they ruined it)
Na na na na (Role models, tune in, turn up)
Na na na na na na (Drop out!)*

Songwriters

***BOGART, EVAN / KIRIAKOU, EMANUEL / GOLDSTEIN, ANDREW / KELLEY,
MALCOLM / OLLER, TONY***

Published by

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4.2. Paraphrase Lyric

The lyric tells about dissatisfaction toward the old generations who turn the world into a mess. The young generations then show their madness through a song and some acts. The first verse explains that this song is aimed to those old generations who have done many bad things despite of their good contribution to the world they lead. MKTO believe that they will be doing well and do everything they want. They repeatedly say 'thank you' to tease the role models what these duo really feel about the world they have left behind.

In the rap verse, they show their lives which have been sick to seek for the happiness. They ask people to against what they feel 'this is not right' because those old generations do not have right to tell them everything in the world which they have been ruined themselves.

4.3. Content of the Music Video

The music video starts when MKTO are watching a senator who is doing his speech in television, MKTO feel dissatisfied then break through the TV and take over his podium and start singing. In the beginning scene, it shows a teacher who is teaching in the middle of class. MKTO come with a can of spray-paint and spray it to the mouth of teacher so his mouth is disappeared and he cannot talk. The students follow MKTO to the road along the scene with black emoticon flag which signs MKTO's movement. The next scene shows MKTO and the people give the black emoticon balloons to people who wear suit that identically related to superiors. The balloons then fly them up to the sky. There is scene which shows graffiti in the building written MKTO. The nation is full of people floating on the sky. As MKTO sing on top of the car in the center of the town, people surround and sing along with them.

5. Discussion

There are some lyric and scenes in "Thank You" which contains diction that can interpret something. The scenes also portray how the conflicts are ongoing between the old generations and young generations through an act of eliminating old people to the sky.

5.1. Textual analysis

In the music video of Thank You, the textual aspects that will be analyzed included diction and imagery, figurative language and elements of cinematography.

5.1.1. Diction and Imagery



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.

5.1.2. Figurative Language & Elements of Cinematography

In the first rap verse, there is line that says “Thank you for the world you broke, like yolk and it ain’t no joke” which is a simile. “yolk” here refers to the

world that has been broken by the rulers. The word “yolk” has a meaning yellow part of the egg, but in this line, it means that the world has become like a yolk that is easy to be destroyed.

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.

“Cause when I break through I’m a use them to reach the clouds”, the meaning of this line is when the ropes or the rules are broken by them, they will use it to get their freedom. “To reach the clouds” is a metaphor. The word “clouds” is mass of visible water vapor floating in the sky, yet in this line “clouds” means a freedom. “To reach the clouds” has a meaning of getting a freedom from the rules which tie themselves.



Picture 2. A man making graffiti on the wall

The camera shoots a detail close up shots with a man creating graffiti in public places along with 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. Vegas or Las Vegas is a very big city in United States and is known as city that never sleeps with its glamorous lifestyle with many casinos and bars.



Picture 3. A scene of Malcolm breaking through a class

In the reff part, the duos also state “we’re breaking all the rules”, along with the scene shooting a medium shot of the characters’ half body where Malcolm breaks into a class and disrupts the lecture by spraying the lecturer straight to his mouth with spray-paint and his mouth is suddenly disappeared. This reflects their revolt against the rules in field of education so they are going to do some acts that oppose those rules that time.



Picture 4. 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. Beside of that, there is one person floating on the sky as a sign of MKTO and their mass' act. Those two people are heading to the centre of the town to join them.



Picture 5. People floating on the sky

The scene above shots an extreme long shot, points out of many people whom look very small float with a balloon tied up on their hand. MKTO has done their movements by getting rid of those people whom they believe to be those old generations whom are responsible for ruining the world.

5.2. Contextual Analysis

There are some aspects of conflicts between two generations that can be explored from MKTO's music video.

5.2.1. The Analysis of The Conflicts

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. The symbol on the podium is the symbol of The Great Seal of The United States, it signs that they also take over the position of the senator as the one in authority that time to make a movement and attract many people.



Picture 6. MKTO managing to take over the podium



Picture 7. 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.



Picture 8. MKTO giving a balloon to an old man

The pictures above are part of scene that some people have joined their move with MKTO. They also bring property like balloons with string that later they will use them as a symbol of getting the freedom. 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. As it is seen in the pictures 8 above, they give a balloon to the person who dresses in suit, and it tie him then fly him up to the sky. They do it to every person whom they believe to be the old generations in order to eliminate them from this world.



Picture 9. The girl pushing a man

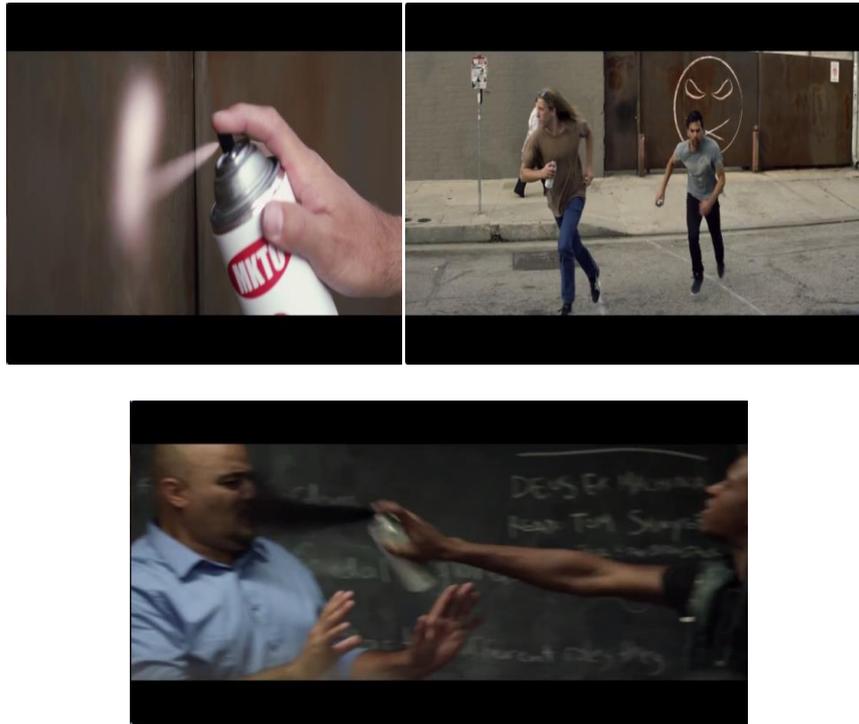
The scenes above portray that there are two girls running then pushing a man whom has blocked their way. This also shows their disrespect toward the old generations.



Picture 10. 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 11. Two people making a graffiti and Malcolm spraying a spray-paint to the mouth of the teacher

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.

6. 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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