

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains the analysis and discussion of the data. The researcher uses the procedure of data analysis as stated in Chapter 2. Furthermore, the analysis and discussion are primarily focused on the conflict contained in the lyrics of the song “Imagine” by John Lennon and also to describe how the conflicts are resolved.

In this song, “Imagine”, there are so many conflicts, both internal and external. So, the researcher will try to analyze the internal and external elements contained of the conflicts in this song.

4.1 Internal Conflict in the song “Imagine”

In writing his original lyric, John Lennon has been inspired by many things that he stumbled in his life. The inspiration has been flowing since his childhood (Radifan, 2012: 8). From the very beginning where John was abandoned by his parents, up to the point where he joined The Beatles and met his beloved wife. One of the people who influenced Lennon the most was his uncle, George. George frequently taught and introduced Lennon to various hobbies such as painting, reading, and poetry. In addition, George also taught Lennon the important value of literature. From his wise uncle, Lennon learned that every word in language have many meaning (Radifan, 2012:9). Thus, it can't be perceive

from one point of view only. In the future, this lesson has big impact to the style that Lennon used to write his song lyric.

Besides learning from his uncle, Lennon also learned to play music from his mother, especially guitar, banjo, and piano. From his mother too, Lennon was introduced to Rock n Roll. That's why Lennon idolizes Elvis Presley very much. Thanks to both his uncle and his mother, Lennon grew up to be a person with passion in music and is very fond of writing lyrics.

There are many things that influence a musician to write a song lyric. If we observe the lyric with the musicians' background, musicians frequently write a song lyric based on his life experience. For example, John Lennon used his life experience from his childhood into adulthood to inspire him in writing song lyrics. Lennon wrote many song lyrics that become hit music internationally. One of the most phenomenal songs that Lennon ever wrote is Imagine. It is released worldwide on May 1971. The song became one the most sold solo album in John Lennon's career as solo artist. Imagine manage to stay on the third rank of Billboard hot 100 and first rank of RPM National Single Chart for 2 weeks. Imagine album was sold more than 1.6 Million copies in England only. The song transformed into legacy and it became a popular song even after Lennon's death in December 1980 (Goldman, 1988:397). The lyrics of Imagine song have the power to inspire many people at that time. The popularity of the song came from many people who get inspiration after listening to the song.

The lyrics read as follow:

*Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today*

*Imagine there's no country
It isn't hard to do,
Nothing to kill or die for,
And no religion too
Imagine all the people,
Living life in peace*

*Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world.*

*You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one,
I hope someday you'll join us,
And the world will be as one*

In the above lyric quote, there are 3 (three) stanzas that started with “Imagine”. The word “Imagine” is clearly conveyed by John Lennon to express his dream about world peace. A peaceful world is an existence of human equality, religious tolerance, and peace among world countries. Lennon believes that the cause of every conflict in the world is the opposing interest of each people and the selfish ego to be an absolute authority.

Just like what has been explained in previous chapter, Internal Conflict consists of personal factor, including the contradiction of several factors of the true nature of human. As Jones states, internal conflict is a conflict struggling against

himself, his conscience, his guilt, or simply trying to decide what he's going to do (1968:31). Related to Jones's theory, it can be concluded that the lyric of Imagine is trying to reveal John Lennon's feeling about the socio-political condition that occurred at that time. Through Imagines' lyric, John Lennon clearly shows his life philosophy as a human who dream of world peace.

In the above stanza, it can be seen that Lennon's idea is different from the ideas of most people. In terms of conflicts proposed by Perrine (1988:42) it can be concluded that the difference is an external conflict. That is a conflict between John Lennon and other people as the external factor.

4.1.1 First Stanza

*Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today*

In, *Imagine there is no heaven*, John Lennon put forward an idea about religion. John suggests people to forget the old concept of heaven. All this time, people assume that heaven is a place above the sky, a place where god and good people resides. But John believes that the present peaceful life may also be called heaven. At least this idea is more logical to human to understand rather than the old concept of heaven. Based on the sentence of that stanza, Lennon tries to express a broader idea about heaven. In, *it's easy if you try*, everyone will be able to understand what is mentioned by John Lennon when they want to open their

mind. In, *No hell below us*, John Lennon tries to express his understanding about broader idea of hell. All this time, our society believes hell is a scary place, where evil people gather after death. But Lennon assumes that hell is not like what people think. Hell is actually happens in the present, such as disasters. For John Lennon, all forms of destruction, war, and misery are a form of hell in this world, and Lennon wants it to stop. In, *above us only sky*, John Lennon expects to live a quiet life.

But, in Lennon's life story, it is known that Lennon is a Catholic. As a Catholic people, he should believe that there is a heaven and there is a hell that one should go after death. This means that all Catholic people believe that heaven and hell exist. This is different from what Lennon says. This kind of difference, when seen in view of Perrine (1988:42) is the internal conflict. That is the conflict between Lennon as a Catholic and his statement that heaven and hell do not exist.

Imagine all the people, living for today, In the first paragraph, John Lennon actually invites people not to think too grandiose about the afterlife. It does not mean that life after death does not exist. For Lennon, it is no use if we are expecting paradise, but in real life, people are living in misery. Making the present life a better and peaceful life is more important than maintaining the triumph and over glorifying heaven by waging war. Lennon still believes that life after death still exists, even in this song Lennon says that *Imagine there's no heaven, No hell below us, above us only sky*. This kind of difference which is seen in Perrine (1988:42) is the internal conflict. That is the conflict between Lennon belief about

life after death and his statement in his song. Even that Lennon still believes that people have a chance to live in a better world.

4.1.2 Second Stanza

*Imagine there's no country
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace*

In, *Imagine there is no country*, John Lennon thought that the existence of the nation has restricted the harmonious relationship between human beings throughout the world. The existence of interests between countries always opposes to each other. It has caused many disputes between nations. Lennon thought that the ideal world is a world without nationality, without the national border limit, all people work together as one big group. All previous idea is likely to happen when people want to open their hearts and mind, as Lennon said in the sentence, *it is not hard to do*. Even as Lennon said in his song *It is not hard to do* to make an ideal world that is a world without nationality and all people work together as one big group, but it is impossible to make that happen. Because an ideal world is the world should be have a country, nationalities, etc. This kind of difference, is seen in Perrine's view (1988:42) is the internal conflict.

In, *Nothing to kill or die for, and no religion too*, when a man has become a large group without any restrictions, without any opposing interests as a legitimate

reason to hurt each other, including religion, people would have no reason to kill or sacrifice each other.

Again, there are conflicts struggling against inside John Lennon as a Catholic's belief with the fact that religious social conditions criticized by John Lennon in the lyrics of the song "Imagine". It describes the theory of internal conflict which is stated by Jones (1968:31) and Perrine (1988:42). Lennon does not mean to negate the existence of religion in the world, but he expects a life without religious dominance in every aspect of human life. Lennon is inspired by a Christian prayer book (Bible) given to him by Dick Gregory. He believes that the concept of good religious people should be reserved to people who are able to create a peaceful world. All religions tolerate one another and the absence of domination of one belief to another. Nobody is debating whether their God is bigger than other's (Sheff, 1981:212-213).

4.1.3 Third Stanza

*Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world*

In, *imagine no possessions, I wonder if you can*, John Lennon hopes that people avoid from having the urge to have a taste of everything that exists in this world. The term "Possession" in accordance to Webster refers to "the condition of having or owning something." A dream that's impossible to be realized in life. Even

John knows this may not happen, but it is important to hope. A desire to consume is the basic nature of human beings, or it can be called lust. It cannot be eliminated. But for Lennon, if humans could relieve or at least limit it, there will be less deprivation in this world and the world is definitely going to be more peaceful.

In, *No need for greed, no hunger*, John Lennon says that greed should be eliminated, world should be shared together, no human being has an excessive wealth and no poor or starving people. In, *A brotherhood of man*, John Lennon says clearly that all human beings in this world are brothers. Humans are social creature, so they need each other. Greed is the enemy of human and a disaster for them. Human should live by sharing what they have equally in this world. *Imagine all the people, sharing all the world.*

But, according to Nook Library (John Lennon: One day a time by Anthony Fawcett) about Lennon's life in New York, the fact that happen, Lennon himself has millions of dollars, cruise ships, and land estates. This kind of difference, according to Perrine's view (1988:42) is the internal conflict. That is the conflict between Lennon's statement in his song that human should not monopolize any properties or goods needed by all human.

4.2 External Conflicts in the song "Imagine",

The life of artists can never be separated from their society. Artists will always react to the world around them. Through their work of arts, they have their own way to express their voice regarding to the happening. It is an undeniable fact that in addition to internal factors, external factors also plays an important role

which affects the beautiful value of an art (aesthetics). Pickering (1993:2) also Burhan (2002:124) explain this phenomenon as external conflicts. These are factors that occur outside of the human itself, whether it is a conflict between the men himself with the nature or their society.

John Lennon, as one of the greatest artists in the world, has a keen sense to the condition of his world at that time. The lyric of the song that he creates is always linked with the social conditions in the community that he encounters and experiences. The researcher has found some external conflicts that inspired John Lennon to write the lyrics, in this case, the subject is “Imagine”. The song title, “Imagine”, is probably inspired by a poem called “cloud piece”, written by Yoko Ono, which was published in her book entitled “Grape Fruit “. There are similarities to the pattern of the poem written by Ono, with Imagine lyrics written by John Lennon. It is shown in the following sentence:

“Imagine the clouds dripping dig a hole in your garden to put them in.

(Yoko Ono, 1963).

The basic concept of the song, Imagine, is about peace and unity of mankind throughout the world. The song tells about aspects that can pull apart the entire human race. In his song’s rhyme, John Lennon implicitly mentions the concepts of nationality and makes people in the world are at odds. In the beginning of 1971, when the lyrics of the song imagine was created, there was a major war between two powerful states, the United States and the Soviet Union, the so-called Cold War. The war occurred so long in most of the regions of

the world and involved many countries including Vietnam. Cold war represents controversy between two major powerhouse that have different vision from each other, each of them afraid to be conquered or attacked by another country simply because they have difference principle, nationality differences, and different allies. Thus, they were waging war that is dangerous to the whole region of the world and mankind. This situation makes Lennon has inspiration to promote anti-war protests and has idea to write the lyrics in “Imagine” song. This kind of phenomenon, according to Pickering’s view (1993:2) is the external conflict.

John Lennon became a peace activist who has strong will and belief the realization of peaceful human life. Vietnam War inspired John Lennon to promote anti-war protests and then he proposes a view of the existence of a world without countries or nationalities, so humans have no reason to defend the principle of state and go as far as to kill or die in the war. All of that idea could happen if human wants to put the peace as the highest value above anything else, including the interests of the state. Lennon is confident that one day society will realize that all human beings are equal, in one country, in one world, and one can live in unity and peace.

In addition of being a peace activist, Lennon also became a political activist. Since he had a relation with Yoko Ono, Lennon became increasingly intense in being political activists who voiced peace. Lennon and Ono were publicly protesting against the Vietnam War, but they did a unique action to voice their opinion. They did “bed -in “on the 25th of March - 31 March 1969 at the Hilton Amsterdam Hotel. The couple swear that they will not get out of bed before

America pulls out from Vietnam, and they invite the press to document their protest. They spend time in silence on the bed without doing anything except, talking to the press at 9 AM and 9 PM.

Lennon and Ono conduct “Bed In” for the second in America, but they are blocked by the government so they moved to perform an action at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal (Radifan, 2012:1). Lennon feels confident about his action, and he believes that he will inspire young people to protest using non-violent method. Lennon said this is just an example of the protest by simply silence on the bed.

In John Lennon’s song Imagine, in addition to voice his protest against the Vietnam War, he also criticizes the capitalist lifestyle adopted by the western people. At that time, ownership of luxury items, money, food, and all possessions are above any priority for everyone. Lennon thought that humans should not monopolize any properties or goods needed by all human. Ownership of properties will be divided equally among every human being without any fights. There will be no greed, no hunger and no poverty in the society. This fact is clearly stated by Lennon in the stanza below,

*Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world.*

The lyrics in the song “Imagine”, in addition for making the song popular, it also causes controversy. Beside in “Bed In” controversy, there are many other actions performed by John Lennon and Yoko Ono which ignite a negative

response from fans and ends horribly for John Lennon. Mark David Chapman (who had been convicted of murder against John Lennon on December 8, 1980) was one of the fans who have been inspired by the songs of John Lennon. Chapman was influenced from reading the Nook Library (John Lennon: One day a time by Anthony Fawcett) about Lennon's life in New York. Chapman was very disappointed by the fact that John Lennon who intensely campaign peace and love but Lennon himself was amassing millions of dollars wealth. Chapman considers that John Lennon's own words betray and deceive the public with issues of peace or love so they want to buy the songs from John Lennon. Lennon voices a form of social system, the absence of monopoly against property, but Lennon himself has millions of dollars, cruise ships, and land estates.

According to Chapman, what was written by John Lennon is a big lie, it was all just a trick from Lennon's music business empire. Finally, Chapman killed Lennon. All of John Lennon's lyric in Imagine are interpreted differently by Mark David Chapman. Lennon had to pay dearly for the song's popularity with his own death. Whatever the reason Chapman had in killing John Lennon, people still think Chapman was a thrill seeker who wanted to be famous. In 1983, Chapman admitted that his actions that killed John Lennon was wrong, he said *"I felt that by killing John Lennon I would Become somebody and instead of that I Become a murderer and Murderers are not somebody"*

4.3 Resolution

In every work of literature, there is always a resolution. It is no exception to the song *Imagine* by John Lennon, because the resolution is one of the most important elements in the literature. As Hurtik states most dramatic literature consists of at least some general stages of action, which are exposition, complication, conflict, climax, and resolution. This fact is clearly seen in the following stanza, *You may say I'm a dreamer, But I'm not the only one, I hope someday you'll join us, And the world will be as one.*

Lennon invites mankind to try a peaceful life and to stand in a unity. Lennon conveys how human beings can achieve a peaceful world for all. Even Lennon himself thought he was a dreamer. At the time, reconciling the countries that have different nationality and principle seems very unlikely to happen. However, Lennon wants to send a message to the public about his reaction to the political event, especially the war in Vietnam, and invites mankind to reflect what he said about peaceful and united world.

In, *I hope someday you will join us and the world will be as one*, Lennon hopes that one day, mankind will join the same dream for peace. It is a hope, an expectation that maybe not realistic and there is no instruction, because it is simply a hope. Lennon convinces that many people have the same idea and share the same dreams with him. He also hopes that one day people will realize and unite in one by the same principle as him. This song is a message to the people around the world who have the same idea that is envisioned by Lennon, a picture

of a different world, a united world, without any hostility, and it consists of harmony of all mankind. This kind, if it is seen in view of Hurtik that stated in previous chapter is the resolution.

The interesting thing in this song is its powerful approach toward its listener. By using simple languages from John Lennon, they can understand the song easily. Some people may interpret this song as the song for anti-religious and anti-nationalist, but the purpose of this song is not to decry the fact that has already happened. It is only a hope for a society that values peace above anything. The way Lennon uses “Imagine” words clearly and repeatedly is the prove itself.

Finally, the message conveyed through Lennon “Imagine” is very simple. Lennon invites people to see the world in a different way. The possibilities of united world and a vision of a peaceful life can motivate people to keep moving forward. There is no anger, no coercion or frustration, just focus on the restoration of humanity, and the world will fill with peace. This song will always be refreshing to hear for at least one reason, optimism and hope for mankind in the world. A peaceful world, filled with people who do not distinct each other. This song is an example of what people and the world can be if they try and put their utmost effort towards it.