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Counter Culture in 'Knocking on Heaven's Door' Songs
(A Musical Semiotic Analysis of The Meaning Construction of Counter Culture in Folk
Music, Reggae, and Heavy Metal Versions of 'Knocking on Heaven's Door' Song)
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COUNTER CULTURE IN 'KNOCKING
ON HEAVEN'S DOOR' SONGS
(A MUSICAL SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS
OF THE MEANING CONSTRUCTION
OF COUNTER CULTURE IN FOLK
MUSIC, REGGAE, AND HEAVY
METAL VERSIONS OF 'KNOCKING
ON HEAVEN'S DOOR' SONG)

Oleh : Muria Endah Sokowati

Abstract

A song, when is reproduced in different versions, will have different constructed meanings. Genre, the singer and the context, when/where the song was produced cause differences. 'Knocking on Heaven's Door', a song composed by the folk musician named Bob Dylan in 1973, was a song which was sung by many singers. It was reproduced in many genres, such as folk music (original version), reggae, blues, heavy metal and punk. Its lyrics contained a protest to counter the American government regulation regarding the war in Vietnam. Bob Dylan and folk music were in empathy with human rights movement. Many musical genres were created as a product of counter culture. For example, reggae was a rebellious Jamaican way against white people oppression, punk was born as a resistance to music commercialization, and blues, as music for black people, became a counter and reaction to the domination of 'white' musicians. The reproduction of 'Knocking on Heaven's Door' in different genres sung by different singers resulted in differences of its construction of meaning. This presentation will elabo-

rate the construction of meaning of the song in folk music, reggae and heavy metal versions as counter culture. Bob Dylan sang the folk music version, the original version, whereas Bob Marley sang in reggae style, and Guns and Roses sang a heavy metal version in the early of 1990s. This analysis uses Jose Luis Martinez' musical semiotic method (the method for analyzing musical signs), which was adapted from C. S. Peirce's theory of semiotics (the study of signs). From the analysis, it could be concluded that the song, which was performed in folk music, reggae, and heavy metal versions, constructed different meanings of counter culture.

Introduction

Popular music has become a part of human life that influences society. It has been realized for a long time that music has become a medium to aspire to social and political reality. Music plays its role as a vehicle to build global political awareness.

Music as a form of counter culture is related to its genre in popular music. Genre is a music classification defined according to its technicalities, musical styles, and also themes, which in every genre root from its history and development, representing the struggle against ideology and the cultural mainstream.

It is relevant to John Fiske's view, which states that popular culture is created as the result of the struggle to fight against ideological power and dominant or mainstream culture (Lull, 1998 : 85-86). Mass media helps this process by distributing it to the oppressed society and lower class groups.

Through the melody, voice and lyrics, popular music constructs its meaning. The writers or singers as well as the genres packaging the music also determine the construction of meaning. This paper is based on the focus on the repackaging of songs in different genres. One of the interesting examples is the song titled '*Knocking on a Heaven's Door*', composed and sung by Bob Dylan in 1973. The original version was recorded in folk music style, and its repackaging then came in many different genres such as; rhythm and blues, reggae, heavy metal, and punk. Eric Clapton, Sandy Denny, Grateful Dead, Guns N' Roses, George Harrison, Indigo Girls, U2, Warren Zevon, Avril Lavigne, Bob Marley, and Cat Power are examples of different singers behind the repackaging.

Bob Dylan was known as a human rights activist. Since 1963 he was often involved in the human rights movement. His song was the expression of his struggle and reflection of his political attitude. He was a *folk music* musician, a genre that stresses solidarity and egalitarianism.

This paper focuses on the repackaging version on this song in reggae, sung by Bob Marley; and heavy metal, sung by Guns and Roses. Reggae is the music involved in humanity problems in Jamaica; whereas heavy metal is the music that is identified with the problems of youth, such as drugs, sex, and violence.

The new interpretations, singing styles, setting and different genres will reconstruct the meaning in line with the counter culture that produced different versions of the song. By using musical semiotic analysis, this paper will explain the construction of meaning in three versions of the song; the original, reggae and heavy metal versions.

Counter Culture Through Music

Counter culture in sociological terminology is a term used to describe a cultural group which has its own values and norms, but which are different from, even opposite to, the mainstream. Counter culture is also understood as a movement to fight against government and dominant ideology (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counter-culture>, accessed on December 16, 2005).

However, counter culture does not always refer to the opposition movement to government political regulation, but it also becomes young people's effort to fight against dominant ideology. They try to find their hope and faith. For example, in the 1960s, especially in America, counter culture was a form used by young people, white and from middle class family, to reject their parents' culture that controlled people's behavior, such as family relationships, education, marriage or division of gender roles. Their parent's cultural expectations dominated their behavior, attitude and the way of life.

Besides rejecting parental culture domination, counter culture also fought against technocracy that was identified with modernization. According to counter culture views, technocracy which didn't pay any attention to human emotions and creativity should not be accepted. The solution was that young people had to reject it and create new way of life. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that counter

culture doesn't always refer to the counter to the dominant system from the government, but also encompasses the counter to the smaller system, such as in the family norms and values.

At the same time, popular music played an important role in the counter culture movement. At the beginning, popular music was considered too commercial to be used as tool to express aspirations. But, since many people realized the tremendous effect it gave, in the following era popular music became the new vehicle to reach and persuade audience throughout country, from the issue of war to the human rights movement and rejection of political and cultural ideology.

Music has its strength in its power to build solidarity between communities. Solidarity is reflected in lyrics and the music itself. As an important part of counter culture, music genres are created as an expression for the counter culture spirit. For example, jazz was born as counter culture from 'black' people because of white people domination; and punk that became the counter for rock commercialization.

It cannot be denied that songs have great emotional power. There are some facts that show how a song is able to motivate people to do something. An example is the French song titled '*La Carmagnole*'. This song was believed to have contributed to the support of people who fought in the French Revolution. Another is the '*Battle Hymn of The Republic*' in American war era in 1860 (Rosselson, 1979 : 40).

Eugene Genovese in her 1976 research about slavery in America showed how the oppressed workers had used song to articulate their suffering. E. P Thomson's 1968 research documented how industrial workers in England in the 19th century had fought against their employers through song and poetry (Street, 2001 : 41). At that time, some protest songs used ballads as musical genre. But, in the next period, more popular melodies started to be used. The purpose was to make song easier to be accepted by audience and able to become a medium for effective communication.

Song as a product of counter culture has become media to aspire to resistance against something. On other hand, the fact that music has become an industrial commodity cannot be ignored. Music is recorded and distributed to make money. According to Leon Rosselson:

The reality is that song is the private property of business organizations, and by 'song' I mean not only individual songs but the whole song idiom; the

idiom in which you might find your own voice has been appropriated by the market (Rosselson, 1979: 41).

In the recording industry, listeners become consumers, and music becomes a product. Recording companies produce music to get large profits. Agencies or managers play important roles to make musicians become famous. It causes musician to have a lower bargaining position. For promotional purposes, companies often control musicians. All are driven by market interest. This is sometimes considered an important factor that causes musicians losing their ideal beliefs.

Herman and Hoare criticized Rosselson's view. They referred to Marxist's view about history and struggle. A revolution had to fight although there were some contradictions (German and Hoare, 1979 : 51). It also happened to music. Herman and Hoare did not deny the domination of capitalist power in the music industry. But, it need not become an obstacle to musicians to use music as their media for resistance and struggle. They explained two arguments in response to Rosselsons statements :

1. There's no reason for a recording company to control song, which is distributed to the listeners as consumers. It will be useless. A recorded song might have meaning which is determined by its production process, but its meaning is also formed by social relationships of people who consume it. Consumers are not passive, regardless of how the producer has already constructed the song. '*Part Of The Union*', a song from The Strawbs' was a song criticizing labor unions. But the effect of this song was totally different when Conventry Car labor sang it.
2. Recording companies won't deny the grass roots of popular songs since the grass roots will give them a large profit. Thus, recording companies maintain grass root's favorite songs. As an example, The Sex Pistol's songs, which had been censored by radio stations since their lyrics were considered too vulgar. After all the publicity, the album became the best seller.

(Herman and Hoare, 1979 : 53-54)

So, there is no reason to doubt the ability of song to become a counter culture agent.

Antonio Gramsci considered popular culture as a form of resistance and

incorporation. According to Gramsci, incorporation refers to a process where the dominant class prefers to get the resistance elements from the subordinate class and use it to maintain their statusquo, than to oppose it. The dominant class incorporates the resistance into their ideology (Fiske, 1990 : 181). The text and popular culture practice move from what Gramsci calls *compromise equilibrium*. Popular music as a form of counter culture against authority becomes incorporation, whereas the singer or musician needs intervention from the recording company to distribute their song.

The purpose is to disseminate *counter culture* messages in their song to be listened to by the public around the world. Recording companies won't impede musicians to express their aspiration in their music and lyrics. Thus, recording companies become part of the musicians' strategy to distribute their messages.

The Theory of Musical Semiotic

The way musical signs express meaning is understood differently by musical semiotic experts. According to Stravinsky in '*Chronicle of My Life*'-music doesn't have power to express feeling, attitude, psychological mood, nature, and so on. This is a radical view of music autonomy. This view is followed by Faltin who said that music doesn't have meaning. Musical signs don't bring messages (Noth, 1990 : 430).

Benveniste surmised that music won't have meaning if it doesn't have a point of reference. It needs language to make its sounds. Both music and language are arbitrary, but unite and form the song. According to Medushevsky musical signs are related to other musical signs or extra musical elements (Baest and Drill, <http://comcom.uvt.nl/driel/publica/music/ch1.pdf>, accessed on January 10, 2006.).

The argumentation of musical signs continues in the problem of musical reference or extra musical. Both Stravinsky and Hansliek reject it. Hansliek even said that music is an autonomous structure that doesn't express anything (Baest and Drill, <http://comcom.uvt.nl/driel/publica/music/ch1.pdf>, accessed on January 10, 2006). Their view denied the fact that people often try to associate the musical structure to extra musical elements, like emotion.

Actually, emotions, such as the feelings of happiness, sadness, fear or anger, are expressed by musical signs. When the arrangement of the voice pattern in music reflects certain emotions, it has communicated those feelings. According to

Leonard Meyer, to understand the communicated meaning is determined by experience, understanding of music, and culture (Huron, <http://www.music-cog.ohio-state.edu/Music829D/Notes/Meyer1.html>, accessed on March 24, 2006). Gordon C. Bruner II shows the voice patterns that express certain feeling and attitude in the table as follows (Brunner, 1990 : 94):

TABLE 1. EMOTION EXPRESSION PRODUCED BY MUSIC COMPONENT

Time-Related Expressions

1. Duple rhythms produce a rigid and controlled expression in comparison with triple rhythm, which is more relaxed or abandoned.
2. The faster the tempo, the more animation and happiness is expressed.
3. Even, rhythmic movement can represent the unimpeded flow of some feeling; dotted, jerky, uneven rhythms produce more complex expressions.
4. Firm rhythms suggest a serious mood whereas smooth-flowing rhythms are more playful.
5. Staccato notes give more emphasis to a passage than legato notes.

Pitch-Related Expressions

1. "Up" and "down" in pitch not only correspond to up and down in the physical world, but can also imply "out-and-in" as well as "away-and-back," respectively.
2. Rising and falling pitch can convey a growing or diminishing intensity in a given emotional context.
3. Songs in higher keys are generally considered to be happier than songs in lower keys.
4. Music in the major mode expresses more animated and positive feelings than music in the minor mode.
5. Complex harmonies are more agitated and sad than simply harmonies, which are more serene and happy.

Texture-Related Expressions

1. Loudness can suggest animation or proximity whereas low volume implies tranquility or distance.
2. Crescendo (soft to loud) expresses an increase in force whereas diminuendo (loud to soft) suggests a decrease in power.
3. The timbre of brass instruments conveys a feeling of cold, hard force whereas reed instruments produce a lonely, melancholy expression.

Source : Gordon C. Brunner II, *Music, Mood and Marketing*, Journal of Marketing, 54:4(1990:Oct.) p.94

TABLE 2. MUSIC CHARACTERISTICS THAT PRODUCE EMOTION EXPRESSION

<p><i>Serious Emotional Expression</i> <i>Mode: Major</i> <i>Tempo: Slow</i> <i>Pitch: Low</i> <i>Rhythm: Firm</i> <i>Harmony: Consonant</i> <i>Volume: Medium</i></p>	<p><i>Sad Emotional Expression</i> <i>Mode: Minor</i> <i>Tempo: Slow</i> <i>Pitch: Low</i> <i>Rhythm: Firm</i> <i>Harmony: Dissonant</i> <i>Volume: Soft</i></p>	<p><i>Sentimental Emotional Expression</i> <i>Mode: Minor</i> <i>Tempo: Slow</i> <i>Pitch: Medium</i> <i>Rhythm: Flowing</i> <i>Harmony: Consonant</i> <i>Volume: Soft</i></p>
<p><i>Serene Emotional Expression</i> <i>Mode: Major</i> <i>Tempo: Slow</i> <i>Pitch: Medium</i> <i>Rhythm: Flowing</i> <i>Harmony: Consonant</i> <i>Volume: Soft</i></p>	<p><i>Humorous Emotional Expression</i> <i>Mode: Major</i> <i>Tempo: Fast</i> <i>Pitch: High</i> <i>Rhythm: Flowing</i> <i>Harmony: Consonant</i> <i>Volume: Medium</i></p>	<p><i>Happy Emotional Expression</i> <i>Mode: Major</i> <i>Tempo: Fast</i> <i>Pitch: High</i> <i>Rhythm: Flowing</i> <i>Harmony: Consonant</i> <i>Volume: Medium</i></p>

Source: Reviewed from Gordon C. Brunner, II, *Music, Mood, and Marketing*, Journal of Marketing, 54:4 (1990:Oct.)

<i>Exciting Emotional</i>	<i>Majestic Emotional</i>	<i>Frightening Emotional</i>
<i>Expression</i>	<i>Expression</i>	<i>Expression</i>
<i>Mode: Major</i>	<i>Mode: Major</i>	<i>Mode: Minor</i>
<i>Tempo: Fast</i>	<i>Tempo: Medium</i>	<i>Tempo: Slow</i>
<i>Pitch: Medium</i>	<i>Pitch: Medium</i>	<i>Pitch: Low</i>
<i>Rhythm: Uneven</i>	<i>Rhythm: Firm</i>	<i>Rhythm: Uneven</i>
<i>Harmony: Dissonant</i>	<i>Harmony: Dissonant</i>	<i>Harmony: Dissonant</i>
<i>Volume: Loud</i>	<i>Volume: Loud</i>	<i>Volume: Varied</i>

Musical signs have meaning attached in musical and extra musical elements. Musical semiotic becomes the method to relate the two elements, so it can refer to certain meaning.

Musical Semiotic Analysis Model

Charles S. Peirce, in his study of musical semiotic, concluded that music is a species of thought, and thus the idea that music is sign and that it depends on its significant processes is obviously true. A musical sign can be a system, composition or its performance, a musical form, a style, a composer, a musician, the instrument, and so on. Signification occurs in a triadic relation of a sign, the object, and the *interpretant* (Peirce's term for the meaning of a sign). Music is a sign developed in the mind of a listener, musician, composer, analyst or critic (Explained by Martinez, *A Semiotic Theory Of Music: According To A Peircean Rationale*, <http://www.pucsp.br/pos/cos/rism/jlm6ICMS.htm>, accessed on October 28, 2005)

This research used semiotic analysis model from Jose Luiz Martinez, which becomes the application of the *triangle of meaning model* from C.S Peirce. Martinez (<http://www.pucsp.br/pos/cos/rism/jlm6ICMS.htm>, accessed on October 28, 2005) divides the analysis into three levels as follows:

1. Intrinsic Musical Semiotic Level, where the quality of music functions as *qualisign*. For example: (a) time-related expression: tempo (fast, medium, slow); duple-triple rhythm; (b) pitch-related expression: up-down tone, major-minor tone, simple-complex harmony; (c) texture-related expression: the instrument used in the song, such as: drum, guitar, string, piano and so on.

2. Musical Reference Level functions as an *icon* that signs certain emotion. For example: fast tempo reflects happiness and spirit, whereas slow tempo is identified with sadness.
3. Musical Interpretation Level. If sign is related to *interpretant*, the quality of music functions as *rheme*, sign that the interpretation is based on the choice of the *interpretant* from his musical perception, cognition, performance, analysis, history, lyric and composition of song.

'Knocking on Heaven's Door in Folk Music as Anti War Song

The lyric of this song tells about the death of a soldier in war. Look at the lyric in *verse 1*:

Mama, take this badge off of me, I can't use it any more

This lyric is denotatively meant as a request of someone to his mother to take his badge because he can't use it anymore. Look at also the lyric in *verse 2*:

Mama, put my guns in the ground, I can't shoot them any more

This part also tells about a request by the same person to his mother to take his gun and bury them in the ground because he can't shoot anymore. The person might refer to a soldier, since the properties mentioned in lyrics, like *badge* and *guns*, were properties used by soldiers.

The lyrics that mention a mother who was asked to take the badge and gun was a connotative statement referring to death. It was mentioned in next lyric; "*I can't use it any more*" and "*I can't shoot them any more,*" which suggests that the soldier is dying, so he was going to discards his properties.

The meaning of death was stressed more in the next line:

It's getting dark, too dark for me to see, I feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door.

It tells about the situation where he has started to lose his consciousness and, in his dying condition, it felt to him like approaching heaven's door. Check also in this lyric:

That long black cloud is going down, I feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door

This lyric strengthened the previous line, making the situation happening to the soldier is more obvious.

Check the lyrics in the *chorus*:

Knock, knock, knocking On Heaven's Door, (4x)

It pictures the situation that he is knocking on heaven's door.

Those lyrics refer to the condition which is often described in tales or stories when someone is dying. In holy book it is stated that heaven is a place for good people to live after their death.

The song narrative described the death of the soldier who fought in war. People commonly interpret that death is identical with sadness or sorrow. Even though, some people sometimes consider death is a good thing or the best condition for humans, so there is no reason to feel sad because of it. Death is a way to immortal life (Handayani in Yusuf, 2005 : 66). It became Dylan's emotion when he sang this song. Dylan shared messages that death isn't a condition that had to be faced with tears. This emotion can be concluded from the time-related expression, pitch-related expression and texture related expression in this song.

In time-related expression, this song showed sadness, which was expressed in tempo and rhythm. Slow tempo expressed sadness, sorrow, and sentimental, or calm, silent, respect and serious situations. Duple rhythm produced a rigid and uncontrolled expression.

In pitch-related expression, there were some elements that showed emotion contradictory to the time-related expression - as an example, in the harmonization. Simple harmony represents happy and calm feelings. It also emanates from a major tone. According to Brunner, as explained in table 1, major tone expresses happy feelings.

There was a contradiction in expression of feeling in time and pitch. In time-related expression, there was impression of sadness, whereas pitch-related expression pictured happiness. So, how can the intended expression be decided? There were two things that can be the references, lyrics and context.

This song didn't say anything about sadness although its lyrics told about death. Tempo and rhythm effects symbolized respect, calm and silent situations. As a whole, this song stressed positive feelings. Not a happy feeling but relief, because the dead soldier was finally going to be in the immortal life and leaving the horrors of war. His death enables him not suffer in war anymore. It has become the way to reach a better stage in life.

The way Dylan sang in minimalist music also showed sadness. Sadness expressed by Dylan was actually in respect of the dead soldier. The vocal harmony became

the background sound that took the soldier to immortality. The sound of a choir can be heard as the backing vocal in this song. It reminds us of the choir in a death ceremony, because in some religions a choir is sometimes used in the death ceremony. Dylan's sadness was a sign of respect for the soldier.

Dylan stressed strong emotions in the chorus: "*Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door...*". Dylan wanted to imply that the dead soldier was coming to heaven's door. Heaven would become his divine home. Implicitly, Dylan wanted to say that death was best for the soldier.

Dylan's opinion and belief about death have also been stated in another of his songs, titled '*Death is Not The End*'. Through this song he said that death was not the end of life since there would be another life after death. Someone's soul would never die. According to him, death is not something to be regretted because the time will come for everyone to face it.

Songs in duple rhythm is associated to heroic themes. In *Music and Ideology*, Van Leeuwen mentioned that music in a major key, 4/4 regular time, dotted rhythm; large intervals are "heroic" features (Van Leeuwen, http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2822/is_4_22/ai_56952170/print, accessed on march 2006). After analyzing the music and lyrics, it can be concluded that this song has a heroic theme.

The concept of *hero* is defined as a person who is willing to sacrifice himself for a good cause (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero>, accessed on November 14, 2006). American soldiers who became the victims of war had changed the public perception of American soldiers. They were not considered as the heroes, but the victims of American regulations to intervene in the Vietnam War. This fact gave inspiration to the anti-war activist, including Bob Dylan.

For Dylan, the dead soldier in the Vietnam War was a hero. In his interview with Playboy magazine, when the reporter asked him about who was a hero in his point of view, Dylan answered implicitly, "*A hero is anyone who walks to hi' own drummer*" (<http://www.interferenza.com/bcs/interw/play78.htm>, accessed on November 16, 2006). According to Dylan, a hero was someone who had belief in himself. Every decision of his action and what he would do were based on his belief that it would be best for him. Dylan appreciated the soldiers' decisions and respected them as heroes. He respected their choice to be soldiers who fought in war.

Dylan's singing indicated that he was sorry for the soldier who died in the Vietnam War, since the war was just to defend America's interests to be the master of

the world. Every soldier who died in battle might mean that they had sacrificed their body and soul to defend their country; they are the heroes.

Dylan sang this song for the first time in 1973 when The Vietnam War was still happening and American government still sending American soldiers to Vietnam to fight against communists. Many American soldiers died in the war. Dylan viewed that a gross human rights violation happened because of the Vietnam War. It became his concern, so he joined the human rights and anti war movement.

As an anti war musician, Dylan expressed his opinion of war in his songs. For example: his song titled '*Talking World War Three Blues*' criticized military industry, which would inevitably cause World War III. His rejection of the Vietnam War was described in the song titled '*Masters of War*'. His fans claim that the songs titled '*Hard Rain*', '*I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine*' and '*Blowin' in the Wind*' were songs that criticized the Vietnam War. Dylan, with other *folk* musicians, joined the anti war demonstration in November 1969 Barringer, <http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/vietnam/antiwar.html>, accessed on April, 16 2006). Dylan deemed that the American involvement in the Vietnam War just caused loss and suffering for Americans.

Folk music has a history of music about struggle. Folk musicians are idealist and have a progressive political orientation. It relates to the history of traditional folk music (before it became part of popular music) as the music to fight against capitalism. This struggle was the same as the struggle of popular folk music musicians, like Woodie Guthrie and Pete Seegers, who became political activists within the human rights movement. They saw folk music as a tool to mobilize people. The lyrics of folk songs often express messages of progressive politics and human rights. Although they sang new songs, the instrument they used was the traditional folk music instrument (Garofalo, 1997 : 197).

Folk music in this song became the vehicle to add emotional effects. In texture-related expression, the typical of folk music-with melodious guitar and its tinkling with the effect of drum-has a background history of the music of resistance. It caused this musical genre to become a metaphor of music for struggle, and stressed song as a counter culture.

'Knocking on Heaven's Door in Reggae Version as The Song of Subculture Resistant

'*Knocking On Heaven's Door*' in reggae version was still about death. Badge and gun in this version referred to the Rude Boys, a youth subculture in Jamaica in the 1960s. Rude Boy culture came from ghetto that lived around Kingston. This group had members whose ages ranged from around 14 to 25, and they always carried knives and other weapons with them. They wore their typical clothes, called sharp 3-button suits with pork-pie hat, imitating high-class fashion. This group was often feared by people because of the weapons they brought. They also participated in criminal activities. Rude Boys wore badges that became part of their accessories.

Bob Marley's expression shown in this song was a sad feeling. The way he sang sounded weak, with full vibration but unclear intonation. Those expressed his sadness. Duple rhythm in this song gave the emotional effect of a rigid and uncontrolled expression. It had negative connotations.

Its tempo that went faster than the original version showed happy feelings. But, from how Marley sang in unclear intonation and full of vibration, he precisely wanted to show his deep sadness. Tempo in this song didn't refer to positive feelings. The medium to fast tempo became typical of reggae music.

Major tone refers to happy themes. However, it doesn't always happen like that. Sometimes it can be found a major song but its lyrics tell about something sad, like a broken heart or failure to reach something. Reggae music was identified with fast tempo, and it also used major keys.

Marley shows deep sadness in verse 2 line 3 where he made a little change in the lyrics. It became: '*There's long black cloud is following me...*'. It described how the situation started, soon to become trouble. The long black cloud represented the troubled situation, sadness or darkness; and it was following the dead boy, which symbolized the member of Rude Boys' gang. It indicated never-ending sadness. Death in this context was identical with negative feelings, and quite contrary to the original lyrics: '*That long black cloud is coming down...*', which meant that sadness had already gone, and the dead soldier had arrived in front of heaven's door (*'feels like I'm knocking On Heaven's Door...'*)

Marley's sadness was supported by the sound of drums as this song's major instrument. The drum's sound became the media to revive people's longing for the

peaceful life in Africa. Drumbeats in reggae music were typical of Africa's music. The drum was a symbol of Africa and became part of the instrument often used by Rastas. Lyrics in this reggae version were based on the idea of Rasta's rebelliousness that was implemented in the use of drum and rhythm adapted from original Rasta music. Reggae was the voice of Jamaicans, and the drum reflected their heartbeat.

Marley felt sad because a member of Rude Boys had died resulting from the impact of the violence done by a security guard. Rude Boys' gang was considered as troublemakers. Marley's life was part of the Rude Boys' gang. He grew up in the ghetto district in Trench Town. His childhood friends and the member of his bands (The Wailers) were part of the Rude Boys gang. He knew and understood the Rude boys' gang life very well.

Together with Peter Tosh and Bunny Livingston, Marley formed the Wailing Wailers Band. The lyrics of their songs told about Rude Boys, young people who looked for their identity by becoming rascals in Kingston Street. Marley considered Rude Boys and their resistance as an expression of the cultural, social and political condition in Jamaica.

The top of Marley's fame, between 1972-1981, was the time when Jamaica was in chaos because of the political competition between the Jamaican Labour Party (JLP) lead by Edward Seaga and the People's National Party (PNP) with its famous person who was the prime minister of Jamaica, Michael Manley.

At that time, Jamaican people, ghettos, and Rasta became the victims of violence. Bob Marley was sorry for this condition. He expressed it in song titled '*Rastaman Vibration*', '*So Jah Seh*', or '*Natty Dread*'. Jamaican people didn't have freedom and they lived in fear, poverty and desperation.

Marley's sadness was especially dedicated to the dead people as victims of the chaos conditions in Jamaica at that time. The lyrics: "*Mama, take this badge off of me, I can't use it any more*" was meant a condition where one of the Rude Boys members was dying in the chaotic situation. He wouldn't be able to continue his life, so he cannot use his badge.

The next lyrics: "*It's getting dark, too dark to see, Feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door*" was a metaphor of the dead boy. How Marley's sang in an expression of sadness (it was different from Dylan who sang optimistically and firmly) showed that death in this song was a terrible phenomenon as an impact of oppression.

Marley's vocal improvisation in *verse 2* in lyric: "*Mama, take these guns away*

from me, I can't shoot them any more" showed that the boy wanted his mother to take the weapons away from him. The improvisation (*solfegeo*) to higher tone in lyric: "*I can't shoot them anymore*" showed strong emotion. It looked as if Marley was disappointed by why there was yet another victim.

There was improvisation again when Marley sang: "*knock- knock-knocking...*". It was vocal improvisation and tempo improvisation. This was also the way Marley stressed the sadness emotion. It occurred again in *verse 3* when there was a change in the height of tone, with improvisation in high tone. It gave the effect of the emotion rising. Vocal improvisation was also heard in the next line: "*It's getting dark, too dark to see*". In lyric "*Feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door*" the rising tone occurred again. Too much improvisation became Marley's moan because of the dead boy. Marley's expression of sadness was created strongly by the sound of harmonica. The harmonica was woodwind instrument that expressed deep sadness.

The difference between the original and reggae version can be seen in the harmonization. In the reggae version, the harmony was more complex. Complex harmony expresses provocation, push or challenge to the listeners to do something. The provocation was supported by repetition within the song in *verse 1*, *verse 3* (one time) and chorus (two times) (compared with Dylan's version, where there is no repetition, except in the chorus to bring the song to coda)

Repetition in certain parts was important in music. According to Richard Middleton, repetition became the specific typical of popular music, and made it inclusive. Repetition meant the idea to restatement (Middleton, <http://www2.hu-hyperlink.com/berlin.de/fpm/texte/middle.htm>, accessed on October, 8 2006) or re-stressing the argument mentioned in the theme of the song.

Repetition in this song functioned to restate the theme. Marley created a complex harmony through repetition in *verse* and chorus. The purpose was to ask listeners to contemplate on the Jamaican condition again. Check repetition lyrics in *verse 1* and refrain:

Mama, take this badge off of me, I can't use it any more
It's getting dark, too dark to see, Feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door.
Knock, knock, knockin' on heavens door, (4x)

By repeating *verses 1* and *3* that told about the dead boy, Marley seemed to

emphasise to the listeners, "Look, that boy is dead!" He died because of the poor conditions in Kingston at that time.

Reggae is music from Jamaica. It became synonymous with Rastafarian identity. Reggae music was identified with the resistance of Afro-Jamaican people. Their life was hard because of discrimination. Reggae became their tool to express their lives and identities as black people. This song became Bob Marley's protest to the condition of Afro-Jamaican people, the discrimination and political disorder that confronted them, and it was represented in the Rude Boys.

'Knocking on Heaven's Door in Heavy Metal Version as The Expression of Life's Disappointment

Metal music, or heavy metal, consists of many subgenres, like black metal, doom metal, power metal, speed metal, thrash, and glam metal. Heavy metal is characterized by loud distorted guitar, emphatic rhythms, dense bass and drum sound, and vigorous vocals. The common themes in heavy metal lyrics are sex, violence, and the occult (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heavy_metal_fashion, accessed on September 8, 2008).

According to Ravalovich and Schneider, the theme of heavy metal music can be classified in three themes as follows:

(1) Psychological chaos, the aesthetics of metal music have been argued to reflect the complexities of contemporary culture. As the world has become conjointly more fractured and psychologically alienating, the song structure of metal bands has mirrored these social changes, (2) Nihilism, nihilistic themes in metal music are those that portray a denial of culturally-constructed codes of conduct and their concomitant systems of morality, (3) Alternative religiosity, and anti-Christianity, the current metal scene is probably most famous for its consistent undermining of Christianity (http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/0/7/8/0/pages107807/p107807-1.php, accessed on August, 30 2008).

Studies of heavy metal music are often related to the issues of low social economic position, unsettled family life, or post-industrial risk.

Guns and Roses, known as the King of Rock, was one of popular glam metal bands. This band had a bad reputation of doing such an aggressive and violent be-

havior, and was identical with alcohol and drug consumption and sexual exploitation. According to Rolland Boer's interpretation, the lyrics of this band's song often told about life on the street, hopeless childhood, persecution, life 's a shit, alcohol and drugs, psychological disturbance, Oedipal longing, vanilla sex, bondage and discipline, jaded and often broken love, the sheer rejection of women and telling the world to get stuffed (Boer, 1999 : 89).

Guns and Roses played '*Knocking on Heaven's Door*' in 1991 in their successful album, "*Use Your Illusion II*". This version was full of electric guitar distortion and the shrieking vocal of Axl Rose, the front man of this band. The duration of this song was 5:34, the longest one. The theme of this song was still about death.

The dead man referred to was one of heavy metal fans, whereas badge was one of the accessories of heavy metal fashion. The clothing associated with heavy metal has its roots in the biker, rocker, and leather subcultures. Heavy metal fashion includes elements such as leather jackets; hi-top basketball shoes; blue or black jeans, camouflage pants or shorts, and denim jackets or vests, often adorned with badges, pins and patches(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heavy_metal_fashion). The fans of metal bands often imitated the styles of their favorite band.

The person died because he killed himself. The gun referred to the suicidal behavior of shooting himself. The sound of a gun before Rose was going to sing the second verse, which was prepared to shoot, strengthened the fact. According to the annual data, suicide was the third leading cause of death among persons aged 10-19 years in the United States during 1992-2001. The most common method of suicide in this age group was by firearm (49%) (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5322a2.htm>, accessed on September 10, 2008). The factors that caused suicidal behavior were: insanity, alcoholism, illness, family troubles, love problems, poverty, unmarried persons, being old and being male (Aldridge, <http://www.musictherapyworld.de/modules/archive/stuff/papers/Suicide.pdf>, accessed on September 8, 2008).

Why he killed himself cannot be interpreted clearly. It could be one of those causal factors. Studying from the childhood background of Rose, it could be concluded that the reason for the suicidal behavior was family troubles. Rose was known as a temperamental and aggressive person. He often acted anarchically. He behaved like that since he was a child.

Rose grew up in Indiana in a troubled family environment. He was born as William Bruce Rose, Jr. His parents were Sharon E. and William Rose. His father left the family when Rose was two years old. After he became an adult, and recovering repressed memories in therapy, he publicly stated that his biological father sexually abused him. He also was physically abused by Stephen Bailey, his stepfather.

Because of his turbulent upbringing and his mother's reluctance to leave the abusive Bailey, Rose is said to have issues with women. He claimed in an interview with Rolling Stone magazine in April 1992, that during his childhood, he was made to believe that women and sexuality were evil and that due to the violent treatment of his mother by his stepfather he witnessed as an impressionable child, he had been led to think that domestic violence was the normal way of doing things (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Axl_Rose, accessed on September 3, 2008).

When he sang '*Knocking On Heaven's Door*', Rose was inspired by his childhood experiences. Some of Rose's songs were inspired by his life. For example, a song titled '*Sweet Child O' Mine*' was his love story to his first wife.

The man in this song was dying because he had shot himself. He asked his mother to take his badge and his gun because now he was dying (check the next line '*...I can't use it anymore, It's getting dark too dark to see, I feel like I'm knocking on heaven's door*' and '*...I can't shut them anymore, that cold black cloud is coming down, I feel like I'm knocking on heaven's door*'). The word 'mama' strengthened the dead man's disappointment in his mother (check the explanation above on how Rose was disappointed in his mother because she didn't leave Bailey).

The man died because of his hopelessness and depression. In this song, there was an illustration of someone who called on the phone to the man, and he tried to warn the man. The man on the phone said:

*"You just better start sniffin' your own rank subjugation, Jack
'cause it's just you against your tattered libido, the bank and the mortician forever,
man
and it wouldn't be luck if you could get out of life alive"*

The man on the phone tried to convince the depressed man (Jack) to face reality. The death didn't mean that he would escape from his terrible life.

The man speaking on the phone represented Axl Rose. He has the same prob-

lem as Jack. Rose also had bitter childhood memories, but he could pass through the hard times. He didn't want Jack to solve his problem by killing himself. But it was too late; Jack had decided to end his life.

Rose's emotion when he sang this song can be analyzed from the time, pitch, and texture related expression. From the tempo and rhythm in time-related expression, like Dylan's version, this song expressed sadness (slow tempo and duple rhythm).

In pitch-related expression, the harmony is more complex from its original version, complex harmony representing more agitated and sad feelings. Rose used higher keys, which means the rising of intensity of emotion.

From the texture-related expression, we can hear loud volume, which became typical of rock music. The sound of electric guitar was a noise effect or distortion (Eisenbeis, <http://www.ctext.org/zines/Kudzu/library/essays/Eisenbeis-Fuzz.html>, accessed on October 10, 2006). In the electric guitar can be heard the noise effect that adds the specific meaning, like disorder, chaos, non-clarity and uncertainty (Sangild, <http://www.musicandmeaning.net/issues/showArticle.php?artID=2.4>, accessed on October 5, 2006). These can be inferred to represent the terrible condition of the dying man.

Over all, the expression of this song referred to the sadness emotion. The voice of Rose is heard like screaming and is heartrending. It sounded like someone was crying. Rose was sad, because Jack decided to end his life. His terrible life made him desperate and frustrated. Like in its original version, in heavy metal version, there was also the voice of a choir as the backing vocal that represented the voice of the death ceremony.

By singing this song, Rose expressed his bitter childhood experience as the victim of a broken-home family. He expressed his disappointment with his trouble life by describing Jack's hopelessness. He felt that there were many young people who had the same problem as he, and he tried to motivate them not to give in to their unfortunate condition (check the man speaking on the phone).

Conclusion

From the structured analysis that has been done, it can be concluded that 'Knocking On Heaven's Door' sung in different versions and by different singers has different constructed meaning of the counter culture. In the folk music version, this

song told about the death of soldiers in the Vietnam War. It became counter culture because Bob Dylan wanted to criticize the American Government intervention in the war. In reggae version, this song told about a member of the Rude Boys gang who died in Jamaica's chaos as the effect of discrimination and political dispute. It became Bob Marley's protest to Jamaica's political situation. These two versions were the products of counter cultures which fought against the structure or macro perspective. These were different from the last version of the song in this analysis. In the heavy metal version, this song was a counter to an individual life, or in the context of agency or micro perspective. This version described a young person's depression caused by family trouble, which also represented the singer's childhood depression.

Each of the three versions of 'Knocking On Heaven's Door' Song told about the singer's sadness and sorrow in different musical element expressions. The musical elements chosen and stressed by each singer became expressions that bring messages of certain criticisms or social concerns.

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