BAD IMPRESSION OF HEAVY METAL CULTURE REFLECTED ON METAL: A HEADBANGER’S JOURNEY DIRECTED BY SAM DUNN (2008): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study is to find out how Bad impression of heavy metal culture is reflected in Sam Dunn’s Metal: a headbanger’s journey by correlating its structural elements and social historical background of America in early twenty first century. Indeed, literature and sociology are bounded each other due to the assumption that the appearance of literary work is in social emptiness.

This study uses qualitative method in which the data are taken from both primary and secondary data source in form of words, sentence and phrases. Primary data source is Sam Dunn’s Metal: a headbanger’s journey while secondary data sources are other sources related to the primary data. Data collecting method in this study is library research, and in analyzing the data the researcher employs descriptive analysis.

The outcomes of this study are as follows: (1) Sam Dunn’s Metal: a headbanger’s journey reflects social condition America in early twenty first century. (2) Sam Dunn depicts Bad Impression of heavy metal culture in Metal: a headbanger’s journey. (3) Sam Dunn want to show that Bad Impression of heavy metal culture is untrue because the lack of knowledge of Society about heavy metal.

Key words: Bad Impression, Heavy Metal, Culture.

A. Introduction

1. Background of the Study

There are so many cultures in this world. Each culture shares different characteristic, norm, believe, habit and value. One culture may be different from the other culture. Sometimes a good habit in one culture is considered as a bad habit or even forbidden to other cultures.

Bad impression is an unpleasant idea or opinion of what something is like (Digital Cambridge Advanced Learner Dictionary – 3rd edition). This bad impression makes people judge certain culture to be at lower level than other cultures especially his own culture.

Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey tells about the journey of Sam Dunn a metal head and also anthropologist traveling around the world to study Heavy metal culture. Heavy metal has been popular music since 1986 but it is full of controversy. Sam has been a metal head
since 12 years old. He is from small town on Canada western edge called Victoria BC. He dedicated himself to metal by listening to some of He is so wanted to study heavy metal culture so he embarks journey around the world to study heavy metal and filming it.

There are several things that fascinate the writer to analyze this movie. The first is this movie portrays an issue that rarely portrayed in movies. The second thing that makes the writer wants to study this movie is because the writer himself is a metal fan. The third reason is as long as the writer concern there is no research paper about Heavy metal music or Heavy metal culture. The writer as a metalhead wants to dedicate himself to heavy metal culture by making this research paper.

Based on the reasons above the writer proposed this study entitled BAD IMPRESSION OF HEAVY METAL CULTURE REFLECTED IN METAL: A HEADBANGER’S JOURNEY MOVIE DIRECTED BY SAM DUNN (2008): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH.

2. Literature Review

There is no previous study in Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey movie at least among the students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, Sebelas Maret University and Satya Wacana University and also the other University.

3. Problem Statement

The problem statement of this study is “How is bad impression of heavy metal culture reflected in Sam Dunn’s Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey movie?”

4. Limitation of the Study

The writer limits the study on the bad impression of heavy metal culture in Sam Dunn’s Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey.

5. Objective of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

a. To analyze the structural elements in the movie of Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey.

b. To analyze the Bad impression of heavy metal culture in Sam Dunn’s Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey movie based on sociological approach.

6. Benefit of the Study

a. Theoretical Benefit:

1) To encourage the students to analyze Heavy Metal whether it’s Music, Culture or Influence.

2) To give contribution to the body of knowledge particularly the aspect of sociological literary study.

b. Practical Benefit:

1) To give reference to the student who wants to analyze Heavy Metal.

2) To improve the writer’s and the reader’s knowledge of Heavy Metal culture and sociologic approach.
7. Underlying Theory

a. Notion of Sociology of Literature

Sociology refers to the human beings in society. It concerns on the social relation of human beings in their society. Swingewood and Laurenson (1972: 11) state that “sociology is essentially the scientific, objective, study of man in society, the study of social institution of social processes; it seeks to answer the question of how society is possible, how it works, why it is persisting.”

According to Swingewood and Laurenson (1972: 12), Literature is a work of art, which expresses of human life and the problem on society, particularly concerns with law, religion, norms and value of society, economics and politics with qualities of the relationship among them.

Sociology and literature have close relationship. The sociology of literature is a method to analyze the literary work based on sociological perspective to understand social aspect and social phenomenon in a certain period where literary work appears.

Swingewood and Laurenson (1972: 13) state that the sociological study to literature is thus a fairly late arrival, for although there are today well developed sociologies of religion, education, politics and social changes even such an imprecise area as ideology, there is virtually no established corpus of knowledge called sociology of literature.

Sociology of literature cannot be separated from society because literary work is created by the author who is the member of the society. The term society may include social, historical, cultural, religious, politic, economy. An author that creates some literary work has certain purpose that can be discussed through sociology. The author may want the readers to discuss more and find the reason why the author created some works especially sociology. By the discussion, the readers will find the answer of why the authors used the social context like what is described in their works. Swingewood and Laurenson (1972: 22) stated that “the basic purpose of sociology is to understand the nature and the working of all societies of men’s position within them.”

Wellek and Warren (1989: 111) distinguish sociology of literature into three kinds. First is sociology of the author. It focuses on the author’s view of the society in which they live. The main problems here is economy, social background and the author’s status and ideology also world vision of the author that can be seen by the outside of the literary works in relation to the author as the creator of a literary work. Second is sociology of the society where the authors live or the universe. It is the study about the influence of society to such literary works. Third is sociology of the reader. It focuses on the influences of the literary works effects to the audience as a society. How far the contribution of
the works to the readers and how the readers react or give responses toward literature can be discussed.

b. Major Principles of Sociology of Literature

The theory is introduced by Swingewood and Laurenson (1972: 13) which stated three approaches to the sociology of literature. The basic principles of literature are follows:

1) Literary Work as the Social Documents

Literary works reflect the society in certain period, what happen in the society at that time. We can discuss the social phenomenon in certain time and place through literary works. According to Swingewood and Laurenson (1972:13), “the most popular perspective adopts the documentary aspects of literary arguing that it provides a mirror to age.”

2) Literary Work as Reflection of Social Situation of the Writer

The literary works of the author is as a member of society where she lives, so it cannot be separated from the social phenomenon Swingewood and Laurenson state (1972:16) “we learn both of the nature of sociology and the ways individuals experienced it through the fictional characters that see and record not only the reality, but their hopes, wishes dreams, and fantasies...” This concept assumes that the author’s thought and idea comes from the reality which happens in author’s social life.

3) Literary Work as the Manifestation from the Historical Moment

Literary works that are created by the author can’t be separated from the social background of the author. The reader that studies the literary works based on sociological approach will developed the sociology of literature itself.

B. Research Method

1. Type of the Study

This research is descriptive qualitative research in the form of literary work. It is a type of research which produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from the observed object in this case a movie.

2. Type of Data and the Data Source

The type of the data used in the study is consisting of primary and secondary data sources.

a. Primary Data Source

The data of this study are scenes, narrations, dialogues and interviews in Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey movie which are relevant to the subject of matter of this study.

b. Secondary Data Source

The secondary data sources are references and materials consists of the other data taken from E-books, E-journals, articles and websites which are related to this study.

3. Object of the Study

The object of the study is Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey movie directed by Sam Dunn.
4. **Technique of the Data Collection**

The procedures of collecting data are as follows:

1) Watching the movie repeatedly,
2) Taking notes of the information both primary and secondary data,
3) Capturing image until the researcher gets adequate information or data analysis
4) Arranging and developing the data into a good unity.

5. **Technique of the Data Analysis**

The writer uses descriptive analysis in analyzing the data through Sociological Approach. The writer describes the structural elements of the movie and Sociological approach. Then, the collected data will be interpreted and analyzed in detail through Sociological approach. In this case is by showing the bad impression of Heavy Metal culture reflected in *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey* movie.

C. **Findings and Discussion**

1. **Structural Analysis of Metal: A Headbanger's Journey**

After analyzing the structural elements of the movie, the researcher will discuss the relation between the elements and puts the element into unity. *Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey* is directed by Sam Dunn. In this movie, Sam attempts to show and describe heavy metal culture and the elements in it deeply, by conducting interviews with some figures that related to heavy metal music and culture. Sam also shows why heavy metal culture is always being stereotyped, dismissed and condemned but still being loved by its fans.

The theme of *Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey* movie is controversy of heavy metal music and culture in society. Metal in societies is considered as something negative. Heavy metal is linked with violence, murder, and criminal, sadomasochism, Satanism, anti religions etc. societies think that crimes, violence, and Satanism are related to this music. But Sam as the director serve facts and opinion about heavy metal and its element then after that society are allowed to judge heavy metal music from their way of thinking whatever it is.

The major character of the movie is Sam Dunn. He is a metalhead and also anthropologist from Canada. Since 12 years old he likes metal. His childhood is very influenced by Metal music. He dedicates himself to metal; he plays metal music, broadcasting a metal show at his own radio and go to every metal gigs in his town. At 19th he went to university. Since there is no Metal study in curriculum so he decided to study anthropology. As an anthropologist he studies so many cultures in the world. But he is fascinated to study a culture that he loves, it is heavy metal culture. He travels around the world to get information about heavy metal and to understand why heavy metal culture is always being stereotyped, dismissed and condemned but still being loved by its fans.
The point of view in this movie uses first person narrative because it tells the journey of Sam Dunn. The narrator speaks as “I” and as himself in the story.

There are 4 countries as the setting of place in the movie. They are America, England, Germany and Norway. In England Sam interviews Tony Iommi the one that is claimed as the creator of the first heavy metal song and the legendary singer Bruce Dickinson. America is the central place of this movie. Here the most of story takes place. In Germany, Sam attends Wacken Open Air, the Mekkah of heavy metal culture. Here, Sam portrays heavy metal as a culture and its elements. The last country that is used as setting in this movie is Norway; here Sam goes to Oslo and Bergen. Sam interviews some black metal musician about Satanism to collect information about the incident of church burning done by black metal musician. Here Sam wants to reveal is that any real Satanism in metal culture.

From the casting, the movie is acted by Sam Dunn himself, some metal musician, metalheads or headbangers and also people who have relation with any problems that arises in the movie.

Plot in this movie is divided into three. The first is the beginning. It contain the introduction of the main character and his past life. the second is the middle. The middle of the movie consist of the journey of Sam traveling around the world and interviewing peoples that related to heavy metal such as: musicians, bands, producers, fans, sociologists, musicologists, writers, DJs, founder, tour managers, groupies, authors, minister of church and Satanist. He does to find the answer of why has heavy metal been consistently stereotyped, dismissed and condemned? Sam divides his film into some parts; they are origins, the sound, environments, culture, censorship, gender and sexuality, religion and Satanism, death and violence. The ending of the film is when Sam managed to conclude what he got from his interviews with several figures.

Structural elements of the movie have important role to make the movie successful. It consist of narrative and technical elements. Sam as the director selects best figures to take part on his movie. He selects figures that have a very close relation to heavy metal such as Bob Ezrin, toni iommi, bruce dickinson, deena weinstein, kerry king, Ronnie James dio, pamela des bares etc. The elements mise-en-scene also performed in this movie such as set dressing and props, costumes, and make up, and lighting. Costumes of this movie use a certain costumes. It is clothes that is related to heavy metal culture such as heavy metal costume, black metal costume and glam metal costumes.

From make up, offers, they can manage the make up for actors and actress so natural based on their characters in the movie. The other elements are lighting. The lighting in this movie makes the effects to support the setting and builds the situation. The other elements of movie production are cinematography that can be divided into three: photographic qualities of shot, the framing of shot, and the duration of
shot. Most sounds in *Metal A Headbanger’s* movie are using metal song, to make the audience carried away to the world of heavy metal. Editing in this film gives influence in delivering messages. This movie is divided into several parts such as origins, the sound, environments, culture, censorship, gender and sexuality, religion and Satanism, death and violence in order to delivered the message well.

2. **Sociological Analysis of Metal: A Headbanger’s journey**

Sam Dunn’s *Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey* movie tells about the existence of heavy metal culture and the controversy of it in the society. Sam Dunn portrays the phenomena of heavy metal culture and its controversy deeply and widely by serving facts and opinions of many figures related to heavy metal. By using this movie, Sam wants to take the audience to the world of heavy metal to introduce them to heavy metal so they can understand what it is. In *Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey*, Sam also shows the bad impression of society to heavy metal culture.

Based on the sociological analysis of *Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey* movie, the researcher concludes that Sam Dunn as the director of this movie concerns the social condition in America, especially in the cultural and religion in America. Sam Dunn makes correlation between what happens behind heavy metal culture with American social condition in early twenty first century. By watching this movie and pay attention, the audiences can get a lot of advantages. The audiences know the historical background of America and the social condition of America. Besides that, the audiences can get the moral message from this movie.

In social class of this movie is dominated by lower class. It tells about how is heavy metal musician background in the past, they live in poverty, bad environment and bad social condition that influence their personality and the way they play music. Tony Iommi the first heavy metal musician he lives in rough area and everything got run down even he states that it was “shit hole”. Lemmy is also metal musician that have a bad social background. He lives in a hopeless village where there is no electricity in there, he said that the thing that he do in the evening is hanging out around phone box because it is the only source of light in the village.

The politic aspect shown in the movie is about laws and regulation of the government that is represented by PMRC to censor music. PMRC rates song into 5, sex, drugs, alcohol, occult and violence. PMRC’s regulation to music industry also appears in the movie in the scene when Dee Snider is called to US Congress to testify about his music that is accused as endorsing violence and sadomasochism. There Dee Snider opposes the accusation of PMRC about himself and his music. He says that he is the direct target of the accusation of them and it is a character assassination to him. PMRC accuses Twisted Sister, his band endorsing Sadomasochism through the song entitled “*Under the Blade*” which it is actually song about the experience of his guitarist’s throat operation. The
congress says that that song is using wild imagination too much but Dee testifies that people can interpret many ways depend on what they think.

In economic aspect, Sam focuses on the heavy metal music industry. Here, Sam tells how heavy metal music industry can survive for 35 years without any support from mainstream media. Heavy metal industry products consist of CDs, Records, Magazines and merchandize such as images, posters and T-shirts. Robert Kampf the founder of Century Media record says that it is network of friend, everyone is participating in it. They help each other, some people help printing up T-shirts, another one is driving. Another kid is helping out his friends by helping them load and unload the van and Sell the T-shirt.

Culture aspect in the movie is clearly shown in *Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey* movie especially on CULTURE part. In this part Sam shows the elements of heavy metal culture that defines it as a culture such as attitude, uniform, music. Mental fact is reflected in this movie. It is about values brotherhood, sense of belonging and helps each other. It is shown by interview of Sam with Robert Kampf, the Founder of Century Media Record. The value of brotherhood, friendship and helping each other is reflected on this film. They work together. Some of them are printing t-shirt, driving, unloading and sell t-shirts in order to keep metal culture alive. The other mental fact that is reflected on this movie also appears on the interview of Sam with Ronnie James Dio. When Ronnie is asked by Sam about what makes metal unique he answers metal is big family who all share one thing called Metal. It shows the value of brotherhood, sense of belonging as a big family and this mental fact makes heavy metal culture lasts long.

Behavioral fact is also clearly reflected in this movie. The most stands out behavior about American life style are they are love having fun to refresh their mind from stressing everyday activity. They like having fun and they do not care about the outside world. In the interview with Malcolm dome, he says what makes metal attractive is the tribal attitude that they like going to metal festival and enjoy their self and do not care to the outside world. The other representation of American behavior is drinking alcohol. Alcohol is a common thing in America. In this film beer is the alcohol that is consumed. In the movie Fans of heavy metal loves to go to Wacken open air the 4 days metal feast containing Music, Beers and debauchery even Sam himself is got hangover in the first day there. The other behavior fact shown in the movie is American likes listening music. They do it to entertain their self or for refreshing and also listening music is their lifestyle. It is shown by a student character named Eric. His life is not always good. Whether it is good or bad he always can count on music. Joey’s lifestyle is different with other people he always listens to music after wake up while other read paper or drinks coffee. He also states the important of music by saying that it is the air that you breathe.

Physical fact is also shown in the movie. There are a lot of physical fact that is shown in the movie such as Clothes, Music, Magazines and
records. The clothes that define heavy metal are black t-shirt, leather; silver because it is a symbol of masculinity in western culture. The dialogue above shows how metal head dressing in a certain way. They wear black t-shirt, leathers, silver and sometimes they have tattoos. This is reflecting physical fact in the movie.

Music is one of physical facts in America. There are many genres music in America such. Heavy Metal music is the major concern and the main idea of this movie. Not only heavy metal music that discusses in this movie, but also another music genre that has relation to heavy metal such as Classical Music and blues. In Metal: A Headbanger's Journey, the genre of music that mostly portrayed are Subgenre of rock such as Metal, blues, rock n roll, punk rock and the mixture from every genre that make so many sub genre Robert walser says that classical music is one genre of music that influences heavy metal. Bob Ezrin says that classical root of heavy metal is fairly obvious and Robert says it describes Bach as it describes Eddie Van Halen.

In the movie, it is also described that heavy metal music has another ancestor that comes from America, Its blues music. Many musician believe that heavy metal music is came from blues music even some of heavy metal musician is playing blues music before play metal. It is antoher physical fact of America in the movie.

The discussion about heavy metal in this movie is not only about the roots but also the development of its subgenre. By the metal ancestors above heavy metal develop and give birth to many subgenre which have its own characteristics. They are power metal, the new wave of British heavy metal, progressive metal, glam metal, pop metal, stoner metal, hardcore, thrash metal, the first wave of black metal, Norwegian black metal, grindcore, death metal,Swedish death metal, metalcore, grunge, goth metal, industrial metal, hard alternative, new metal and the new wave of American metal.

Religious aspect appears on the movie especially on RELIGION AND SATANISM part. Here, Deena Weinstein says that religion is the important part of heavy metal because in the first era metal musician were raised religiously. One of musician that uses religion as the theme of his song is Ronnie James Dio. His music is full of religious imagery but often contradict with religion. Slayer, An American trash metal band also interviewed by Sam because its songs are directly attacking Christianity. For example ‘God hates us all’, ‘haunting chapel’, ‘hell awaits’. But in the interview, they explain that the songs are just arts and arts are the reflection of what happened in the real world.

In the late of twentieth century, it is called as the age of electronic age because the worldwide, communication satellite and computer were born in 1999. The appearance of the discovery, America becomes a modern country. The development of the mass media appears in Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey. It is also become a topic that is discussed in the movie.
D. Conclusion and Implication

After analyzing Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey movie, the writer draws the following conclusion. Firstly, based on the structural analysis, it is evident that in the movie, Sam Dunn wants to convey a moral message that the Bad impression of Heavy metal culture is untrue because most people doesn’t know how is the value in heavy metal culture. All of the aspects in this movie support each other. Starting from the characters that can bring the soul in the movie; mise-en scene that colors the character’s actions; good lighting that can build the situation; cinematography that makes the movie more alive; the sound that can give a sensation that makes this story really attractive, and the last is editing that makes a unity in the movie. They are complemented each other in order to create the good quality movie that proper to be watched by the society.

Secondly, based on the sociological analysis, it is evident that there is a close relationship between the movie story and the social reality underlying it.

The major factors that contribute to the production of the movie among others are the global issues of the society. Sam as Anthropologist that loves heavy metal music study this culture to get understanding about it and wants to tell the world about heavy metal so they can understand it.

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