

Thematic Analysis of “Kaleidoscope World” By Francis Magalona

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INTRODUCTION

Rapper Francis Magalona's 1995 song "Kaleidoscope World" is a very meaningful song that appeals to listeners of all ages in the Philippines. The song has many level of significance that make it a timeless work of music, even though it was released as an anthem of solidarity, resiliency, and cultural pride (Barret, 2023). The song went on to win the 1996 NU 107 Rock Award for Song of the Year and the 1996 Awit Award for Best Produced Record of the Year. The song was used in several Magalona memorials following her passing, including a paid audio-visual performance (Lo, 2009). Kaleidoscope World tells the story of diversity and life in general.

Francis M's 1995 album, *Freeman*, demonstrated his legitimacy in both hip-hop and rock genres. It included the renowned track "Three Stars and a Sun," which became a symbol of local rock and Filipino music, highlighting patriotism and the safeguarding of the nation (Libre, 2017).

Despite the song's widespread popularity and cultural significance, there remains a need for a deeper critical analysis of "Kaleidoscope World" to uncover the underlying discourses and narratives embedded within its lyrics.

"Kaleidoscope World" by Filipino artist Francis Magalona is a powerful song that embodies the complexities of human existence. The song is a reflection on the complexities of life, highlighting the importance of social commentary in popular music. According to Oriangel (2023), Magalona's contributions to Filipino hip-hop and social consciousness have made him a celebrated artist in the genre. His song serves as a powerful medium for expressing these complexities. The pioneer of Pinoy rap music, he significantly influenced Philippine artists and fans worldwide. His authentic, original, and relatable music remains celebrated and remembered today, leaving a lasting cultural legacy in the Philippines and beyond.

Based from Putri and Triyono (2018), a song is a medium for expressing thoughts or critical analysis, with songwriters creating unique meanings for their audience. Each songwriter's style is influenced by language proficiency and background. Good songwriters pay attention to language and creativity, often using figurative language for aesthetic purposes in their lyrics. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used to analyse Magalona's "Kaleidoscope World" and its discursive strategies to convey societal messages and challenge norms. CDA examines how Magalona uses language to construct meaning and potentially influence listeners' perceptions of the world, highlighting the intricate interplay between language, power, and ideology within texts.

The objective on this study was to identify the underlying themes present in the song “Kaleidoscope World” and examine the lyrics to uncover social, cultural, and philosophical messages conveyed by Francis Magalona.

METHODS

The data of this study were the lyrics of Francis M’s “Kaleidoscope World” released 1995. The research method used in this study is was critical discourse analysis in analyzing the lyrics through Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis by categorizing any kinds of figurative expressions delivered to reveal the intended meaning of the song. It focuses on the macrostructure analysis of the song.

Procedure in Collecting and Analyze Discourse Data:

- Text Selection. Choice of song based on context, societal meaning, and how it will be received.
- Transcription. The song requires listening more than once and picking up on small changes in tone, rhythm, and delivery.
- Close Reading. Reading the words carefully can help you find the main ideas, patterns, and symbols.
- Textual Analysis. Discourse analysis is used in textual analysis to look at linguistic features, sociocultural context, connections between texts.
- Interpretation. Figures on what a song's themes and messages mean by looking at how they make people feel and they connect with different groups of people.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The study used text analysis which focused on macro-structure, that analyses thematic elements in a text, thereby revealing its general meaning through core ideas (Putri & Triyono, 2018). The themes outline crucial information or goals conveyed to the audience. The theme is obtained through reading the text as a whole, with each part leading to one element and supporting each other to illustrate a common theme.

Table 1. Themes Presentation and Interpretations of Francis M's 'Kaleidoscope World'

Theme	Lyrics	Interpretation
Diversity and Inequality: Conflicting Views	So many faces, so many races Different voices, different choices And some are mad, while others laugh Some live alone with no better half Others grieve, while others curse And others mourn behind a big black hearse And some are pure, and some half-bred And some are sober, and some are wasted Some are rich because of fate And some are poor with no food on their plate Some stand out, while others blend And some are fat and stout, while some are thin	This creates a sense of clear division within the human experience.
Unity in Diversity	Every color and every hue Is represented by me and you Take a slide in the slope Take a look in the kaleidoscope Spinnin' round, make it twirl In this kaleidoscope world	This metaphor suggests a harmonious whole. Despite it creating unity from shifting broken pieces.
Guns and Peace Don't Mix	You can't talk peace and have a gun	This irony emphasizes how cruel socio-political aspects are.
Not Everyone is the Same	Some can swim, while some will sink Others walk, while others run	This metaphor shows the unequal access to resources of people which influences their capabilities.

Theme 1: Diversity and Inequality: Conflicting Views

“mad/laugh, alone/better half, grieve/curse, pure/half-bred, sober/wasted, rich/poor, stand out/blend, fat/thin, friend/foe, some/most.”

As you could see from the verse, it emphasizes conflicting and contradictory concepts. The verse highlights the conflicting views of diverse emotions and situations experienced by humans, focuses on issues such as mental health and social status. People who hear it are prompted to question and explore the gray areas between the groups that are being given. In this part, it shows that every person has different backgrounds and points of view.

Theme 2: Unity in Diversity

The chorus compares human diversity to a kaleidoscope. Based from the lyrics, “*Every color and every hue is represented by me and you*”. This symbolizes unity through colorful patterns. However, the metaphor suggests that while we may appear united, if you look closely our differences and struggles are still present based from this line “*Take a slide in the slope Take a look in the kaleidoscope.*” And as you go through this part, “*Spinnin’ round, make it twirl in this kaleidoscope world*” no matter how you try to embrace social diversity to make it united, real problems like inequality and injustice cannot be solved by celebrating differences. The song highlights the complexity of life, highlighting the differences between rich and poor, and the need to address the challenges faced by some people.

Theme 3: Guns and Peace Don’t Mix

The part where Francis M said, “You can’t talk peace and have a gun” is truly mind bending. It questions morality where you want peace through war. This is paradox is a reality. The highlights this reality, the contradiction between promoting peace and holding a weapon for fighting. Francis Magalona conveys a strong anti-violence message. It highlights the contradiction between war or armed conflict (*guns*) and harmony (*peace*), emphasizing that violence cannot coexist with true peace. The line prompts discussions about violence and achieving peace in a complex world, potentially leading to larger discussions. This line also suggests that societal divisions, conflicts, and violence prevent people from achieving harmony. Magalona often used his music to advocate for social awareness, and this line serves as a call to reject violence and embrace peace.

Theme 4: Not everyone is the same

“Some can swim, while some will sink

Others walk, while others run”

The comparison of swimming and sinking shows how complicated it is to find your own strengths and weaknesses within the frameworks of society. Francis M highlights the dynamics of human relationships, acknowledging both supportive and adversarial connections in society. The images of swimming and sinking show unequal access to resources and opportunities, which makes us think about the parts of society that make these differences possible. Further, the line, “*Others walk, while others run.*” this contrast between walking and running further emphasizes the diversity of abilities and circumstances individuals face. Overall, this line makes you think about how social norms and processes affect your own life and the things that happen to you and also serves as a reminder that uniqueness should be embraced rather than seen as a source of division. It reinforces the idea that even though people may differ in race, beliefs, or status, they all contribute to the colorful and ever-changing “kaleidoscope” of life.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, “Kaleidoscope World” by Francis M. is a powerful and thought-provoking song that delves into the complexities of human existence. It highlights the beauty of diversity while also shedding light on the persistent struggles and disparities that exist within society. The song challenges the notion of superficial unity and calls for genuine societal change. It encourages listeners to critically examine societal norms, question

hypocrisy, and work towards understanding and addressing the challenges faced by different individuals. Overall, "Kaleidoscope World" serves as a call for empathy, understanding, and the pursuit of genuine unity in a diverse world.

The implication on this study was social awareness and harmony, the song encourages people to embrace peace and understanding instead of focusing on divisions such as race, status, or beliefs. Anti-Discrimination Message, Magalona subtly criticizes discrimination and prejudice, promoting the idea that no one is superior or inferior based on external attributes. Life as a constant change, the imagery of a kaleidoscope suggests that life is always changing, evolving, and moving in unpredictable ways, making it important to adapt and appreciate each moment. Call for unity, the song ultimately serves as an anthem for togetherness, urging listeners to look past differences and work toward a more harmonious society.

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