

STEREOTYPE TO PUNK IN THE SONG'S LYRICS OF *AMERICAN IDIOT* ALBUM BY GREEN DAY

Brian Daffa

Universitas Balikpapan

briandaffa15@gmail.com

Abstract	Article Information
<p><i>This research aims to analyse the stereotype to punk in the song's lyrics of American idiot album by green day, the objective of this research is to identify the stereotype in the song's lyrics. The theory used in this research is semiotic by Michael Riffaterre specifically semiotic poetry's heuristic and hermeneutic reading. The method used in this research is qualitative in descriptive way. The researcher found there are negative and positive stereotype to punk in the song's lyrics, the negative stereotypes are rebellious, violent and drug/alcohol addict. The positive stereotype is free/independent, The research show that there is more negative stereotype than positive stereotype in the song's lyrics with the stereotype form, negative stereotype has a negative outcome and positive stereotype has a positive outcome for the character.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>Stereotype, Punk, semiotic, Song's Lyrics</i></p>	<p><i>Received:</i> 01/10/2024</p> <p><i>Revised:</i> 01/11/2024</p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> 01/02/2025</p>

INTRODUCTION

Stereotyped According to (Beeghly 2015, 676) that stereotype is a claim of a group not about a specific individual but they state general claims about kinds, this can be characterized as a subclass of generics that make claim specific about social kinds, such as "black men are criminal, "women have babies", doctors wear white coats". Stereotype to punk is created by their idea where they reject any form of law, legal system and the agencies of law enforcement, the stereotype of dissatisfaction with centralized, bureaucratic structure that are managing most of our aspect in life (Ward, 1996, p. 17).

Punk is a culture that believe in the idea of anarchy that has exist for a long time and it could be an identity for someone. Culture explained by (Collier, 1989, pp. 287-302) is a historically transmitted system of symbols, meaning, and norms.

The importance of this research is to enrich the knowledge of semiotic poetry and to educate the general views of punk society. The researcher analyzed on punk stereotype that

is found in the music album as a portrayal of cultural identity, focuses on the punk's character behavior to see what they do that make them different from the category of "normal". This researcher interested in this topic due to the fact that punk society have seen in a narrow point of view in the general society where in reality punk are more than what we usually heard or read.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Semiotic theory is a stylistic way to study the reading and production of a meaning in a text, the reader is the only one that make the connection among the text, interpretant and the intertext, a reader mind semiotic transfer from sign to sign. A poetic discourse is the result of establishment between a word and a text, or a text and another text (Riffaterre, 1981, p. 103).

Stereotype is a concept where it describes a certain group and its trait, it can be created by other people, it can be held in two ways where they can be held in a way where people actually believe in it and where in a sense, people know a certain stereotype exists about particular group and what it is about but people don't necessarily believe it to be true (Perkin, 1997, pp. 80-81).

Semiotic Poetry

To understand semiotic poetry the reader must carefully separate the two levels or stage of reading to decode the text, according to Riffaterre there are two stage of reading and that is heuristic reading and hermeneutic reading.

1. Heuristic reading is reading the text with the point of view of linguistic, therefor this stage is reading the text in literal meaning.
2. Hermeneutic reading is a stage where the reader make sense from the first reading using metaphor, metonymy, ambiguity, contradiction, nonsense, enjambment, homologue, typography and anything that would help to make that text to make sense in anyway, the text would be fully understood once the reader fully read the text second time naturally.

Stereotype

Stereotype develop in countless condition and manage with different sort of problem. Form of stereotype can be classified as negative, positive (Perkin, 1997, p. 85). Stereotype by Tessa Perkin is going to use to help identify the form of stereotype in this study object, this concept where it describes a certain group and for this study the researcher found there are two stereotypes of negative and positive:

1. Negative stereotype is most common stereotype due to stereotype usually erroneous than accurate.
2. Positive stereotype is the opposite of negative stereotype where the stereotype points out good in the group that are being stereotype.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the researcher uses qualitative research. This research is called qualitative research since this research presents the descriptive data, in forms of words, spoken or written by people. There are two classified sources of data in which the researcher devices the data. The first is primary data. The primary data is the main object that the researcher uses in this analysis. The primary data are taken from *American Idiot* and secondary data is supporting reference.

The researcher choses the song's lyrics because Green Day perfectly symbolized punk of that current era. The researcher focuses on punk's characteristic in the music album.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There are two type of stereotype, negative and positive, for negative there are Rebellious, violent and drug/alcohol addict and for positive there are free/independent. these finding are to be explained as follow:

1. Rebellious (Negative)

The first stereotype, a stereotype that portray resistant to authority or control, as seen in:

“Don't wanna be an American idiot
Don't want a nation under the new media
And can you hear the sound of hysteria?”
The subliminal mind fuck America”
(Track 1 “American Idiot” verse 1)

Heuristic reading for the first verse of American Idiot is focusing on the literal meaning of the text. In the first line, “don't wanna be an American idiot” means that the writer of the song doesn't want to be a stupid American or encourage American to not be stupid, the word “wanna” is a short informal slang for “want to”, and before the word “don't” there should be a subject on who is the line referring to. In the second line there's also a missing subject for who is the line referring to, “Don't want a nation under the new media” means that whoever is speaking does not want his or her country to be under new media. In the third line continuing the second line “And can you hear the sound of hysteria?” is a question to everyone that listen and reading, can we hear the voices of hysteria. In the last line “The subliminal mind fuck America” means that there is a hidden ‘mind fuck’ vulgar slang to the nation of America.

Hermeneutic reading must be done after the first reading of heuristic. An interpretation through the understanding from an indirect expression that's intentional from the writer. Hermeneutic reading aim is to fully understand the meaning of the song's lyrics. The hermeneutic for the first verse is that the character do not want to be an “American idiot”, is a phrase that symbolize rebellious because the phase straight insult all the so called “Idiot American”. The term “American idiot” have an ambiguity because it can mean literal an

American who is an idiot or it could mean people that follow the “media”, but the character who is presumably a punk does want to listen or follow.

2. Violent (Negative)

The second stereotype is violent, a stereotype that portray physical force used to hurt or kill. Portrayed in:

“My name is Jimmy and you better not wear it out
Suicide commando that your momma talked about
King of the forty thieves, and I'm here to represent
The needle in the vein of the establishment”

(Track 6 “St.Jimmy” verse 1)

Heuristic reading, In the first and second line “St. Jimmy's comin' down across the alleyway, Upon the boulevard like a zip gun on parade” means that “St jimmy” is a person, going from the alleyway to the highway, “zip gun” a firearm that’s created not by a professional, “parade” means a celebration. That mean that this St Jimmy character is going violently like a zip gun to the highway. In the third verse “light of a silhouette” means that silhouette is created by a light. In the fourth and last verse “He's insubordinate, coming at you on the count of 1, 2 (1, 2, 3, 4” mean that St Jimmy is a rebel that will come and get you.

Hermeneutic reading, the title of the song “St. Jimmy” is not a place but instead a character name that glorify violence, St Jimmy refer himself as “zip gun on parade”, there’s a metaphor in the “zip gun” he means that he is dangerous like a gun and “on parade” is just nonsense because there a gun would not be available on a parade.

3. Drug/Alcohol addict (Negative)

The third stereotype is drug/alcohol addict, a stereotype that portray a person addicted to a substance, as seen in:

“I'm the son of rage and love
The Jesus of Suburbia
From the bible of none of the above
On a steady diet of
Soda pop and Ritalin
No one ever died for my sins in hell
As far as I can tell
At least the ones I got away with”

(Track 2 “Jesus of Suburbia: Part 1” verse 1)

Heuristic reading for the first verse of Jesus of Suburbia: part 1 is focused on the literal meaning of the text. In the first verse, “I’m the son of rage and love” means that he is the product of rage and love. In the second line the researcher gets an answer on who is talking “The Jesus of Suburbia”, the character just stated his name in this part. In line 3 “from the bible of none of the above” means that the character does not believe everything in the book of bible. In 4 and 5-line part the researcher gets to see a portrayal of substance usage from the punk character named Jesus of Suburbia in “On the Steady diet of soda pop and Ritalin”. Ritalin is the brand name of a dangerous drug Methylphenidate. In line 6 “No one ever died for my sins in hell” means that he believes no one died for his sins and go to hell. In the seventh and last line “As far as I can tell, At least the ones I got away with” is continuing from the last line meaning that to his knowledge no one has died for his sins and got away with it.

Hermeneutic reading must be done after the first reading of heuristic. An interpretation through the understanding from an indirect expression that’s intentional from the writer. Hermeneutic reading aim is to fully understand the meaning of the song’s lyrics. The title of the song is “Jesus of Suburbia: Part 1”, this is the name of the main character in the story, and with “part 1” meaning that the song has multiple continuation. In the first verse there are “Rage and Love” is foreshadowing and a displacing meaning of metonymy of the personality of Jesus of suburbia, he is full of rage but at the same time it all could be because he wants to feel love and he take some substance to fill that in “on steady diet of soda pop and Ritalin”. In the second verse the researcher can see the “rage” in the chatterers where he is in denial there is nothing wrong with him and blame where the “land” where he is right now.

4. Free/Independent (Positive)

The last stereotype is the only positive stereotype in this research, free of independent is a portrayal of someone who is independent and free to do what he wants, as seen in:

“Jesus filling out paperwork now

At the facility on east 12th st

He’s not listening to a word now

He’s in his own world and he’s daydreaming”

(Track 12 “Homecoming: part 2 East 12th St” verse 1)

Heuristic reading for the first verse of Homecoming: East 12th St is focused on the literal meaning of the text. In the first line “Jesus filling out paper work now”, is the situation where the main character Jesus is now an employee working on a “paperwork” itself is a routine of a worker involving written documents such as forms, records and letters. In the second line “at the facility on east 12th st”, in this line the researcher found out where the character Jesus is working and that is in the “facility”, facility is a place, especially including buildings where a particular activity happens. The researcher assumed that this facility is an office where Jesus is working. In line three “he’s not listening to a word now”. Meaning that the character curtly not listening to anybody’s “words” he will now do or even have the time to listen to any opinion other than himself. In the last line “he’s in his own world and he’s

daydreaming” is elaborating from previous line where the character does not listen to anybody opinion and he’s only listening to himself imagining in “daydreaming” of his better future.

Hermeneutic reading must be done after the first reading of heuristic. An interpretation through the understanding from an indirect expression that’s intentional from the writer. Hermeneutic reading aim is to fully understand the meaning of the song’s lyrics. The song title is “East 12th St” a place where the main character Jesus work, throughout the song the researcher sees that Jesus is working hard despite the hardship he felt during working in the facility, In the first verse line four the character is seen “daydreaming” this is a metonym of the character imagining his life will get better, his consciousness detaches from the reality that he is curtly working a normal job but he is imaging he’s doing something better than this.

CONCLUSION

The forms of stereotype are divided into two, negative stereotype and positive stereotype. The negative stereotype to punk society is rebellious, violent, and Drugs/Alcohol Addict. The positive stereotype to punk society is free/independent. The majority of stereotypes in this research is negative stereotype, this is due to the fact that punk society does not want to be ruled over and being lawless in the portrayal in the song’s lyrics. The character in the song’s lyrics portrayed doing bad action several time more than good action, there for the negative stereotype are more than the positive.

REFERENCES

- Beeghly, Erin. 2015. "What is a Stereotype? What is Stereotypeing." *Hypatia* 676.
- Collier, Mary Jane. 1989. "Cultural and intercultural communication competence: Current approaches and directions for future research." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* vol 13 287-302.
- Perkin, Tessa. 1997. *Rethinking Stereotypes*. London: The Media Studies Reader.
- Riffaterre, Michael. 1981. "Interpretation and Descriptive Poetry: A Reading of Wordsworth's 'Yew-Trees'." In *UNTYING THE TEXT: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, by Robert Young, 103. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Roer, Hans-Martin. 2016. "'Hearts Recycled but Never Saved' A Search for Self in the Modern Day." *Master's Thesis*. Bergen: University of Bergen, may.
- Ward, Colin. 1996. *Anarchy in Action*. London: Freedom Press.