CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter encompasses the introduction of the study that covers background of the study, statement of problems, aims of the study, research methods, and the organization of the paper.

1.1. Background of the Study

Due to the rapid advancement of technology, today’s society could access any kind of music all around the globe easily. Despite the fact that technology has a substantial role in music, the writer would rather outline an issue of how ideology manifested in a song might have a massive impact on its society. As a kind of entertainment, the existence of the music or song is identified or perceived differently by the society. Some people might see this role of music or song as a mean or medium to voice the right of marginalized society, a medium of propaganda, and any other things related to social phenomena.

A positive ideological impact of the song toward the society is marked by the latest occurrence of a Korean song entitled Gangnam Style by PSY (2012). As it is reported by AFP (Agence France-Presse), cited in thejakartaglobe.com and
escapistmagazine.com in October 2012, UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon believes that by its global reach and the implicit meaning lies within the song, he finds it helpful for him in attempt to establish world peace. The song that has been widely known for its world record—topped YouTube viewers of all history (1,308,121,490 viewers, viewed in February 12, 2013) is the reason why he reckons that the song has unlimited reach all around the globe.

The phenomenon on how music could easily widespread among society brings another effect; still, in relation to ideology of the song. One of the negative examples on how the ideology of the song may affect its society can be found on the following tragic event. According to Dailymail.co.uk in 2008, a girl named Hannah Bond (13) hanged herself after allegedly becoming obsessed with “Emo”—fashion which is famously brought by a well-known band, My Chemical Romance in their album Welcome to the Black Parade (2006). She further found out through the Internet the way how emo scenes—emo fanatics live. Therefore, this case marks the existence of ideology in the song album or a song, which is taken a follow up action by those who see this ideology. However, this research would like to examine on how readers or in this case audience, is positioned to the manifested ideology in the song album.

This research uses song lyrics as its primary source. The song lyrics itself is a part of literature and yet an artifact or social product that may manifest certain ideology (Eagleton, 2002). That is mainly because the author carries his/her own
ideology or thoughts, beliefs and attitudes that relates to social and politic as an individual (Thompson, 1984). Furthermore, Fiske on his book Cultural and Communication Studies (1990) states the ideology as a social practice. Indeed, the song could be a medium to manifest and disseminate ideology in which the writer has previously accentuated on how the existence of the music in the society.

The exact definition of the ideology is difficult to pin down. Nealon and Giroux (2003) in their book The Theory Toolbox characterize the features of ideology as false consciousness, prescriptive, descriptive, and dynamic. While Hollindale’s Three Levels of Ideology (1998) as cited on Wannamaker (2009) notes that ideology is beliefs which are left unexamined by the writer and it slips into the text unseen with people’s bare eyes. Other definitions are stated in the Fiske’s (1990) book which states that Karl Marx defines ideology as a set of ideas used by ruling social class to be accepted in the society as something natural; while Gramsci, cited in the same book, defines ideology as a hegemony which needs to be striven for. Still, the ideology is defined by Beard’s Text and Context: An Introduction to Literature and Language Study (2001) as the attitudes, values and assumptions that refers to the systems of ideas and characters of an individual or a group.

Turning into a point where this research will focus on; a legendary American punk rock band, Green Day appears as the main discussion of the ideology in this research for their finest album American Idiot (Egerdahl, 2010). It is chosen mainly under the assumption that the album is highly political. Egerdahl on her book Green
Day: A Musical Biography (2010) mentions on how the album could create a massive change in the band, yet it is the mark of the top career of the band itself by having more than 25 awards for its album in range 2005 to 2006. The album, which would be filmed in 2012 (Egerdahl, 2010), was released in 2004 or around the time when American society faced an aftermath of devastating event in September 11, 2001 or known as 9/11. Billie Joe (a lead vocalist, guitarist and main songwriter of Green Day) on his interview in 2011 said that his band was anxious to voice the feelings of their society and tried to protest the government under the reign of G.W. Bush. Indeed, what is being criticized by the album is the ideology of what Ryn (2003) called as American Empire Ideology.

This ideology generally introduces United States as the leader in order to make the world not only safer but also better that the writer tends to call it as a utopian belief. The ideology appeared in the album as a cliché thing. This “nearly messianic role” (coined by Washington Post) of US had brought another humanity agenda that the writer thought was so dehumanizing; such as the raid on Iraq. That agenda, the raid, had been marked as Bush’s justification for the sake of the tragedy of 9/11 of his grandiose plan to annihilate terrorism.

In attempt to examine how readers/audiences are positioned as subject through the song lyrics, the writer employs Beard’s (2001) approaches to texts and contexts in order to get a better understanding in reading the song as literary text, which will be supported by Lye’s (1997) Ideological Reading. Beard’s approaches
cover a context framework; writer’s, text’s, reading’s, and language’s context. This methodology will be discussed further in chapter three; not to mention that Stephens’ theory (1992) of implied readers and subject position is further explained, due to the basic needs of the analysis of readers’ subject position in the text.

The writer finds many researchers have conducted the same study about lyrics, such as: Oppression Against Children in Iwan Fals Song Lyrics by Munawaroh, (2011), and Identity Construction As Depicted in Avril Lavigne’s Songs: An Analysis of Characterization Using Transitivity System by Laela (2011). Even those researches were analyzing about lyrics, but none of them investigated the ideology that exists in the text. Munawaroh’s research for instance, as it is cited in repository.upi.edu (2012), she investigates a song lyrics by employing semiotic approach proposed by Barthes and theory of oppression by Young (1990). While Laela scrutinizes Avril Lavigne’s songs by applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that aims to seek the answer of two formulated research questions: the identity construction as depicted in the Avril Lavigne’s song’s lyrics and the types of processes predominantly used in the text. Relying on that fact, the writer would rather evaluate Green Day’s song album by employing Beard’s theory on the context framework and Lye’s theory of Ideology as the supporting approach.
1.2. **Research Question**

The writer would like to examine readers’ subject position in Green Day’s album *American Idiot*. To do so, here is a question that the writer would like to establish:

In what way(s) does Green Day’s album *American Idiot* ideologically position the implied reader(s) in opposite to the USA political agenda?

1.3. **Aims of the Study**

In line with the question above, the aim of the study will be listed as follow:

To find out on the way(s) of Green Day’s album *American Idiot* ideologically positions the implied reader(s) in opposite to or against the USA political agenda.

1.4. **Scope of the Study**

In narrowing down the scope of the study, the writer puts only the first Green Day’s concept album, *American Idiot*, which was released on February 21, 2004. In order to grasp the way the album positioned the implied reader(s) in opposite to the USA political agenda, the writer sticks on the Beard’s (2001) approaches, *Ideological Analysis* initiated by Lye (1997) and Stephens’ (1992) theory of implied readers and subject position.
1.5. Significance of the Study

It is expected that the readers will be more aware of how ideology operates in texts that positioned readers in a certain way to either reject or conform the ideology in song lyrics. To some extents, this research will hopefully inspire the writer’s own society, especially musicians to create their works even better.

1.6. Methodology

1.6.1. Research Method

This study employs qualitative approach in accomplishing the main goal of the study. It focuses on describing, interpreting, analyzing, and criticizing the ideology of Green Day’s album American Idiot (2004). In doing so, the tool in dissecting the ideology will rely on Beard’s (2001) a context framework and Lye’s (1997) Ideological Analysis. Stephens (1992) theory of implied readers and subject position are utilized due to the basic needs of examining readers’ subject position in the album. Further details of methodology will be presented in chapter III.

1.6.2. Data Collection and Analysis

The data were gained from Green Day’s album American Idiot (2004). In order to strengthen the analysis and interpretation of the data, the writer also conducts
library research to enrich the understanding of ideological position in text. To conduct the research, the writer follows some steps as follow:

1. Collect the data from the album of *American Idiot*.
3. Listen carefully to the whole songs.
4. Identify and list some issues in the album, and interpret the songs.
5. Apply Beard and Lye’s approaches into the text.
6. Elaborate the whole songs, the questions, and the information that has been obtained earlier from articles, journals, interviews and books.
7. Determine the subject position along with implied readers and implied author of the album.
8. Draw conclusions and suggestions based on the findings and results of the study.

1.7. Clarification of the Terms

Since the research explores many studies to be discussed, the writer will reassert them under the clarification listed as follows:

1. American Society: American society in this context refers to American society in range 2001-2004 or the time when the album was made. At that period, the American society was in a great distress because of the traumatic tragedy called 9/11
and series of attacks were launched on America (BBC.co.uk). Furthermore, the reign of G.W. Bush put its society on panic because of his controversial series of policies, including the agenda of Iraq invasion.

2. Ideology: Theoretically speaking, ideology is what people think before people think or act (Nealon & Giroux, 2003). Thus, the ideology is hidden behind the text. Critically speaking, the term ideology itself refers to the ideology initiated mainly by Beard (2001) and Lye (1997).

3. Song Lyrics: In defining the term lyrics, it is often associated with the literary work which is written based on someone’s point of view which is subjective. In accordance to Online Etymology Dictionary, the term lyrics refer to “words of popular song”, that consists of choruses and verses that main message of the lyrics itself can be told whether implicitly or explicitly.

4. Readers’ Subject Position: Defining readers’ subject position might engage in a discussion about a moment where a reader interprets the text’s implicit ideology—known by Stephens (1992) as a process of subjection. He further asserts that literary text, as an object of reading, and reader as a subject both have their own sense of self. Therefore, a reader’s subject position will always confront with a numerous subject positions within a text.

1.8. Organization of Paper

The paper will be organized as follows:
CHAPTER I

This chapter contains background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of the terms, and organization of the paper.

CHAPTER II

It consists of theoretical review that provides a basis for conducting the research problems.

CHAPTER III

This section contains the research methodology, discussing the steps and procedures of the study, and the data resources in conducting the study.

CHAPTER IV

In this part the result of the research will be presented. This chapter contains the research findings and discussion.

CHAPTER V

This last chapter contains the interpretation toward the result of the research in a form of conclusion and suggestion in accordance with the research.