

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

Human beings are such complex creatures; they create something they soon abandon. It is like what Nietzsche said, "God is dead, and God remains dead! We have killed him!" (Nietzsche 1862, 119-120). Several experts have defined religion, such as Edward Burnett Tylor (1871) who argues the idea that religion is the belief in higher/powerful beings. Then Clifford Geertz (1993, 87-125) who argued that religion is a systematic value which tend to be influential, powerful and establish durable moods and idea. Meanwhile, Thomas F. O'Dea (1966, 120) defines religion as similar to culture, which contains the symbolic process of experiencing the value. Under experts' definitions of religion, the writer of this thesis specifies that religion is an organized collection of socio-cultural beliefs in a form of systems. It shares a view that relates humanity to an order of existence and it deifies beings to be worshipped. Unlike what Nietzsche had written and expressed in his poem about the murder of God and its divine decomposition. X.J Kennedy as a scholar and American contemporary poet, who wrote a similar poem shared perspective towards God and religion as Nietzsche did. Symbolically, they proclaimed God is dead and laid to rest in the sepulchre. They are telling us that God is dead, entombed, and laid to the eternal rest in the divine sepulchre. Both Nietzsche and Kennedy wrote that people murdered and entombed God. They emphasize the idea of death of God as neglecting and

leaving the religious moral value because it is expired and irrelevant (Burnham 2015, 93). .

According to Nietzsche's concept of *Übermensch*, people have to become self-reliant to overcome their problems. Once people become the persons who overcome the flaw and creates the meaning of themselves, people must set their goal to be advanced and become the guidance for oneself and the other (Nietzsche 2006, 144). To reach the goal, humanity has progressively developed the way of thinking . The human developmental thought has given birth to philosophical ideas to sort and resolve the problems. These philosophical ideas dawned from philosophers from various eras, ranging from the Greek era with philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle who develop the eudaemonistic thought on ethics and to modern eras such as Karl Marx who developed materialism thought on how people should prove the objective truth and Nietzsche who criticize moral value (Frede 2017; Nadim 2019, 5; Burnham 2015, 225).

Other concepts that intersect with philosophy including religion is philosophy of religion. Philosophy of religion is a philosophical science focusing on the themes and concepts related to religious culture that discuss about the matter of religious significance (Taliaferro 2007). Philosophy of religion is covered and related to other existing philosophical branches such as metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics (Taliaferro 2007). Religion is supposed to act as guidance for humanity so that people have not become astray because in previous time, religion is considered as pinnacle of moral compass and universal basis of consolation and justification (Marx 1844). In recent times, religion has become a

means to accommodate people's private agenda such as discrimination and persecution on minor religious group. Religious discrimination can be started by major group as a conflict to discriminate minor group because they represent unwanted competition and considered as threat to a major religious group and even the major culture as well (Finke, R. Martin dan Fox 2017, 412).

There are many forms of religiosity among people in society such as the believers, the atheist, and the agnostics. Some people considered as the true believers who firmly devoted to their religion, and the atheist, who does not believe the existence of God, but there is also the agnostic who believes the existence of God but chooses not to commit on a certain religion. Marx stated that religion is the opium of the masses, it means that religion is a form of the concept of the world that contain spiritual enthusiasm, moral compass, and base of consolation and justification (Marx 1844). To Marx as a materialist, religion is nothing but the support system of the people that give the illusion to be grateful and rely on themselves to the spiritual beings (Marx 1844). The concept of a material object is only able to acquire by such work or effort and religion that is only counted as illusion or optional supports. Yet people begin to "murder God" to free themselves from the metaphysical bound of religion (Nietzsche 2001, 205-6).

Many western literary works have been produced to criticize this phenomenon of the death of God, ranging from short stories, poems, dramas, and even novels (Lowman 2009). There are two remarkable literary works: "Parable of the Madman" by a German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche published in 1882, and "God Obsequies" by X.J Kennedy, published in 2007. The theme of both

poems is based on Nietzsche's famous statement "God is Dead", the idea of diminishing God's existence since people assume that God is slowly ceased to exist in their life. They are sure to live without religion and God's presence. Even though Nietzsche's work was published a couple of centuries ago and way before World War I and II, but the issue addressed within is still relevant to this very day as X.J Kennedy produced "God Obsequies" in 2007.

Both literary works employ the issue of the spiritual crisis as it manifested from as Nietzsche's term of "old deep trust" that turned into doubts on the religion and God's existence (Nietzsche 2001, 199). Humans as God-made creatures who experienced the phenomena of the spiritual crisis were portrayed differently in both poems. Some of God's murderers do not understand what they should do when they put away their religion and admit the absence of God from their life.

Nietzsche's poem admits the nihilism idea since it discusses how the speaker questioned everyone regarding God and religion as it is discussed in *Gay Science - Book five: fearless ones* (Nietzsche 2001, 199-200). It does not indicate any answer and further details of what have people do. The nihilism idea of the poem has been taken from Nietzsche's (1862) philosophy; Nietzsche argued that we may become nihilist by discrediting the metaphysical matter. To Nietzsche, religion functioned as the moral compass and forced the ethics to people that affects how people see the truth (Nietzsche 2005, 194). It is obvious in "Parable of the Madman" a spiritual crisis exists as an issue mentioned as the manifestation of questioning the existence of God to the audiences. The audiences remain silent and astonished after listening to the speaker's statement, and there is no answer

from the audience neither the speaker, except rapid questions being asked by the speaker.

Similar to Nietzsche's poem, Kennedy's also discusses the death of God. Kennedy's "God Obsequies" goes further with the narration of attending God's funeral. The funeral attendees were several famous people such as philosophers, biblical beings, and the speaker as the attendee who reacts towards the funeral. It is quite interesting to read what the attendees react to God's funeral as Kennedy described it one by one, yet he mentioned that the attendees was the one that "do him in" (par.1 line 4) (Wiman 2007, 290). It is mentioned before that both poems have a similar issue of spiritual crisis, nihilism, and the death of God. Kennedy wrote a different narrative towards the phenomena where he mentioned the people who murder God and what they react toward the phenomena. It was the developed part of Kennedy's poem differentiated from Nietzsche's "Parable of the Madman".

Since these two poems have shared a similar issue, this study is conducted to reveal the intertextuality and the difference of the people who "murder" God. Friedrich W. Nietzsche's "Parable of the Madman" (1862) and X.J Kennedy's "God Obsequies" (2007) are the poems the writer used as primary data for this research. The main issue used by these two poems is the death of God. Even though these poems were published in different eras, they shared a similar idea of how humans abandoned God's existence and neglected religion. Williams wrote that Nietzsche agreed to Marx that he also perceived that religious belief is a manifestation of social and psychological motives (Williams 2001, xiii). In

consequence, human beings have made progress through their sense of thought that takes the form of philosophy and they create science to prove and establish everything they wish to know.

Revealing the meanings from these texts is quite challenging since the poems have brought the controversial statement and the idea. The method employed in this study varies on the intertextual with Kristeva's intertextuality approach, the writer discussed and established context in qualitative way. Seeing through the contextual meaning of the poetic words, this study requires effort by doing the close (adequate) reading and applying Barthes semiotic theory as the main theory to analyze the object. Poetic language has a lot of abstract words and various metaphors that lead to contextual meaning as the expression of feelings and attitude. Barthes' semiotic theory is applied to analyze the narrative poem because the poem's language contains tropes such as metaphors. Chandler argued that poem's

tropes change the usual meaning of words by replacing it with figures of speech (Chandler 2016, 149). From the poem's word composition and metaphors that have a relational system in language, evidences are taken from the poem and analyzed through the signs and symbols.

The data were obtained from the close reading then examined by Kristeva's intertextual approach to find out the interconnection of those poems. Since the poems show the theme that appears similar, the intertextual approach is practically useful to find the permutation of the text. The sign obtained required details such as the text that must be referenced, alluded, and related from the

source text. Moreover, knowing the author's background and their authorship is helpful to examine their works (Haberer 2007, 59-61). Paying close attention to alluded texts is required to reveal the permutation since the alluded text is a production of the source text. In other words, Nietzsche's "Parable of the Madman" is the source text and Kennedy's "God Obsequies" is the transformed text.

The remarkable sign related to the issue will be obtained from the source text and new text. The remarkable sign will be sorted out from its similarities and its related surface meaning. It is argued by Haberer that the practical concept of finding the intertextuality is to find the referenced or the alluded part of the text (Haberer 2007, 59-61). The signs will be examined with the semiotics theory. Analyzing profoundly on the typical structure and signs that alluded result in the revelation of context. Even Bakhtin and Kristeva agreed that intertextuality is a dialogical aspect of the language which possibly evokes the relationship between the texts (Kristeva 1986, 36-37). Barthes stated that the literary works are composed of the previous literary works, therefore the text is open to be interpreted by the reader. As a result, the concept of the death of the author and the birth of the reading results the text possibly understood either from the textual context or the social one (Haberer 2007, 56-57).

There are many discussions regarding the topic on the "death of God" proposed by several experts and it has much developmental thought towards the topic itself. Previously, study on the death of God theme has been conducted by several experts such as F. Joseph Smith on his writings on "God is Dead" —

Philosophical Sources and Themes (1967) which explains the view of God in theology and philosophy. The relevance of the death of God is quite ambiguous since the theological explanation of the death of God is an irrelevance in secular world-view (Smith 1967).

Lawrence J. Hatab on his writings entitled *Nietzsche: Nihilism and meaning* (1987) defines that the death of God is the disappearance of the religious value on people's life as it is not relevant to use as the foundation of basic values and morality. He argued that Nietzsche's statement is an ambiguous statement that can be possibly led us into nihilism or even understood as the challenge for people in the future to reconstruct the groundwork assumption values and morality (Hatab 1987).

More specific studies regarding Parable of the Madman has been conducted by Stephen Mulhall in his book entitled *Philosophical Myths of The Fall* on chapter 1 – "Nietzsche: Madman and Masters" (2005). Mulhall dissects the poem and explains it in an obvious way, from a philosophical perspective and a bit of a theological approach. He explained that Nietzsche has shared the reflection of his thought as the Madman on the poem and he concludes that this poem is Nietzsche's critique on religion, the theist and atheist on how they should do to the phenomena of the death of God (Mulhall 2005).

Those previous studies on Nietzsche's death of God on "Parable of the Madman" have defined and explained the statement in theological and philosophical perspectives which are quite helpful for the writer to understand the theme and major issue as the ground foundation of this thesis. However, those



studies do not provide enough information about how “Parable of the Madman” formally analyzed. The same as F.W Nietzsche’s “Parable of the Madman”, X.J Kennedy’s “God Obsequies” has not been (officially) analyzed formally. Even the comparative and intertextual studies on F.W Nietzsche’s “Parable of the Madman” and X.J Kennedy’s “God Obsequies”.

The intertextual study towards the literary works emerged while the reproduction of the new literary works was influenced by previous remarkable literary work either from the classical or the modern. There are three intertextual studies of literary works that contribute as references to this study.

The first study had been conducted by Linda Flores (2017), on intertextuality between the reproduced literary works which compare. The second study was conducted by John T. Kirby (2017) on his reviews on Pogorzelski’s works. The third is the study is conducted by Kiki S. Azis (2018) on the intertextuality between the two stories. These related studies will furtherly reviewed in Chapter II

From these studies mentioned above, the writer expects to understand and conduct a better study of different objects with similar theoretical frameworks. Moreover, it is also expected to fill the gaps in the previous studies and capture the insights from the related studies to produce a better one.

## **1.2 Statement of The Problems**

From the study above, two research questions are conjured:

1. How do the texts represent the difference of the people who "murder" the God on F.W Nietzsche's "Parable of the Madman" and X.J Kennedy's "God Obsequies"?
2. How are the texts related and interconnected to one another regarding the "death of God" issue?

## **1.3 Objectives of The Study**

Based on the statements of the problem above, the objective of the study is aimed to answer the research question, which is:

1. To signify the difference between the people who "murder" the god on both literary works.
2. To identify the intertextuality between the objects regarding the death of a God issue.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study is conducted to be able to contribute a clear view to the readers of the developmental thought of how people overcome their doubt and resolve the matter of spiritual crisis. By conducting this study, the writer expects to provide the critical idea proposed by Nietzsche and Kennedy regarding the ontological

thought of human relation toward metaphysical issue to literary realm specifically in Indonesia, Surabaya, and English Department of Universitas Airlangga.

By the production of this study, it is expected to provide the variation of literary genres which relates to philosophical matters such as morality and transcendental thought. This study aimed to inspire students of the Universitas Airlangga English Department who are interested in philosophy and transcendental themes on literary studies. The writer also intended to influence the Faculty of Humanities and the English Department to concern about the ontological issue and spiritual issue on literary studies and the educational process.

### **1.5 Definition of Keyterms**

- Death of God : the term derived from the Nietzsche’s famous statement of “God is dead” as the consideration of the absence of God on his book “*Gay Science*” (1882).
- God’s murderer : the term derived from Nietzsche’s book “*Gay Science*” (1882) which identifies the people who put away God and religious moral value.
- Intertextuality : is a complex relationship between one text and other text that interacted, alluded, and referenced.
- Sepulchre : is a place of burial. This term is used as part of the title as the manifestation of the death of God issue.

- Spiritual crisis : a disorder in person's relationship with a transcendent being or force. In this case of the study, the spiritual crisis is being sceptical on religious moral value, stagnancy or even decadence on life's purpose.