

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND RELATED STUDIES

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a framework in analyzing the study, in order to find the answers to the statements of the problem mentioned previously on Chapter I. So for this chapter, it covers the approaches, theories, and related studies, along with the explanation of the terms. These, then, are the constant trace to lead the writer ever closer to the objective of the analysis. They are all important and each one contribute materially to the analysis.

II.1 Structural-semiotics Approach

In Beberapa Teori Sastra, Metode Kritik, dan Penerapannya, Prof. Dr. Rachmat Djoko Pradopo notes that structural-semiotics approach is assorted to be one of the latest literary theories of the criticism, in spite of reception theory and deconstruction (Pradopo 140). Considering that Mathers' lyrics are contemporary, the writer determines it is inevitably necessary to apply this particular approach.

As Terry Eagleton explains, 'semiotics' or 'semiology' can be combined to structuralism. It is the systematic study of signs, and this is what literary structuralists are really doing. The word 'structuralism' itself indicates a method of enquiry, which can be applied to a whole range of objects from football matches to economic modes of production; 'semiotics' denotes rather a particular field of study, that of systems

which would in an ordinary sense be regarded as signs: poems, bird calls, traffic lights, medical symptoms and so on. But the two words overlap, since the structuralism treats something which may not usually be thought of as a system of signs as though it were – the kinship relations of tribal societies, for example – while semiotics commonly uses structuralism methods (100).

Basically, structural-semiotics is a continuation of the classical structuralism. Sometimes it is simply called as semiotics. It can be marked, here, that the main difference between structural-semiotics and the classical structuralism lies on the returning of the signs to the social and cultural contexts as well as the historical frame. Robert Scholes notes that, in structuralism, the area of the analysis is limited only in the intrinsic aspects of the literary text. The single objective form, which is meant to be analyzed in structuralism, is the intrinsic elements. They construct the structure totally and simultaneously. On the contrary, it would be a stagnant fact for literary texts to put the structure as the entirely possibly meaningful object. Tynjanov, then, recounts that this condition is against the substantiality of language in literary texts as language construction which is dynamically built by the author's experience (Aminuddin 124-125).

In literary criticism, this theory is also known as dynamic structuralism, as confirmed by Pradopo. It is a structuralism, which views literary works as a sign system. As a sign system, literary works cannot be separated from the convention of the society, which includes language society or literature society, and the communal

society that committed the convention. As we all know, convention includes any kind of agreement, whether it is written or not. Here, instead of the historical background, the analysis of the work cannot be abstracted from the previous literary tradition. A literary work is said to proceed the previous tradition of literature, or deviated it. It can sometimes be both, which means to proceed half of the ideas, and also deviate the rest of them at the same time. It is because of every author always has the necessity to create something new (Pradopo, Pengkajian Puisi 125-126). To support this idea, Terry Eagleton states that: The literary work, indeed, is a continual generating and violating of expectations, a complex interplay of the regular and the random, norms and deviations, routinized patterns and dramatic defamiliarizations (Eagleton 103). Considering the fact, it is required to look at the intertextuality of the literary work. A literary work can only be read in its relation to the other texts, such as the historical relation, whether it is with the whole works of the author or the works from the previous era (Pradopo, Pengkajian Puisi 155).

The intertextuality is important in the subject of this analysis is a contemporary work, which produced in the recent time. Thus, even though the writer does not always use the word 'intertextual', we can find the application of this theory as a part of the semiotics approach. Eagleton remarks, still in Literary Theory: An Introduction, that usually a modernist text does not have fixed meaning. Instead it has disarrange signifieds and a insubstantial universe of signifiers, through which the critic may cut his or her own errant path. All literary texts are being shaped by others,

not in the standard sense of the 'influence' of other texts, but in the more radical sense that every word, phrase or segment is a reworking of other writings which precede or surround the individual work. There is no such thing as literary 'originality', no such thing as the 'first' literary work: all literature is 'intertextual' (138).

Within the textual semiotics, it is suggested in Semiotics of Poetry, that some poems are characterized by nonsense. It can or cannot be completely obscure, but it is always absurd or unacceptable as daily language used for communicating. Nonsense is an aspect related to intertextuality. It has a role to decode a sign, in spite of the literariness. It is a sign because it adds a dimension to retroactive reading. It helps the reader to be sensitive to the semiotics constants pointing to connotations rather than denotations.

In this particular type of intertextuality, we also have to consider about the scrambling. It happens when the text contains words, phrases, or sentences also found in a hypogram, but with their order changed, and where, further, the links in the sequence they form in the hypogram have been perhaps completely destroyed, or at least bypassed or made implicit (Riffaterre 138-139).

Structuralism and semiotics complete each other. It cannot be separated from one another, as mentioned previously. An element of a literary work is meaningful in its relation to another element and the whole content of the work. Correspondingly,

the structure of the work along with its parts, which consists of meaningful signs, also needs to be analyzed (Pradopo 143).

II.2 Expressive Theory in Germany

According to intertextual, as revealed formerly, there is no such thing as the 'first' literary work. However, the writer conceives it to be essential to apply the expressive theories. Even though it is quite the opposite of the intertextual viewpoint, it can be used to support the semiotics analysis which is also demonstrated here, related to the extrinsic aspects in the writing of the lyrics. One thing we should not forget is that here, we are to study a contemporary work, as has always been mentioned. Yet, it is not merely discussing about a recent work, but the main thing is about the influence of the poet toward his work. Accordingly, the writer adopts the expressive theories in making even to the structural-semiotics approach.

As for the expressive theory of art, it is a way of thinking in which the artist becomes the major element generating both the artistic product and the criteria by which it is to be judged. In essence, a work of art is the internal made external, resulting from a creative process operating under the impulse of feeling, and embodying the combined product of the poet's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings (Abrams 21-22).

The development of this theory, however, became different in Germany and England. The advancement of ideas in German criticism in the late eighteenth century

can hardly be understood without some reference to the music discussions, for in the broad transformation to an expressive theory of aesthetics, music, in Germany, bore the relation to the genera of art that the lyric bore to the species of poetry (Abrams 91).

Abrams, referred to J.G. Sulzer's Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste, remarks that:

‘One can regard each work of the fine arts as an instrument, by which one produces a certain effect on the minds of men’. In many of his articles, however, Sulzer's disposition is to take his theoretical departure (pragmatic theory) from the soul of the artist in the process of composition – ‘the ground of poetry,’ as he says in ‘Dichtkunst,’ is to be sought in the genius of the poet.’ The result, again and again, is to put the author at the center of the theory, and to make the moral and pleasurable effect on the audience a fortunate by-product of the author's spontaneous expression of feeling (qtd. in The Mirror and the Lamp 88).

Here, Sulzer intends to say that when a poet is in a degree of enthusiasm, his ideas would irresistibly burst in speech, and he would turn all his attention to that which goes on inside of himself; forget the external surroundings. In this stage of self-expression, the poet turns to be careless not only to the external world, but to his actual or possible audience; so that poetry, in ceasing to be mimetic, almost ceases to be pragmatic.

Still adapted from Sulzer's point of view, the lyric is the primordial form of poetry. In addition, Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) writes that: a work of art 'is the visible product of an ego'. 'Poesy is the representation of the spirit, of the inner world in its totality. Even its medium, words, indicates this, for they are the outer revelation of that inner realm' (Abrams 88-90).

II.3 Biographical Approach

Biography can be judged in relation to the light it throws on the actual production of poetry; but we can, of course, defend it and justify it as a study of the man of genius, of his moral, intellectual, and emotional development, which has its own intrinsic interest; and, finally, we can think of biography as affording materials for a systematic study of the psychology of the poet and of the poetic process (Wellek and Warren 75).

From the quotation above, we may get some ideas of how important it is to relate a literary work and the author. However, Wellek then warns us to be more careful in using this particular approach: A work of art may rather embody the 'dream' of an author than his actual life, or it may be the 'mask', the 'anti-self' behind which his real person is hiding, or it may be a picture of the life from which the author wants to escape (78).

So for the writer, it is essential to apply biographical approach to know how far actually Eminem's disturbance life controlling him in writing lyrics, considering that there are several similarities between his works and life. Still, she needs to be

careful not to be lured into: the whole view that art is self-expression pure and simple, the transcript of personal feelings and experiences (Wellek 77).

II.4 Related Studies

After the releasing of his phenomenal album, The Slim Shady LP, Marshall Mathers III or simply known as Eminem has been known because of his joyfully violent, rude, hilarious and demented rhymes. The problem does not lay on the R-rated lyrics, as spoken on "Invisible Man" in salon.com. The lyrics themselves are nothing new, although the lyricist has taken them to a new and oddly focused level. Other rap records might create a world of cliched females and prostitutes to lay down party beats for good times or hold up a mirror to their environment. Some of the better ones, such as: Jay-Z, Ice Cube, and Ice-T even took time out occasionally to reflect on the consequences of their gangster actions. But, Mathers is not interested in any of the subjects. Instead, the lyricist simply delivers 75 minutes of nearly nonstop hate. It arises some controversy. However, in essence, we can find three grouping of people's opinions toward him. Some people would consider him as an evil and intolerant scoundrel bent on corrupting the children of America, some others would think he is ingenuously a normal man telling life just the way it is (technocult.com 2000). And, the rest would love the guilty pleasure of listening the album (salon.com 2000). Thus, the writer includes all sides of the opinion to keep herself objective during the analysis.

A stimulating opinion about The Slim Shady LP, is remarked by Michael Norton, who is also a musician. He affirms that his first impression after listening to it, he found it to be shocking. Using his words, he could only get about six songs in before he felt his lunch started creeping its way back up his insides. It is all the mingled between something good and bad. It is pure and strong, yet we would not be able to escape the fact that it is extremely disturbing as well (salon.com 2000).

To a greater distance, Timothy White, a Billboard Editor in chief, attacks this album by saying that the music industry remains an easy place to start, if you seek to play a leadership role in making money by exploiting the world's misery. This is exactly like what Mather's did in The Slim Shady LP. White relates the lyricist's misogynistic rages and the rise of spousal abuse in it (Boehlert n.pag). From religious point of view, Sr. Mary Rose McGeady, a daughter of Charity and head of the Covenant House youth shelter in New York, accused the lyrics as an example of the cultural forces that is giving young people a sense of hopelessness (spxafrica.com 2001). On the other hand, the article "Eminem Blows Up" also states, in a good sense, the lyricist is probably the only rapper in 1999 who "boasts low self-esteem" (eminemworld.com 1999).

Another opposing point of view, Brett Anderson writes a review on the album, which is praised to be very good. In general, he says, The Slim Shady LP is a collection of stories about the life of a major character named Slim Shady, which is the lyricist's dark alter ego. In the lyrics, as it is told, Slim Shady is a white young

man raised in a black neighborhood by a mother to whom he claims did more drugs than he did.

Yet, if he had to describe it in one word, Anderson considers it to be funny. In the poet's works, particularly in The Slim Shady LP, Anderson sees it all as fairly dark material. In the end, however, the antagonism is what makes his music breath. It is the form which let you do or say things other people will not.

However, the content of the album is not entirely a joke entertaining. The lyricist's most notable skills - his feel for narrative, his verbal dexterity, his stress-relieving nasal whine - tend to obscure his confusion about the difference between cutting close to the bone and murder. His willingness to lay his own emotions bare is striking; the song "Rock Bottom" is cold, telling about first-person tales of inner-city strife on identity. It comes from the pen of a man who has clearly learned through life - and music - that violence is how people respond to feeling scared and angry. Hip-hop, for better and for worse, is about violence as well as race. And, with The Slim Shady LP, the lyricist proves that there are plenty that one can say about both. (Rev. of The Slim Shady LP n.pag).

To clarify the debate of this matter, the lyricist himself justifies on "Eminem Blows Up", that his album is not for younger children to hear. It has an advisory sticker, which means that one must be eighteen to have it. In fact, it does not mean younger children will not be able to listen to it, but he claims not to be responsible for

every child out there. He is not role model, so he defends, and he never claimed to be. For anyone expecting more of the naughty pop-culture-obsessed blond youth, The Slim Shady LP is a travel to the low world. But, the definite world is actually the reason why the hip hop underground loves Mathers. His rhymes are dreadfully evil, telling about a minimum-income life lacking of expectation, and aroused with anger (eminemworld.com 1999).

CHAPTER III
THE BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE LYRICIST
AND HIS WORKS