

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Music has served a multitude of purposes and functions. One of the purposes of music is to serve as a medium for expressing and conveying messages. The aims or functions of music are also evident in the development of the hip-hop genre. For instances, Hip-Hop mentions about sexism, the African American community, drug utilization, and racism (Gladney, 1995, 291). Furthermore, Hip-Hop is also being used as the medium to deliver messages of African-American discrimination (Reyna & Brandt, 2009, 376). The Hip-Hop genre; known with its famous rap music has similarities with previous forms of literary works. In rap music, rhyme and rhythm play a large part in the songwriting process of this genre. Rap music also used figurative language such as hyperbole and metaphor which similar with folk-poetry, form of poetry which already recognized since the pre-literate and newly-literate African-American society (Wood, 2014, 130-137).

Al Ramiah et al. (2010, 85) refer discrimination as the unjust and negative treatment directed toward a particular group or its individual members. It is involved not only such actions against the minority, but also the judgements to them. Discrimination perpetrated by the dominant group within a given society against marginalized minority populations is a prevalent phenomenon. Furthermore, discriminations also frequently depicted in Hip-Hop music. As Hip-Hop is identic genre music to the African-American community, which is

the minority in United States, topic about discrimination became popular theme in this music genre.

Nevertheless, with the widespread of Hip-Hop, numerous of white musicians enter the Hip-Hop landscape. This makes white community become the minority in the landscape. As the minority in the industry and the genre's landscape, they often faced discrimination from majority which is from the African-American community. This form of discrimination existed and known as reverse discrimination.

Fullinwider (1980, 24) defines preferential, which a term he preferred to over reverse discrimination, as hiring in a situation "where a person is hired because he or she is black, a woman, a veteran, an Indian, etc., and where these characteristics are irrelevant to job performance" (p. 24). Nunn (1974, 153) also views reverse discrimination with the idea of C-group which refers to individuals who were unjustly discriminated against in the past due to a non-moral characteristic such as race, gender, or ethnicity. According to Nunn (1974), reverse discrimination involves favoring the C-group in current policies while concurrently disadvantaging another group. In terms of reverse discrimination in Hip-Hop industry, Hess (2005) explains that the historical and cultural ties of the hip-hop music to the African-American community are primarily responsible for the discrimination against white rappers in the industry.

The existence of reverse discrimination in America society could be seen in Eminem's *White America* and Tom MacDonald's *White Boy*. Both Eminem and Tom MacDonald are white representative in hip-hop industry. Eminem and

Tom MacDonald came from different era from Hip-Hop industry that makes a differentiation of responds from African-American community. Eminem began his rap career at a time when there were few white artists in the Hip-Hop industry, while Tom MacDonald entered the industry after many white rappers had already established their names.

Although many studies have employed research on reverse discrimination, none has conducted a topic about reverse discrimination in Hip-Hop industry. Therefore, this study aims to explore the behavioral patterns exhibited by African-American community in comparison to their white counterparts within the hip-hop industry in different era.

1.2 Research Question

1. How do the lyrics portray the cause of reverse discrimination in Eminem's *White America* and Tom MacDonald's *White Boy*?
2. How do Eminem's *White America* and Tom MacDonald's *White Boy* articulate the experiences of reverse discrimination within hip-hop culture?

1.3 Scope of Study

This study focuses on examining and exploring the phenomenon of reverse discrimination as represented in Eminem's song "White Eminem" and Tom MacDonald's song "White Boy" through the theoretical framework of Abrams and Harpham (2009). The analysis investigates this phenomenon through intrinsic literary elements, including imagery, hyperbole, antithesis, symbolism, and metaphor. In addition, the study draws on Hess (2005) to

contextualize reverse discrimination within the field of hip hop. According to this perspective, discrimination against white American rappers in the hip hop industry largely stems from the genre's historical and cultural roots in African-American identity. Because hip hop has functioned as a platform for marginalized voices, particularly African-Americans, artistic authenticity is often judged based on lived experiences of struggle, making it challenging for white American rappers to establish credibility within a culture that views Black identity as fundamentally distinct.

1.4 Aims of Study

According to the research questions, the purpose of this study is to analyze the differentiation of reverse discrimination causes in American hip-hop industry which is represented by hip-hop songs lyric *White America* by Eminem and *White Boy* by Tom MacDonald.

1.5 Previous Studies

The article journal published by the titled *Understanding Rap as Rhetorical Folk-Poetry* which was written by Wood (2014) explained about rap or hip-hop music and its correlation to folk poetry. This journal examines the widespread appeal and historical roots of rap music, emphasizing its connections to African-American's folk poetry and underscoring its transformation to a commodified artistic expression. Furthermore, this study explores the rhetorical elements of rhythm, rhyme, and rhetoric as showed in rap music.

In a study article by titled *Analisis Kata Tabu dan Klasifikasinya di Lirik Lagu Eminem pada Album The Marshal Mathers LP* which was written by Affini (2017), explored Eminem's word choice in his song. This thesis heavily exposed the use of words that were considered taboo which found a lot in Eminem's song more specifically in his album *The Marshall Mathers LP* which was used as the study's object. The taboo words in Eminem's album by categorizing into several classification which were, cursing, profanity, blasphemy, obscenity, sexual harassment, vulgar language, name-calling, and insult. However, it distinguishes Hip-Hop poetry from conventional poetry by highlighting its employment of intricate vocabulary and profound messaging, which the genre and its artists endeavor to convey.

In the journal article titled *Ambivalent Sexism and Misogynistic Rap Music: Does Exposure to Eminem Increase Sexism* which was written by Cobb (2007) analyzes the influence of rap music on sexist attitudes by drawing on theories of stereotype priming and spreading activation, with Eminem's music serving as a key example of misogynistic rap. Through experimental research involving college students, the study compares responses to Eminem's songs, nonmisogynistic rap, and no music exposure. The findings indicate that exposure to Eminem's misogynistic lyrics does not consistently increase sexist attitudes, while nonmisogynistic rap unexpectedly produces higher levels of sexism, particularly among male participants. Overall, the study suggests that Eminem's music and rap more broadly tend to activate pre-existing cultural stereotypes about misogyny rather than directly generating new sexist beliefs (Cobb, 2007)

In the article titled *Playing With Fire: Cycles of Domestic Violence in Eminem and Rihanna's "Love The way You Lie"* which was written by Enck & McDaniel (2012) explores the song from Eminem. The difference with the previous study was this study focus on exploring the message of domestic abuse in Eminem and Rihanna's Love the Way You Lie music video. According to Enck & McDaniel (2012), the music video for Love the Way You Lie perpetuated a "cycle of abuse" narrative, mirroring societal views that subtly condone or romanticize violence committed by intimate partners, especially against women. Using a conjectural approach, the authors show how this portrayal perpetuates hegemonic masculinity while simultaneously reflecting abusive relationship patterns. They contend that the acceptance of these cycles by society is a sign of a larger cultural commitment to maintaining systems that normalize and support abusive behavior.

In the study which was written by Keller (2003) titled *Shady Agonistes: Eminem, Abjection, and Masculine Protest* examined Eminem's public persona and lyrical content as expressions of what R. W. Connell terms masculine protest within a working class context. Keller argues that Eminem's combination of vulnerability and aggression reflects a response to early experiences of powerlessness shaped by poverty, domestic instability, and social marginalization. Through the personas of Eminem, Slim Shady, and Marshall Mathers, the artist performs exaggerated masculinity marked by anger, misogyny, and homophobia as a means of asserting control and authenticity within hip hop culture. The study further explains that Eminem's lyrical attacks

on women, gay men, and public critics function as projections of abjection, drawing on Julia Kristeva's theory to show how he defines his identity by rejecting what he perceives as weakness or social inferiority. Keller ultimately concludes that while Eminem's work appears rebellious, it reinforces traditional gender hierarchies and conservative notions of masculinity, positioning his music as a culturally revealing but problematic form of masculine protest rather than a transformative challenge to dominant power structures (Keller, 2003).

Last, in an article journal titled *Pop Goes the Rapper: A Close Reading of Eminem's Genderphobia* which was written by Stephens (2005) examined Eminem's controversial lyrics and argues that they are more accurately characterized as expressions of gender phobia rather than homophobia, as homophobic language is primarily used to police gender behavior and masculinity rather than sexual orientation. Drawing on hip-hop scholarship and theories of musical authenticity, the study demonstrates that hyper masculinity and gender conformity function as central markers of "realness" in hip-hop culture, shaping Eminem's public persona and lyrical aggression. The article further critiques institutional responses, for narrowly framing Eminem's discourse as homophobic while overlooking the broader and less visible operation of gender regulation within the genre (Stephens, 2005). The article revealed and exposed the performative nature of gender and masculinity in hip-hop (Stephens, 2005).

1.6 Research Method

This study uses three methods to achieve the data. The first method is the method of collecting data, the second is the method of research, and the third is the method of approach.

1.6.1 Method of Collecting Data

This study will use library research as the method of research. Library research is a fundamental aspect of the research process, where in one must discover and locate sources that offer factual information or personal and expert opinions relevant to a research issue. This practice is an essential component of several research methods, as highlighted by George (2008, 103).

1.6.2 Method of Research

The present study will employ a qualitative research methodology as its primary approach. This method aims to gather rich, varied, and extensive data. Focus on deeper interpretation on experience, subjective viewpoints, and the meaning associated with experience (Creswell, 2014, 46). In addition, this study applies close reading as the method to examine the song lyrics. According to Barry (2009, 121), close reading needs a careful and detailed analysis of a text by focusing on its language, diction, figurative, and structure to find the deeper meanings. Through this method, it allows the specific stanzas and lines to be analyzed in detail to describe the phenomenon of reverse discrimination portrayed in *White America* by Eminem and *White Boy* by Tom MacDonald.

1.6.3 Method of Approach

This study will employ a phenomenological methodology. This study employs the phenomenological technique to elucidate and comprehend the human experience of a topic explored within a song. The implementation of phenomenological approach in literary works analysis stated by Poole (1971, 8) which interpreted from his argument that the relevance of this approach in analyzing a literary works to access the deeper understanding of the literary works. He also mentioned that this approach focuses on how the work's narrative reality is shaped by the characters' perceptions of time, location, and interpersonal interactions. Phenomenological analysis goes beyond formal structures to uncover the emotive and purposeful aspects that are crucial to the meaning of the text by concentrating on lived experience and the structures of consciousness. Thus, Poole promotes a reading that interacts with the internal, subjective life worlds that are portrayed in literature rather than just analyzing external form (Poole, 1971, 10). I choose this method to gain a more profound comprehension of the reverse discrimination phenomenon in the American hip-hop music industry, as exemplified in the songs *White America* and *White Boy*.

1.7 Organization of Writing

This thesis will be organized into chapters and subchapters for the purpose of structuring the study:

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the background of the study, research problem, aim of the study, scope of study, previous study, method of the study, and the organization of the writing.

CHAPTER 2 INTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter contains the intrinsic aspects of *White America* and *White Boy*.

CHAPTER 3 EXTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter contains the extrinsic aspects of *White America* and *White Boy*.

CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION

This thesis' main chapter covered the discussion and findings on the songs. The findings and data will be analyzed by referring to the theories from the previous chapter.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

This chapter synthesizes the main findings of the research by addressing the key objectives outlined in the introduction.