

Eminem: Minstrel, White Negro, or American Hero?

Marshall Mathers III, better known by his stage name, Eminem, is one of the most complicated and fascinating figures to come out of hip-hop in the past decade. No rapper in the last ten years has sold as many records or caused as much controversy as Eminem; no rapper has garnered as much hate and adoration. He is considered to be rap's biggest superstar (Armstrong 335). However, as the most prominent figure in a genre created by and largely performed by African Americans, Eminem is both a problem and an anomaly because, quite simply, he is white.

As a result of his racial background and ethnic make-up, Eminem has triggered countless conversations, arguments, and debates about his presence in the hip-hop community. Critics and scholars from all sides of the political and cultural spectrum have argued for and against him. He has been accused of being an updated version of the blackface minstrel performer (White 66); a white appropriator of black music, the "Elvis" of our hip-hop era (Watkins 101; Cobb 1; Rodman 106); a product of white corporations' commercialization and marketing (Armstrong); a "White Negro" (Cobb; Ford; Taylor); a racist (Mays and Benzino); and a symbol of hope for a post-racial, harmonious America (Rich; Kitwana). While it is easy to see Eminem as a dichotomy—someone to either be vilified or celebrated, an oppressor or a champion—he is far too complex a figure to be reduced to such a simple binary. He is all of the above and none of the above at the same time. He is a postmodern figure who cannot be reduced to the same criticisms of Elvis Presley or Benny Goodman. He is a product of the twentieth-century and must be analyzed and understood in this current context as well as a historical context.

Almost anyone in the hip-hop world knows Eminem's story by now. Eminem grew up in the working-class projects of Detroit, often on the outskirts of African American parts of town (Armstrong 345). The son of a "teenage mother on welfare," Eminem grew up learning that "being white and poor was a dreadful combination" (Watkins 91). After repeating ninth grade three times, he finally dropped out of high school, worked in a bunch of service industry jobs, and married his high school sweetheart, Kim, all the while pursuing rap as a career in Detroit's underground hip-hop scene (Kitwana 137). Although he was not taken seriously at first as a result of his skin color, he slowly began to build his reputation by competing in head-to-head battles. Each battle that he won helped to make it clear that he was not just another wigger (Reeves 250). Eventually he got noticed and landed a small record deal with a local producer. As the story goes, Eminem borrowed fifteen hundred dollars to record his first album, the independently produced *Infinite* (Kajikawa 343). But nobody listened; it was a commercial flop (Reeves 250). Perhaps the most striking thing about *Infinite* was that Eminem did not address his race at all; it sounded as if he was simply trying to imitate other black rappers like Nas (Kajikawa 346). Again and again, his race became an issue. As Marcus Reeves notes, Eminem would not achieve success until he faced his whiteness and really listened "to what made him angry: the resentment, joy, and fury inside that expressed who *he* really was—poor white trash, America's other Frankenstein produced in trailer parks across the country" (Reeves 250).

And so, afraid that his chances at making it in rap were fading away, Eminem created Slim Shady, an alter ego who was bizarre, angry, cruel, and demented, but also quite fascinating. Slim Shady became a vehicle for all of the anger and desperation that Eminem felt but did not know how to express (Watkins 100; Reeves 252). He continued to battle in underground hip-hop contests, often winning first place, and managed to enter the Rap Olympics, where he placed

second, and was finally noticed by Interscope executives Jimmy Iovine and Dr. Dre. Intrigued by the idea of a white rapper—and wanting to cash in on the white suburban consumer market—Dre realized that “lucrative opportunities existed if the right sound, style, and image could be crafted,” and that Eminem fit the bill (Watkins 102). Under Dre’s guidance, Eminem released *The Slim Shady LP* in 1999. It debuted at number 2 and sold 300,000 copies in its first week. A star was born.

His next album, *The Marshall Mathers LP*, sold over 8 million copies in two months; the album following that, *The Eminem Show*, sold over 7.6 million copies. Eminem then went on to star in a critically acclaimed semi-autobiographical movie, *8 Mile*. But his rise to stardom was not without its own controversies. Eminem has gained a large amount of criticism and negative publicity from women’s groups and LGBT rights groups for his misogynistic, homophobic, violent, and profane lyrics (Rodman 99; Grundmann 21). But these issues are quite different from the ones that Eminem has stirred in the African American world. Bakari Kitwana best articulates the tensions between Eminem and the black hip-hop community:

The problem here is not simply that Eminem is white and can rap—but that he’s white, can rap so well, has received honor after honor as a rap great by the entertainment establishment (two Grammys for *Slim Shady* and three for *Marshall Mathers*) and that for thirty years hip-hop has been almost exclusively associated with Black Americans. The contrast is so striking it begs a reaction, especially in an America where the old racial politics still dictates what’s acceptable. In such a climate a white rapper, no matter how good, is bound to be considered suspect by Blacks. It is not unprecedented in America’s white supremacist culture for mediocre whites who perform as well as Blacks, in an area dominated by Blacks,

to find themselves elevated through the stratosphere (European ballplayers in the NBA, for example). (Kitwana 139-140)

No one doubts Eminem's talent or his authenticity. But all of the attention and the positive reception that he has received from consumers, critics, and the media is certainly suspect, and is undeniably tied to white hegemony. If Eminem had been black, would his reception and success have been the same? It's almost certain that it would not. Eminem himself acknowledges this on his song "White America": "If I was black, I woulda sold half" (Eminem, *The Eminem Show*). Although Eminem recognizes his own advantage in this respect, it is an advantage nonetheless—an advantage that is firmly rooted in a white American cultural legacy.

As many scholars have pointed out, Eminem is only the most recent in a long line of "white actors who adopted blackface in the nineteenth century to send up and parody mainstream values and ideology" (White 66). Professor and scholar Gary Taylor goes so far as to say explicitly that "*The Eminem Show* is a minstrel show" (Taylor 344). Although he does not physically put on blackface makeup or anything similar, Eminem is often accused of being a "wigga," which is defined as:

the so-called white nigga who apes Blackness by "acting hip-hop" in dress, speech, body language, and, in some cases, even gang affiliation. Some in the African-American community see the appearance of the wigga mutant as a comical form of flattery, others as an up-to-date form of minstrelsy. (Tate 9)

Because Eminem is white and performs a type of music that is culturally black, he could certainly be categorized as a minstrel performer (Rux 21).

Instead of being compared to blackface performers, however, Eminem is often compared to another superstar: Elvis Presley (Davis 225; Rich 1). One of the ultimate white appropriators

of black culture, Elvis took rock ‘n’ roll, which was originally a form of African American music, and turned it into music for white people (Shobe and Olson 1000). Similarly, many critics contend that Eminem is doing the same thing to hip-hop (Hess 379; Rodman 107). Eminem himself acknowledges the comparison in his ironic song “Without Me:” “I am the worst thing since Elvis Presley / to do black music so selfishly / and used it to get myself wealthy / (Hey!!) There's a concept that works / twenty million other white rappers emerge” (Eminem, *The Eminem Show*). As Mickey Hess puts it, “Hip-hop has been, and remains, very conscious of the long-standing threat of appropriation, and the loss of black control of the music and culture to a white record industry.” As a result of this fear, white rappers like Eminem “remain accountable to the music’s black traditions (Hess 375). The hip-hop industry is certainly not the same as the rock ‘n’ roll industry, and Eminem is fully aware that he cannot get away with cultural appropriation without at least acknowledging it.

Thus, the Elvis-Eminem comparison is not quite as fitting as some might believe. Eminem’s mentor, Dr. Dre, is black, not to mention that he’s considered hip-hop royalty as a former member of N.W.A. and the producer for Snoop Dogg. Dre can hardly be considered a parallel to Colonel Parker, Elvis’s manager and mentor, although he does have some similarities with Sam Phillips, the producer who discovered Elvis (Rich 1; Watkins 102; Rodman 107). Unlike Elvis, Eminem writes his own material. And most importantly, Eminem acknowledges and is for the most part accepted by the black community whose music and culture he is practicing. Eminem is authentic; he’s “keepin’ it real” (Shobe and Olson 1005; Cutler 219; Lee 353; Watkins 103; Davis 224).

Authenticity is arguably the most important trait that a rapper needs to have (Watkins 103). Because Eminem is viewed as authentic, someone who keeps it real, a more apt

comparison to Eminem than Elvis would undoubtedly be Vanilla Ice, the nineties rapper who was exposed as a fraud. Mentioned in virtually every single scholarly work about Eminem, Vanilla Ice is significant because, as Cutler puts it, he and Eminem embody “opposing poles of an imaginary spectrum of authenticity” (Cutler 219). Paul Olson and Bennie Shobe, Jr., note that hip-hop culture places a high value on lived experience and personal accountability (Shobe and Olson 997-998), and Vanilla Ice had neither of these characteristics. Mickey Hess points out that in the 1980s, “white artists asserted their immersion in hip-hop culture without imitating a model of black authenticity” (Hess 376). The Beastie Boys, the first bestselling white rappers, were accepted in the hip-hop community because they “made no attempt at blackness” (Hess 377). On the other hand, Vanilla Ice “attempted to mimic black vocal styles” (qtd. Diehl 171).

Although Vanilla Ice’s mimicry of black vocal styles was not necessarily an issue, his mimicry of black lived experience *was* an issue. As Russell White argues,

Ice’s attempt to legitimize and authenticate his recordings by means of a biography that suggested he had been brought up in a rough area of Miami and had a violent gangsta past has been well documented in histories of hip-hop. The fact that Ice felt the need to construct such a biography, of course, demonstrates the importance and centrality of lived experience to the way in which authenticity is constructed in hip-hop and the way in which rap artists are judged and validated by the audience. However, when parts of Ice’s biography were exposed as fake and his ‘mask’ or veneer of authenticity was removed, his credibility evaporated and his career went into terminal decline. (White 68)

Vanilla Ice misrepresented himself, made “claims about himself that [were] untrue in order to appear to be something that he is not” (Shobe and Olson 999). As a result, white rappers have

been trying to live down the Vanilla Ice stigma ever since. Eminem is no different: just like so many others, he tried to overcome the “Vanilla Ice effect.” The only difference is that Eminem succeeded, mainly because he had the lived experience and personal accountability that Ice was lacking. In short, Eminem is authentic where Ice was not.

Edward Armstrong articulates why Eminem is authentic in a description of his own three components that define authenticity in hip-hop, similar to Olson and Shobe’s qualifiers of authenticity:

Three kinds of authenticity are initially evident. First, there’s a concern with being true to oneself. Rap illustrates self-creation and individuality as a value. Next, there’s the question of location or place. Rap prioritizes artists’ local allegiances and territorial identities. Finally, the question becomes whether a performer has the requisite relation and proximity to an original source of rap. Eminem is firmly grounded in these three kinds of authenticity. (Armstrong 336)

Based on Armstrong’s criteria, Eminem fits all three of these categories because he essentially stays true to himself and does not pretend to be anyone that he is not. First, he writes his own lyrics, which are usually fresh and original and different and highlight his talents as an individual. Secondly, he is firmly rooted in his hometown of Detroit. Shobe and Olson point out that “Eminem makes several references to Detroit and criticizes other performers for ‘claimin’ Detroit’ when they are not actually from the city” (Shobe and Olson 1002). His semi-autobiographical movie, *8 Mile*, is named for and takes place in the eight mile strip that separates the black projects from the white suburbs in Detroit (Grundmann 32; Hanson, *8 Mile*). Lastly, Eminem has the “requisite relation and proximity to rap” in a number of ways: through his many years spent on the underground hip-hop battle scene and the many awards he’s received, as well

as through his relationship with his mentor, Dr. Dre—not to mention the fact that Eminem is also lyrically talented. Ryan Ford sums up this argument: “Eminem’s persona as well as his allegiance to gangsta rap producer Dr. Dre, his poor upbringing in Detroit with a relative closeness to African Americans, and his amazing lyrical prowess, afford him two things that are of very high value in the hip-hop community: industry respect and street credibility” (Ford 130).

Ultimately, though, his experience as so-called “poor white trash” lends the most weight to his claims of authenticity. Marcus Reeves argues that “in exposing his own hardships, Eminem exposed, for those who still refused to acknowledge a population of white poor and dispossessed, another shade of rage and frustration that could be just as desperate as a black gangsta’s” (Reeves 253). By playing up his story as a poor kid on welfare, Eminem was able to affirm his authenticity and establish a connection with the ghetto, hard-knock culture of gangsta rap. As Carl Rux succinctly says, “Eminem may have been born *white* but he was socialized as *black*” (Rux 21).

Edward Armstrong argues that Eminem stops from “fully exploiting his underclass background,” but I strongly disagree. I think Eminem uses his background as much as possible in order to affirm his authenticity. Russell White contends that “the ‘white trash’ identity is as near to black ethnicity and its negative connotations as white ethnicity gets” (White 72). Thus, Eminem takes his experience as a disadvantaged white boy and relates it to black ethnic experience in the ghettos. Both ‘white trash’ and ‘blackness’ are associated with “something other than privilege and power” (White 72). This gives them common ground and provides Eminem with more authenticity.

But Eminem takes his experience as a poor white even further: he renders himself as an Other in the hip-hop community. Katja Lee expands on this idea and posits that “by making

whiteness meaningful and offering Mathers's real working-class identity and urban roots as authenticating markers, [*The Slim Shady LP*] attempts to negotiate a space for Eminem" (Lee 356). In another sense, Eminem is taking W.E.B. DuBois's idea of "double-consciousness" and turning it on its head (Taylor 347; Lee 355). By seeing himself the way others in the black hip-hop community view him, he is appropriating double-consciousness for white people. The African Americans in hip-hop who look down on him are now the oppressors, and he, the white boy, is the oppressed (Rux 28). He even bases an entire movie on his working-class background in order to establish himself as an underdog (Hanson, *8 Mile*). As Mickey Hess argues, "Eminem inverts the narratives of black artists to show whiteness hindering his acceptance as a rapper" (Hess 381). The climactic scene in *8 Mile* shows Rabbit, Eminem's character, battling with Papa Doc, a black MC. Eminem is able to defeat Doc by challenging Doc's authenticity as a gangsta: he reveals that Doc went to private school and comes from a privileged, stable, middle-class family. In terms of authenticity, at least for Eminem, class beats race. Rabbit (who is a thinly-veiled film version of Eminem) is more ghetto than Doc is because he has experienced and lived the ghetto lifestyle.

However, Eminem's well-established authenticity is not the only thing that helps him escape the Vanilla Ice fate; his "inversion" of whiteness is what ultimately solidifies his position in the hip-hop world (Hess 385). In fact, Vanilla Ice's plight gave Eminem a template of what not to do, as Mickey Hess argues: "Ultimately, the marketing and reception of Vanilla Ice made Eminem a more marketing-conscious performer" (Hess 382). Under the guidance of Dr. Dre, Eminem decided that instead of burying his whiteness in the way that Ice did, he made it "the cutting edge that defines his essence as a rapper" (Armstrong 342). Across the board, scholars agree that by recognizing his whiteness and making it a focal point of his identity, Eminem

resignifies authenticity and sufficiently renders his whiteness a nonissue (Armstrong 342; Hess 382; Kajikawa 347; White 66; Lee 355; Watkins 107). Not only is his whiteness rendered a nonissue; it also “preempts possible criticism” (Kajikawa 348). Armstrong argues that by calling attention to his potential weaknesses, making fun of himself, and acknowledging the gains he receives from being white, Eminem beats critics to the punch and avoids charges of inauthenticity:

Basically, he’s simply affirming something that everyone already knows. His lyrics, therefore, are perfectly self-referential. This reflexive perspective immunizes him against the compromising racial charges often leveled against him. Eminem cannot be inauthentic because he acknowledges the truth about himself. He accomplishes a self-conscious parody of rap’s racially based ethnicity. [. . .] In “White America” (Eminem, *The Eminem Show*), he infers: ‘Let’s do the math, if I was black, I would not have sold half.’ It’s pointless to impugn Eminem’s motivations as a rapper because Eminem wittily exults in his own selfish and lucrative expropriation of black music. (Armstrong 343)

Loren Kajikawa takes Armstrong’s argument further and demonstrates the way Eminem employs this technique in his music video for his song “My Name Is” (Eminem, *The Slim Shady LP*). In the video, Eminem dresses up in different stereotypes of white people, like a nerdy professor or the father from *Leave It to Beaver*. By making fun of these stereotypes, he is distancing himself from them and allying himself with the black community—it is as if he is saying, “I’m not one of them.” Or, as Kajikawa says, “by focusing the viewers’ attention immediately on exaggerated images of normative whiteness, the video implies that Eminem represents the polar opposite of such representations (Kajikawa 350).

Many critics contend that the way Eminem deals with his whiteness is subversive and dangerous for the hip-hop community and the black community in general. This contention is true to a certain extent; Carl Rux is right when he asserts that “Eminem escapes the actual danger of hip-hop lore by maintaining fundamental whiteness in the context of comical blackness” (Rux 33). Eminem’s acknowledgment of his own whiteness, while brilliant as a marketing tool, allows him to get away with almost anything. As Gary Taylor argues, Eminem’s identity “lets him have his chocolate cake and eat the vanilla frosting too: he can be white when it suits him, and non-white when that suits him” (Taylor 354). This is a privilege granted only to whites: black people cannot be black when it suits them; their skin will always label them as the minority Other. Additionally, this privilege can be employed—as it so often is by social conservatives—to make claims of reverse racism, something that Eminem has done on occasion (Davis 231). Ryan Ford echoes this idea and notes its larger ramifications for white hip-hoppers and wiggers in general:

Eminem’s mind-blowing achievements have permitted legions of white fans to appropriate selected aspects of the culture of hip-hop. [. . .] an exploitative relationship occurs when the music itself becomes a commodity stripped of other characteristics that are culturally significant in the formation of the art form. Therefore, while the act of appropriating the music and culture is not itself a negative, the false imagery of the culture that is used to gain profits from white America essentializes the culture to little more than stereotypical representations. (Ford 130)

And so Eminem allows white fans to enjoy hip-hop without understanding its cultural and historical roots. White suburban kids are thus allowed to essentialize and stereotype certain characteristics about hip-hop and appropriate other characteristics that they like. As scholar

William Jelani Cobb argues, Eminem is the “beneficiar[y] of a type of cultural affirmative action for white men” (Cobb 1). Because whiteness is the norm in American society, Eminem does not “have to represent” in the same way that black rappers do (Armstrong 348). He does not have centuries of suffering and struggle behind him; all he represents is himself. Thus, he effectively erases the historical and cultural significance of hip-hop.

And yet, while I believe that Eminem does represent black cultural appropriation and white hegemony in its most insidious form, I would hesitate to say that his is a conscious appropriation. He is not representing white hegemony deliberately, and he should not be vilified for doing so simply as a result of the historical American tradition of white supremacy. In fact, he has made a conscious effort to try *not* to co-opt black culture for white people as a whole, and understands that there are certain boundaries in black culture that must be respected and never crossed, as illustrated in his refusal to use the “n-word” in his vocabulary (Armstrong 336). Some scholars have pointed out that he has done quite a few positive things for other black artists, like his patronage of 50 Cent and D12 (Reeves 262). The black hip-hop community has, for the most part, embraced him. One only needs to look at Russell Simmons’s backing of Eminem in the Eminem-*The Source* feud to see that he is respected for his talent in the black community (Reeves 264; Kitwana 141).

Additionally, the hip-hop industry is not as much under the threat of white corporations and power as the black rock ‘n’ roll industry was fifty years ago. Eminem is not the only one profiting from his success: so is a black man, Dr. Dre. As Watkins points out, few people recognize that Dre needed Eminem as much as Eminem needed Dre (Watkins 104). Eminem was ushered into the black hip-hop community by a black man, so he is clearly not the same kind of cultural appropriator that Elvis was. The existence of black hip-hop moguls like P. Diddy and

Russell Simmons and black producers like Timbaland and Dre are testaments to the power that black men still wield over the industry. As Hess points out, “black artist-executives assert their control even as they market white artists to white listeners” (Hess 386). Eminem is not alone in his quest for stardom and profit; black men are receiving lucrative gains from his rise as well. Perhaps critics should not be so harsh on him. In fact, perhaps we should examine those criticizing Eminem themselves. Kimberly Chabot Davis makes the interesting point that many of Eminem’s biggest critics are, ironically, also white:

It strikes me as ironic that many of the cultural critics writing about whiteness and cross-racial identification—David Roediger, Noel Ignatiev, [. . .] Susan Gubar, Robyn Wiegman, to name a few—represent white identity as an unchanging position of domination, despite the fact that these critics are themselves white and antiracist. [. . .] Why is the only critical stance one of overwhelming despair? While I do not mean to minimize the importance of these cautionary analyses of the imperialist power of whiteness, I am concerned that white critics may feel compelled to repeat the same tale as a means of “saving whiteface.” (Davis 249)

Davis’s argument is exactly right. White hegemony in America is not static and unchanging; it is constantly being challenged in different ways by different groups. Whiteness is not a “monolithic signifier of domination” (Davis 222). We cannot relegate all white lovers of hip-hop into a category of “wiggers” who appropriate hip-hop culture. Additionally, we must examine our own biases and cultural and social backgrounds before analyzing others’. Davis’s idea of “saving whiteface” is seconded by Bakari Kitwana, who describes David Mays, the white, Harvard-educated owner of *The Source* and the main supporter of Benzino, in his attempt to bring down Eminem: “Mays has far too long enjoyed his status as the Blackest white boy on the block. Then

along comes Eminem. Not only is he down with Blacks and hip-hop but he can rap too—as well as many Black rappers. [. . .] Is Mays’s response to Eminem character assassination?” (Kitwana 146). I would argue—as would Davis—that Mays’s vendetta against Eminem is ridiculously ironic.

Perhaps, as Elton John says, critics need to “stop taking [Eminem] so seriously” (qtd. Rux 34). Otherwise, Davis argues, “we risk reifying the very racial category that we set out to deconstruct and abolish in the first place” (Davis 250). Rux himself needs to perhaps take Eminem less seriously: Eminem himself certainly does not view himself in such a serious light.

Other critics see Eminem in a very positive light. Bakari Kitwana argues that

America’s racial politics is shifting, even as the shift is being resisted. The Eminem phenomenon makes clear that as a generation we’re beginning to raise the right questions about race in America. The cutting edge of this new racial politics is even more transparent among those seeking to access hip-hop as an agent of social change. It is there that white, Black, Asian and Latino youth are forming alliances and coalitions crucial to the future of the republic. (Kitwana 162)

Kitwana clearly believes that Eminem is a positive figure because he has represents a paradigm shift in the way people think about race, ethnicity, and hip-hop in America. While this is certainly true, I am inclined to take a slightly more pessimistic view: yes, today’s generation—my generation—is much more understanding and accepting of minorities, people of color, people of differing sexual orientations, and other marginalized groups, but institutional memory loss is taking place as a result of the global commercialization of hip-hop. Teenagers today who just listen to what is on the radio have no knowledge of the history and significance of hip-hop; all

they hear are the lyrics and the beat. There is no further cultural understanding. It is hard to say just how many kids are still seeing hip-hop as “an agent of social change,” as Kitwana hopes they are. And neither do I agree completely with Loren Kajikawa, who concludes that

What is significant about these opposing views [Eminem as a positive symbol in race relations or as the archetypal white boy performing black culture] is that they simultaneously occupy a historical moment in U.S. society when whiteness as a social category was undergoing profound change. Eminem’s performance of whiteness in hip hop provides a mirror in which numerous tensions and political projects come into focus, a picture of U.S. race relations in which whiteness becomes just another Other. (Kajikawa 361)

As wonderful as the idea sounds—Eminem as a metaphor for the gradual change in which whiteness no longer is the norm in America—it can hardly be considered even remotely true by today’s standards. The poverty level, the achievement gap, the disproportionate number of African Americans and Latinos in prisons—the existence of all of these color lines in American society clearly illustrate that minorities are still being put down as a result of institutional racism. Whiteness is still normative, and it will take more than just a single white rapper to undo centuries of white hegemony.

Eminem is most significant, in my opinion, simply because he has started a dialogue. He has definitely lived up to the hype. His controversial nature and persona have opened up conversations—scholarly and otherwise—about the purpose and direction of hip-hop. He represents so many things for so many people. Eminem is all of these things and none of these things at the same time. He most certainly embodies many of the criticisms and compliments laid at his feet; but he is neither the devil nor the Messiah of hip-hop. A lot of the paranoia

surrounding his ascent has been unfounded; we still have not seen an influx of white rappers trying to usurp black power. As Ford observes, “even as Eminem continues to climb both on the charts and with his notoriety, other white hip-hop mainstays have not come in numbers. [. . .] It seems as if hip-hop has truly reached a point where capital has become *the* driving force behind the music” (Ford 133). Perhaps capitalism is on its way to becoming the sole denominator in American music and culture. Perhaps Eminem is simply a novelty and will remain the token white rapper in the black hip-hop community.

Or perhaps, as Cobb suggests, Eminem is just not that significant (Cobb 1). Perhaps Eminem is simply a guy who loves hip-hop and wants to share his gift with the world. If this is the case, then he should just keep on doing exactly what he’s been doing for the past ten years: rapping, stirring up controversies, making people angry, and generally just being entertaining.

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