

Should Eminem's Freedom of Expression be Limited?

By Noelle Hutchins

nahutchi@email.unc.edu

Although Eminem won the Grammy Awards for Best Rap Album (Marshall Mathers LP), Best Rap Solo Performance ("Real Slim Shady") and for Best Rap Duo ("Forgot About Dre"), much opposition has arisen against him.

Eminem, a.k.a. Slim Shady, has been featured on the covers of VIBE, The Source, Rolling Stone, Rap Pages, Spin and Stress. Yet, at the same time the artist, produced by Dr. Dre, has been condemned by gay/lesbian groups for his controversial, derogatory and "hate filled" lyrics.


"Eminem's hate filled lyrics have not only brought many people together in opposition, they've also raised the issue of corporate responsibilities for marketing this kind of product," said Joan M. Garry, executive director of The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD).

Homophobic lyrics in the songs "Marshall Mathers," "Criminal" and "Remember Me" appear on the highly acclaimed album, *Marshall Mathers 2000* (LP). But Eminem doesn't seem to be affected by the opposition. In fact, his album sells, and his popularity might be increasing. "I do say things that I think will shock people," Eminem said. "But I don't do things to shock people. I'm not trying to be the next Tupac, but I don't know how long I'm going to be on this planet. So while I'm here, I might as well make the most of it."

What if Eminem blatantly and defiantly shunned the black community? This should seriously be taken into consideration. Listeners or hate groups can easily change his lyrics to offend African Americans or other minority groups. However, his harsh criticisms might not be a surprise to some. Eminem forcefully attacks his mother, his former wife Kim, Christina Aguilera, N'Sync, Britney Spears, Jennifer Lopez, Will Smith, Former President Clinton and Total in various songs.

While action is going to be taken against him by GLAAD, Eminem is protected under the First Amendment to say whatever he wants. Basically, it all boils down to a man's conscience and the values of the American people. If Eminem openly harasses groups of people, should his freedom of expression be limited? Or is his freedom of expression an art form?

"I'm not alone in feeling the way I feel. I believe that a lot of people can relate to my sh-- whether black, white, it doesn't matter. Everybody has been through some sh--, whether it's drastic or not so drastic. Everybody gets to the point of I don't give a f---," he said.



A Celebration Of Gospel

The UNC Gospel Choir's
Annual Spring Concert

April 29th, 2001
Memorial Hall
4 p.m.

\$1 Admission