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THE EVOLUTION OF DONALD TRUMP'S IMAGE IN RAP LYRICS

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The article reveals the prerequisites for the emergence of song lyrics of the rap genre and its meaning and place in modern musical creativity; the names of famous rappers and their songs, which contain the name of the forty-seventh president of the United States of America, Donald Trump, are indicated. The article demonstrates the use of a stylistically colored image of Donald Trump through the involvement of his name in the lines of the rap genre song lyrics. Since, by definition, in particular, the lyrics of rap songs and hip-hop culture in general are designed to proclaim the pressing problems of the common people, images of celebrities, famous politicians, wealthy officials and government representatives can often be found in the context of the causes and consequences of adversity and the joyless existence of poor people. The example of Donald Trump demonstrates how authors-rappers use images of famous political personalities to demonstrate the attitude, feelings, expectations, claims or sympathy of the public for them. The article also traces the evolutionary changes in the lexical, semantic and stylistic meaning of Donald Trump's image, depending on changes in public attitude to it in different years under different conditions. The article examines and analyzes the interpretation and subtext of the lines that contain Donald Trump's name in the works of several famous rappers, and also emphasizes the contextual interpretation of a well-known politician's personality in the artistic transmission of political issues that concern society. As a result of studying popular song lyrics of the rap genre, the results are summed up and a conclusion is made about the frequency of using stylistic techniques, namely tropes, such as metaphor, hyperbole, simile and their role in creating a certain image. Thus, the authors of the rap genre song lyrics linguistically, through the use of specific vocabulary and stylistic techniques, achieve the goal of updating and popularizing such rap songs through the use of the image of Donald Trump's famous personality.

Keywords: rap, stylistic device, metaphor, hyperbole, simile, lyrics, hip-hop.

Рязанов І.Г. Еволюція образу Дональда Трампа в реп-текстах

У статті розкриваються передумови виникнення пісенних текстів реп-жанру та його значення і місце в сучасній музичній творчості; зазначаються імена відомих реперів та їхніх пісень, у яких зустрічається ім'я сорок сьомого президента

Сполучених Штатів Америки Дональда Трампа. Стаття демонструє використання стилістично забарвленого образу Дональда Трампа через залучення його імені в рядках пісенних текстів реп-жанру. Так як за визначенням зокрема тексти реп-пісень та хіп-хоп культура загалом покликані проголошувати нагальні проблеми простого народу, образи знаменитостей, відомих політиків, заможних можновладців та представників влади можна досить часто зустріти в контексті причин і наслідків негараздів та безрадїсного існування бідних людей. На прикладі Дональда Трампа продемонстровано, як автори-репери використовують образи відомих політичних персоналій для демонстрації відношення, почуттів, очікувань, претензій чи симпатій громадськості до них. У статті також прослідковуються еволюційні зміни лексико-семантичного та стилістичного значення образу Дональда Трампа залежно від зміни громадського ставлення до нього у різні роки за різних умов. У статті аналізується тлумачення та підтекст рядків, у яких зустрічається ім'я Дональда Трампа у творчості кількох відомих реперів, а також наголошується на контекстному трактуванні відомої персоналії політика в художній передачі політичної проблематики, котра хвилює суспільство. Після вивчення популярних пісенних текстів реп-жанру підведено підсумок та зроблено висновок про частоту використання стилістичних прийомів, а саме тропів, таких, наприклад, як метафора, гіпербола, порівняння і їх роль у створенні певного образу. Таким чином, авторами пісенних текстів реп-жанру лінгвістично за допомогою вживання специфічної лексики та стилістичних прийомів досягається мета актуалізації й популяризації таких реп-пісень через використання образу відомої особистості Дональда Трампа.

Ключові слова: реп, стилістичний прийом, метафора, гіпербола, порівняння, пісенний текст, хіп-хоп.

Introduction. Rap as a genre of music has always had a social element to it – starting with block parties and performances in nightclubs in the late 1970's and throughout 1980's as means of social gatherings for young African-Americans and carrying on as one of the simplest yet possibly one of today's most accessible forms of both musical and lyrical expressions that attract high numbers of both rappers-songwriters and listeners who together comprise a massive rap community (Rose, 2008).

Rap has continuously been an outlet for social and sociopolitical commentary with such acts as Public Enemy, N.W.A and Tupac Shakur in the 1980's and 1990's, along with J. Cole and Kendrick Lamar in the recent past. For their social and sociopolitical commentary in their songs these artists are listed among many rappers and songwriters who have been labeled as representatives of “conscious hip-hop”, which is one of the many subgenres of hip-hop music, but is rather different from others in the topics it covers in its lyrics (Forman, 2013).

Political topics are not alien to the “conscious hip-hop” subgenre, the prominent topics of which have always been the struggle against racial oppression in the US, fighting the poverty and the social injustice – the topics that are inherently politically charged, and therefore the American politics and its

representatives have been mentioned and referenced in the lyrics quite a few times (Forman, 2013).

With such a polarizing figure in both the cultural and political life of the US as Donald Trump, it's important to look at his personality from the point of view of the general public and art produced by acclaimed talents. Rap as a genre has grown in its popularity and has passed rock music as the most popular genre in the US for the first time in history in 2017, during Trump's presidency (The Independent. Rap overtakes rock as most popular genre in the US).

The aim of the article is to determine how the character of references to the 45th President of the United States Donald Trump in the lyrics of rap songs has changed over time, and how his political career influenced his image in the rap community.

The process of Trump's image's evolution is divided in the article into two periods: 1989-2016 – the years prior to the 2016 presidential elections; and 2016-2020 – the years he became the Republican presidential nominee, won the race, then eventually became and served as the president. The article is focused on these two particular periods of time with an intention **to determine** how the rap community looked at Trump before his political career and how he was perceived as a president; what messages regarding him were expressed and how the 45th POTUS has been portrayed in rap songs.

Besides purely linguistic methods of analysis and in order to make a comprehensive analysis of the song lyrics from the point of view of culture, music and social context, we need to take into consideration the works of Adam Krims, Murray Forman and Tricia Rose as they provide a deep research of rap and hip-hop landscape – musical, lyrical and cultural; with Adam Krims' *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity* (Krims, 2000) we get a better understanding of a concept of identity within rap culture and rap lyrics; Murray Forman provides a deep analysis of modern political activism released through rap music in his paper *Doing Their Own Thing: Hip-Hop Youth Activism in the Twenty-First Century* (Forman, 2013), which builds a basis for a thorough understanding of how Donald Trump's political career might have influenced the ways he was perceived by a youth-dominated rap culture; and Tricia Rose's *The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop – and Why It Matters* (Rose, 2008) gives us a better understanding of political and racial issues in the US and how these issues are reflected in popular rap music.

Methodology. In order to provide an accurate analysis of the change in the character of the Donald Trump references before and after his 2016 presidential win, we utilize several methods: **lexical-semantic analysis**, with the help of which the peculiarities of the used vocabulary will be clarified; **conceptual analysis** – to identify deep semantic connections of the references and imagery behind them; **stylistic analysis** – to establish the stylistic devices used to build the image, and to reveal the structural and semantic features of the references; **textual analysis** is used to establish the semantic correlations within the lyrics.

Dealing with specifically used vocabulary at the lexical level we incline to borrow several steps from the research methodology by De Becker et al. (2023). While accepting the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) method in general, they offer three techniques allowing to capture strings of lexemes from authentic data sets. Our texts yield various lexemes which we group ad-hoc and add descriptive parameters as we proceed to accumulate vocabulary for the groups, correcting our parameters and keeping track of the data variability. As far as conceptual and stylistic parts of our analysis procedure we turn to the Deliberate Metaphor Theory, offered by the Dutch scholars and explained in W. G. Reijnierse et al. (2018), which focuses on the metaphorical utterance and checks for the source domain as a distinct referent. Since our data comprise not only fragments but also full texts of rap lyrics, we analyze these texts applying R.Carston and X.Yan's (2023) approach which demonstrates two ways of interpreting metaphoric meanings: in a predicate and in referential syntactic role. Thus, we analyzed our material on the syntactic, lexical, semantic and textual levels interpreting the outcomes and making reliable conclusions about the stylistic effects and conceptualization of Donald Trump's imagery in rap lyrics.

Results and discussion. According to one of the CNN reports, Donald Trump has been mentioned at least 318 times in the rap lyrics in the period of time from 1989 to 2016 (CNN Politics. Election 2016: How hip-hop turned on Trump and settled for Clinton). As claimed by FiveThirtyEight, Trump's positive image of a millionaire has found its reflection in the rap lyrics throughout the 1990's and 2000's as a way for rappers to reference wealth and ambition – many rappers have called themselves Trump or compared their wealth and status to the likes of Donald Trump (FiveThirtyEight. Hip-Hop Is Turning on Donald Trump), (XXL. 20 Times Rappers Big-Up Donald Trump in Their Lyrics). This wasn't necessarily a praise towards Trump himself but rather stylistic means of magnifying and elevating themselves.

To make an outline of Donald Trump references prior to his political career, we should look at several excerpts from rap songs.

The first example is *Pocket Full of Stones* by UGK (1992) that contains such line:

Fuck Black Caesar niggas call me Black Trump

(Genius. UGK – Pocket Full of Stones Lyrics)

In this excerpt we see that a rapper Bun B, the member of UGK, calls himself Black Trump, appropriating the status of the millionaire, and at the same time contrasts himself to the image of an influential gangster from the movie *Black Caesar*. The simile here is used for the stylistic purpose. The line also contains a syntactic frame repetition Black Caesar – Black Trump. The epithet ‘black’ in both phrases refers to the racial factor, yet Black Trump is syntactically opposed to the previously mentioned character. So, the original hero of the black culture is substituted with a new image syntactically related to the classical character but opposed to a wealthier and riskier white millionaire.

The second excerpt we look at is from *211* by Master P (1994):

He got jealous tried to jump I hit him with the pump

Put more cash in my pockets than Donald Trump

(Genius. Master P – 211 Lyrics)

While describing the altercation with an imaginary enemy, Master P not only uses the violent image of a firearm, but also combines it with the status difference, claiming to be richer than Donald Trump, who at the time had already had an image of an excessively rich individual. Evidently, the simile in the line is used for a stylistic purpose to describe a great amount of money: here Trump is mentioned as a reference figure identifying a point to measure wealth. Even though the imagery focuses on the rapper, Donald Trump is represented as a man whose pockets bulge with money.

Another example is *Country Grammar (Hot Shit)* by Nelly (2000):

Now I'm knocking like Jehovah; let me in now, let me in now

Bill Gates, Donald Trump, let me in now

(Genius. Nelly – Country Grammar (Hot Shit) Lyrics)

In this excerpt a rapper Nelly implies that he's knocking on the door of the high society as he's willing to join it, making the analogy to Jehovah's Witnesses' practice of knocking on people's doors with an aim of spreading their religious teachings, which is also known to be quite persistent and became a well-known cultural reference. Here Nelly puts Trump into high society along with Bill Gates;

once again Trump is described to be rich and influential, and someone people strive to be like. Enumerating Trump with Bill Gates shows the level of his perception in the public eye, creating an image of a wealthy person living in a luxury mansion. This is a feature of highly selective exclusive society, exempt from ordinary people.

Trump is also mentioned alongside Bill Gates by Diddy in his 2006 song *We Gon' Make It*:

I spend absurd money, private bird money

That Bill Gates, Donald Trump, Bloomberg money (Genius. Diddy – We Gon' Make It Lyrics)

This time again, Donald Trump being mentioned together with other rich individuals highlights his wealth and status.

In 2011 rapper Jeezy released a song titled *Trump* which contains such lines:

Richest nigga in my hood; call me Donald Trump

The type of nigga to count my money while I smoke a blunt

(Genius. Jeezy – Trump Lyrics)

As the title of the song shows, Donald Trump's persona is the central topic of the lyrics' content – and, as in all the previous examples, this excerpt once again demonstrates Trump as an iconic millionaire, the wealthy man Jeezy compares himself to. Trump's name is used in the direct meaning, as a point of reference for the rapper to associate himself with an example of a wealthy affluent person, but the song takes a twist on the social status – Jeezy portrays himself as a Trump-like figure in the criminal world, as the song mostly concentrates on the topics of crime and drug dealing.

Another example of Trump being the rap's favorite rich man, is the song titled *Donald Trump* by Mac Miller released in 2011. This song has reached a high level of popularity and gained a platinum status in the US, meaning it sold over 1 million copies, according to the RIAA certification (Genius. Mac Miller – Donald Trump Lyrics).

The chorus of the song contains such lyrics:

Take over the world when I'm on my Donald Trump shit

Look at all this money! Ain't that some shit?

(Genius. Mac Miller – Donald Trump Lyrics).

The reason why this song stands out among others is the fact that Donald Trump reacted to its success by confronting Mac Miller demanding royalties from the song's sales because his name was used in it. At the time Mac Miller and

Donald Trump had a public feud with Trump releasing videos online addressing Miller in which he called the rapper names and demanded to be paid for his name being used (Vanity Fair – Mac Miller, Donald Trump’s Least Favorite Rapper, Revisits Feud).

Trump being associated with richness remained a constant in rap lyrics not so long before the start of his presidential campaign. In the 2014 song by Meek Mill called “Off the Corner” the rapper uses Trump’s name three times in the chorus:

*I made a million on that corner
Going Donald Trump numbers on the corner*
(Genius. Meek Mill – Off the Corner Lyrics)

The first time Trump himself appeared on the record has been on the 1998 album by Wu-Tang Clan’s Method Man in the audio track titled *Donald Trump (Skit)*. This track features no rap performance, it is a short interlude with a voice mail from Trump. In the interlude Trump says:

Hey Method Man! This is Donald Trump and I’m in Palm Beach and we’re all waiting for your album. Let’s get going man! Everybody’s waiting for this album. (Genius. Method Man – Donald Trump (Skit) Lyrics)

Trump’s involvement in the recording process of the album is unknown as well as the depth of his personal relationship with Method Man, and whether Trump even listened to Method Man’s rap. But his status within the world of rap at that point has been quite noticeable, and while this element of the record might hold little artistic value, status-wise it might have been a successful PR move from the rapper to use Trump’s voice.

From what we see in these examples it is possible to establish that Donald Trump’s public image in the eyes of the rap community for a long time has been generally associated with wealth, success, power and status. All of the mentions and references to Trump in the rap lyrics from 1989 to 2016 contain no political and sociopolitical subtext and hold no analysis on his influence on the world outside of him being rich and famous. The lyrics that mentioned Trump in that period of time are used for bragging and to elevate rappers’ status, they do not talk about Trump as a person and as a public figure, they talk about themselves and use Trump’s image as a metaphor for wealth to highlight their own importance and ambitions.

During and after the 2016 presidential campaign the quality of references to Donald Trump in rap lyrics has changed, and the topics attached to his name have

become politically charged. We can observe a wave of criticism aimed at Donald Trump expressed through rap music beginning in 2016.

Among the most vocal rap artists and songwriters to criticize Trump in their lyrics since 2016 have been Los Angeles based rappers YG and Nipsey Hussle, who released the song titled *FDT* in March 2016 (Genius. YG – FDT Lyrics). The titular acronym stands for *Fuck Donald Trump* – the phrase that is repeated over and over again throughout the song lyrics. The message of the song is clear: YG and Nipsey Hussle criticize Donald Trump’s stance on various political and social issues, especially the ones related to racism in the United States. They also express their disappointment with Trump, as YG himself says in the intro to the song:

Me and all my peoples, we always thought he was straight

Influential mothafucka when it came to the business

But now, since we know how you really feel

This how we feel

(Genius. YG – FDT Lyrics)

By saying *all my peoples* YG means not only the African American community and the rap community, but also Mexicans and Muslims, as they are mentioned later in the song. YG acknowledges the positive image Trump used to have among the representatives of the rap genre and praises Trump’s influence in the business world, but his transition into politics changed the way the author looks at him.

In the same intro to the song YG calls Donald Trump a *weird ass mothafucka talkin’ out the side of his neck* where *talking out the side of one’s neck* means to tell lies for an effect in order to manipulate others and to gain someone’s admiration (Genius. YG – FDT Lyrics).

In the song lyrics YG criticizes Trump’s verbal attacks on Mexicans in the US and his negative comments about Muslims and Islam in general:

I like white folks, but I don’t like you

All the niggas in the hood wanna fight you

Surprised El Chapo ain’t tried to snipe you

Surprised the Nation of Islam ain’t tried to find you

(Genius. YG – FDT Lyrics)

El Chapo being mentioned in the lyrics as a threat to Trump plays a stylistic role: YG uses El Chapo’s image of a Mexican drug lord because it embodies ruthless violence as a response to Trump’s negative attitude towards Mexicans.

The Nation of Islam is an American Muslim movement that initially criticized Trump for his anti-Islam expressions, but eventually endorsed his candidacy.

In the second verse Nipsey Hussle takes hits at Trump, comparing him to Reagan, contrasting him to Obama and outlining the nepotism which allegedly was the key factor to Trump's wealth:

Look, Reagan sold coke, Obama sold hope

Donald Trump spent his trust fund money on the vote

(Genius. YG – FDT Lyrics)

Blaming Reagan for the unsuccessful and racially biased war on drugs, Nipsey elevates Obama as someone who became president by being a promising candidate, and takes down Trump by basically accusing him of buying votes.

Another line by Nipsey Hussle uses antithesis:

You build walls, we gon' prolly dig holes

(Genius. YG – FDT Lyrics)

In this line we have two contrasting nouns *walls* – *holes*; these two oppose each other with the *walls* being a high fence on the Mexican border Trump promised to build, and *holes* meaning *graves* as disconnection from Mexico can only symbolize the death of the relationship with the neighbor.

In the interlude before the third verse YG states:

We the youth

We the people of this country

We got a voice too

We will be seen

And we will be heard

(Genius. YG – FDT Lyrics)

The message of these lines is evidently political, it reflects the intentions of the authors, their state of mind as they oppose Trump's candidacy in their lyrics.

The third verse of the song talks about the importance of Mexican culture within the United States, and Los Angeles especially. Here Trump's verbal attacks on Mexican immigrants are regarded as unjustified and baseless.

This song is evidence of significant transformation in rap's attitude towards Donald Trump after the start of his presidential campaign. Running almost 4 minutes long, the song is the first widely popular anti-Trump rap song at the time when Trump rose in the ranks of the Republican Party and became a serious candidate in the presidential race. The song's message can be described by one of

the lines from its lyrics: *Don't let Donald Trump win*. The song does not just attack Trump personally but also aims to criticize his overall views on politics.

Later on, in July 2016 YG released a song called *FDT, Pt.2* featuring a 4 times Grammy winning rapper Macklemore along with a San Francisco Bay Area rapper G-Eazy (Genius. YG – FDT, Pt. 2 Lyrics).

In the first verse performed by G-Eazy the rapper compares Trump to Hitler, which in this context has a big stylistic power as this hyperbole expresses how bad Trump looks to the author. The KKK mention is also made for a stylistic purpose to describe Trump as a racist (alongside comparing Trump to Hitler who was a well-known war criminal and an immoral person); G-Eazy is accusing Trump of being racist towards African Americans:

*A Trump rally sounds like Hitler in Berlin
Or KKK shit, now I'm goin' in
I'm just sayin' what's real, I don't give a fuck who I offend*
(Genius. YG – FDT, Pt. 2 Lyrics)

In the third line of the excerpt G-Eazy states his lack of caring for the feelings of Trump's supporters as he finds it to be more important to say what's on his mind instead of trying to please the audience.

Later in the verse G-Eazy once again accuses Trump of being racist, mentions Trump's remarks on Islam and calls him a terrorist.

*This man's not peaceful, racism's evil
This man hates Muslims, that's a billion fuckin' people
If truth be told, Donald is a terrorist
Reasons why the world's got a problem with Americans*
(Genius. YG – FDT, Pt. 2 Lyrics)

In the second verse performed by Macklemore lyrics raise such issues as gun control, Trump's islamophobia, hatred towards Mexicans and homophobia. In the lyrics Trump is directly called a terrorist, a word that carries significant negative connotation in the context of American political landscape. Macklemore uses his verse to support the minorities and marginalized people of the US, criticizing Trump's verbal attacks on these groups. Macklemore also mentions the nepotism issue of Trump's fortune within the wordplay: *automatic guns – automatic funds*.

*How 'bout we stop sellin' automatic guns?
You got rich 'cause your daddy gave you automatic funds*

...

*I'ma stay right here, I ain't livin' in fear
With my people who are Muslims, Mexican and Queer*
(Genius. YG – FDT, Pt. 2 Lyrics)

YG performs the third verse of *FDT, Pt.2*. He once again mentions KKK which is an attack on Trump – an associative image that implies Trump is racist towards African Americans. The phrase “*deport ‘em*” is a reference to Trump’s ideas of a massive deportation programme for Mexican illegal migrants.

*Donald Trump, call him out, KKK supporter
His favorite phrase, “Deport ‘em,” how the fuck y’all endorse him?*
(Genius. YG – FDT, Pt. 2 Lyrics)

Outside of rap, “*The Fuck Donald Trump*” slogan became widely used on social media and later was referenced in songs by various artists including Smokepurpp and Danzel Curry (Triple j. Denzel Curry releases politically charged new track).

Among other significant rappers to criticize Trump was Eminem, the best-selling rapper of all times (Billboard News. Eminem Unleashes Anti-Trump Freestyle ‘The Storm’ at BET Hip-Hop Awards). In 2017 during Trump’s presidency, Eminem performed a freestyle at 2017 BET Awards. The freestyle was released as a live performance video that features Eminem rapping acapella (Vox – Eminem’s “The Storm” freestyle rap is a blistering anti-Trump invective).

Donald Trump and his presidency is the substantial topic of the lyrics. In this freestyle Eminem attacks Trump personally as well as his relatives and his policies:

*That’s an awfully hot coffee pot
Should I drop it on Donald Trump? Probably not*
(Genius. BET – 2017 BET Hip Hop Awards – Cypher 5 Lyrics)

Eminem mentions 44th President Barack Obama, saying he deserves praise, as the president who came after him is *a kamikaze* that can cause *a nuclear holocaust*. The hyperbole and simile are the key stylistic devices in many lyrics attacking Trump, and this freestyle is among them. For example, the rapper uses the simile “*kamikaze*” which hyperbolizes the insanely risky behaviour:

*But we better give Obama props
‘Cause what we got in office now’s a kamikaze
That’ll probably cause a nuclear holocaust*
(Genius. BET – 2017 BET Hip Hop Awards – Cypher 5 Lyrics)

The same way G-Eazy said he is not afraid to offend any Trump supporters. Eminem is openly saying he is not afraid of the president himself and he won't be careful with the words he chooses to use against him in his lyrics:

The fact we're not afraid of Trump

Fuck walkin' on egg shells, I came to stomp

(Genius. BET – 2017 BET Hip Hop Awards – Cypher 5 Lyrics)

In the freestyle Eminem makes remarks about Trump's appearance, jokes about Trump's skin color being tanned in orange:

Racism's the only thing he's fantastic for

'Cause that's how he gets his fuckin' rocks off and he's orange

Yeah, sick tan

(Genius. BET – 2017 BET Hip Hop Awards – Cypher 5 Lyrics)

Along with personal attacks on Trump's appearance, Eminem exaggerates the president's age, calling him a *94-year-old grandpa* – which is an example of hyperbole. Eminem also threatens him with physical violence and accuses Trump of being ignorant about the history of the US:

Fork and a dagger in this racist 94-year-old grandpa

Who keeps ignorin' our past historical, deplorable factors

(Genius. BET – 2017 BET Hip Hop Awards – Cypher 5 Lyrics)

Eminem also calls Trump a hypocrite because of the comments Trump made about the African American athletes who refused to stand for the US anthem (Politico – Trump attacks McCain: 'I like people who weren't captured'). He quotes Trump who blamed the athletes for being disrespectful towards the military, and immediately confronts this quote with the references to Trump's disrespectful comments about the POWs (The Guardian – Donald Trump blasts NFL anthem protesters).

Now if you're a black athlete you're a spoiled little brat for

Tryna use your platform or your stature

He says, "You're spittin' in the face of vets who fought for us, you bastards!"

Unless you're a POW who's tortured and battered

'Cause to him you're zeros

'Cause he don't like his war heroes captured

That's not disrespectin' the military

(Genius. BET – 2017 BET Hip Hop Awards – Cypher 5 Lyrics)

Later in the freestyle Eminem addresses his fanbase, saying he denounces any fans who support Trump. Eminem separates himself from anyone who is pro-Trump, giving his fans an ultimatum to choose sides:

*And any fan of mine who's a supporter of his
I'm drawing in the sand a line, you're either for or against
And if you can't decide who you like more and you're split
On who you should stand beside,
I'll do it for you with this:
Fuck you!
The rest of America, stand up!
We love our military, and we love our country
But we fuckin' hate Trump!*
(Genius. Eminem – The Ringer Lyrics)

In the 2019 album *Kamikaze* Eminem revisits his 2017 BET performance in the first song of the album *The Ringer*:

*“Aw, man! That BET cypher was weak, it was garbage
The Thing ain't even orange – oh my God, that's a reach!”*
(Genius. Eminem – The Ringer Lyrics)

In these lines Eminem mocks those who criticized his performance and the ones who didn't agree with Trump being called *orange* along with calling Trump *the thing* which aims to dehumanize him and show Eminem's lack of sympathy to Trump.

Eminem also mentions the *line in the sand* that separated him from any Trump supporter:

*'Cause I feel like the beast of burden
That line in the sand, was it even worth it?
'Cause the way I see people turning's
Makin' it seem worthless, it's startin' to defeat the purpose
I'm watchin' my fan base shrink to thirds*
(Genius. Eminem – The Ringer Lyrics)

In this excerpt the author acknowledges that division defeats the purpose of the 2017 freestyle, and he is not sure whether it was a right thing to do because alienating his audience made it impossible to deliver his message.

Eminem wishes he could reword his performance and express sympathy for those who fell for Trump's agenda. He calls Trump a *serpent*, using a metaphor,

which might be a Bible reference that compares Trump to the seducer who made Eve commit the first sin:

*But if I could go back, I'd at least reword it
And say I empathize with the people this evil serpent
Sold the dream to that he's deserted
But I think it's workin'*

(Genius. Eminem – The Ringer Lyrics)

Conclusions

To demonstrate Donald Trump's personality, rappers use different stylistic devices. Mostly, they are metaphor and simile.

As seen in the examples above it is possible to establish the evident change in the topics and the tone of the references to Donald Trump before and after he started running for presidency. Prior to 2016 Donald Trump had a positive public image of a millionaire, it was generally associated with wealth, success, power and status. Trump-millionaire was referenced in the rap lyrics of 1990's and 2000's: rappers called themselves Trump or compared themselves to Donald Trump.

All of the mentions and references to Trump in the rap lyrics from 1989 to 2016 contain no evident political and sociopolitical subtext. There is no analysis on his impact on the world and society. None of the lyrics prior 2016 were critical of Donald Trump. The references to Trump in that period of time were used for bragging and to elevate rappers' status: Trump is not displayed as a particular individual; in these lyrics he is a reference point – a collective image of a rich person.

During and after the 2016 presidential campaign the character of references to Donald Trump in rap lyrics changed – the topics attached to his name became political. We can observe a wave of criticism aimed at Donald Trump expressed through rap music beginning in 2016 and going onwards.

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