DOI 10.36145/DoC2021.10

Łukasz Muniowski

University of Szczecin

lukasz.muniowski@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5814-366X

Redman and the Realness of 'Laziness'

Article history:

Received	**24 October 2021**
Revised	**10 December 2021**
Accepted	**16 January 2022**
Available online	**05 March 2022**

Abstract: Hustling is considered almost an obligation of the modern-day rapper, who is supposed to monetize his talent, while also remaining true to himself and his roots. Being a hustler or just achieving the status of one is desirable for modern-day rappers, as it validates their position in their social group. The voices that stand out are therefore those belonging to rappers who chose to go a different route and instead of bragging about their riches, prefer to present themselves as slackers, who are more concerned with the comfort of 'laziness' provided by their lyrical talents. As a case study I have selected a well-known rapper, Redman (1970), who is respected in the hip-hop community and has enjoyed some mainstream success, yet never

commodified his image. He is one of the few rappers whose authenticity is never disputed, and in this article I want to argue that the main reason behind his special status is the laziness he projects through his lyrics as well as visual representations of his rap persona: the *MTV Cribs* episode, his role as Jamal in the 2001 movie *How High*, and the fictionalized version of himself in the short-lived *Method & Red* TV series.

Key words: Redman, laziness, hustle, hip-hop, work

Introduction

The subject of this article is laziness as presented by Redman (real name Reggie Noble), one of the most influential rappers from the 1990s onwards. I want to argue that the main reason behind his special status in the hip-hop community is the laziness he projects not only through his lyrics but also through the visual representations of his rap persona: the episode of *MTV Cribs* in which he presents his house, his role as Jamal in the 2001 movie *How High*, and the fictionalized version of himself in the short-lived *Method & Red* TV series (2004). I am clearly not stating here that Redman is a lazy person, a notion which can be quickly disproved by taking a look at his discography – eight solo and four collaboration albums, as well as five mixtapes, and numerous guest verses recorded since he debuted on EPMD's album *Business as Usual*, released in 1990. Instead, I want to show how carefully he crafted his rap persona and thanks to that successfully presents himself as lazy in spite of the expectations of the hip-hop community.

Through an analysis of laziness in Redman's work, I want to show how big of a part laziness can play in constructing a relatable and likeable celebrity and hence serve as a source of cultural identity. As noticed by Barry Smart: "The media construct celebrity individuals and effectively place them on a pedestal in the course of attempting to accord them something akin to heroic status. After an indeterminate period, in which such celebrity individuals tend to be excessively feted, it is frequently the case that the media machine turns its attention to reports on the shortcomings and misdemeanors of the

very same celebrities. In short, the celebrity as role model is both made and undone by press and television coverage" (Smart, 2005, p. 8). Redman pays little mind to being a role model, he is more concerned with releasing music that is appreciated by his fans. He is never present in gossip columns, because he avoids the spotlight, unless when discussing his music. In other words, Redman markets his products only when he has to.

The other of my intentions behind writing this article is to expand the scholarship on Redman, which up to this point has been limited to short mentions in academic articles on drug use (Herd, 2008, pp. 167–180; Diamond, Bermudez, & Schensul, 2006, pp. 269–298), violence (Hunnicutt, & Andrews, 2009, pp. 611–630); and misogyny (Weitzer, & Kubrin, 2009, pp. 3–29) in hip-hop lyrics. I am going to open my argument with a short analysis of some of his lyrics, and then focus on the visual representations of his rap persona. The lyrics are from a couple of songs Redman recorded in the 1990s, since that was a time when he created his rap persona, while the visual representations come from 2000s – the decade when he was already a well-established rapper, and used television and film to solidify said image.

While the activities described and performed by a rap artist are oftentimes illegal, and his living can be described as on the margins of society, transgressive, maybe even condemnable, by using him as a case study I want to present how prevalent neoliberal ideology is. So much so, that it influences expectations concerning individuals who willingly reject work within respectable social structures, yet apply the same system of values to their line of work, which, due to its illegal character, is deemed anti-systemic. By focusing on somebody who built his persona around an open rejection of these expectations, made it his distinguishing feature, this article intends to defend the importance of laziness in everyday activities and serve as a critique of neoliberal economy.

Understanding Laziness

Throughout this article I am going to use the terms laziness, idleness and slacking interchangeably. While laziness has solely negative connotations,

idleness can be used in various contexts. Idleness is relieved of judgement, it gives an individual more freedom to do nothing. A slacker is somebody who avoids any sort of labor, so the word describes a person willingly being lazy. While slacking and laziness can be understood as synonyms, the usage of idleness in this article still requires a short explanation. Rejecting a positive interpretation of idleness, while counterintuitive, is in agreement with the neoliberal obligation to stay productive. Just like in streaming services, whose products are massively digested by people who presumably cannot afford themselves any sort of leisure, a break in transmission is seen as something wrong, unwanted. A moment when nothing happens is a time when nothing is produced or consumed, therefore, from a capitalist perspective, it is something negative. With that in mind, in this part I intend to present the theory which will be helpful in analyzing the case study, which is Redman and his rap persona.

Giorgio Agamben claims that in Western thought power has always been connected to the act (2014, p. 480). Those who remained active have been superior to the passive members of society. The reason that they enjoyed universal respect was one thing, he however is more concerned with their sheer ability to act. According to the Italian philosopher, true power comes not so much from the act itself but rather from being able to perform it, something that might be described as self-agency. If one is able to do something, that means that one has a substantial amount of power in that regard. Accordingly, the epitome of power is having the possibility of performing an act, yet declining to do so. Zuzanna Ładyga writes that Agamben's understanding of power stems from a deep appreciation of freedom, as it is truly liberating to be able to do something, have potentiality, yet eventually choosing to simply not do anything (Ładyga, 2019, p. 26). Whether the power is acquired or simply given to an individual, exhibiting it is different than having the capability to do so, as this is more an issue of motivation than ability.

This is partially what Paul Lafargue refers to in his book *The Right to Be Lazy* (2016) however, in his reasoning he goes even further, arguing that it is work that can be considered somewhat of a disorder, as leisure seems to be a more natural state for human beings. Everyone has the right to be lazy, to take a break, yet, according to Lafargue, it is almost impossible for Western

thinkers to even consider the possibility of doing absolutely nothing. That is why acting is presented as an impulse, something done without much thought, hence natural, while inaction requires careful deliberations. This observation stands true till this day, as nowadays idleness is perceived as something negative, while the lack of any activity by an individual is universally condemned. Ładyga makes the connection between Lafargue's argument and the present-day perception of idleness when she writes that: "the twenty-first century is the epoch of hyper-activity and hyper-engagement, which renders the possibility of time for idle thinking as important and desirable as it is unwelcome and socially suspicious. We live in a culture where the imperative to do anything rather than nothing and to be productive has become the dominant value, if not the synonym of value as such" (Ładyga, 2019, pp. x–xi).

Constant activity is a purely capitalist idea, as it corresponds with the duty of incessant creativity that is comprehensively characterized in Jonathan Crary's essay on what he calls '24/7 Capitalism' (2014). In a neoliberal economy "the separation between work and non-work is progressively dissolved so that a general condition of constant productivity prevails at all times, in all spaces" (Spencer, 2016, p. 77). In consequence, labor has taken over leisure as the go-to free time activity not because of its overwhelming power, but rather because there is basically no free time left. Instead, we are forced to believe that labor is a form of leisure, and those who refuse to consider it as such are characterized as lazy.

This applies even to anti-systemic occupations, performed by individuals who openly refuse to get involved in any sort of conventional labor. Even though they step out of social constraints, they are fueled by the same needs and desires, hence their activities, as unconventional as they might be, can be just as oppressive. Ongoing productivity can be easily connected to a prominent figure in hip-hop and street community, that of a hustler. A hustler is an entrepreneur who works outside the system, performing illegal activities in order to make money. These usually involve selling drugs and other illegal substances. Copes, Hochsteller and Williams write that "to understand the social identity of the hustlers, it is necessary to examine how they talk about themselves in terms of identity categorization, as well as how they

construct relevant out-groups" (Copes, Hochsteller, & Williams, 2008, p. 256). The hustler is an urban figure, developed in response to the way the city is constructed – hence in response to the needs and wants of the rich.

The poor must accepts the terms offered by the rich, but they also need to survive and/or accumulate wealth on their own terms. In other words, they are forced into the hustle by the same society that casts them out because of their participation in the illicit activities. The hustle, immortalized in the works of cult writers such as Donald Goines (1936–1974) or Iceberg Slim (1918–1992) as an activity associated with urban African American communities, lies at the heart of the work of most mainstream hip-hop artists as well (Perry, 2004, pp. 48–49). By presenting themselves as hustlers they are able to market themselves as anti-systemic entrepreneurs, which elevates their status among potential listeners.

While hip-hop lyrics immortalize hustlers, the hustlers also influence hip-hop culture with their lavish lifestyles and larger than life personalities (Ferranti, 2008). By simply name-dropping famous street entrepreneurs in their lyrics, rappers are affirming their special position and elevating their own status as well. References to Bumpy Johnson, Frank Lucas or *Freeway* Rick Ross serve as proof of a rapper's proficiency in street mythology. In consequence, many rap artists become hustlers themselves and are soon stuck in the ongoing cycle of productivity. This view is justified by hip-hop's most prominent hustler, Jay-Z, throughout his lyrics. When he proudly raps in *December 4th*: "Hustlers, we don't sleep, we rest one eye up," he implies that even when they are supposed to rest, hustlers are the perfect neoliberal subjects, always ready to participate in the process of accumulating wealth. The ultimate goal is to achieve said wealth without commodifying one's image, which is problematic in the hip-hop community. This leads to a certain paradox which is pointed out by Jeff Chang: "even as hip-hop was at the peak of its function as a multiplier for entertainment and luxury lifestyle capital, a service that seemed to empower only the crassest tendencies of mass culture, hip-hop continued to give voice and grant vision, one-to-one, to millions around the world" (Chang, 2006, p. xii).

Hustling is considered almost an obligation of the modern-day rapper, who is supposed to monetize his talent, while also remaining true to himself and his roots. That way the hustle becomes 'a politics and an ethic' (Sköld, &

Rehn, 2007, p. 52). Lester K. Spence notes that "whereas in the late sixties and early seventies the hustler was someone who consistently sought to get over, the person who tried to do as little work as possible in order to make ends meet [...] the hustler is now someone who consistently works" (Spence, 2015, p. 14). Constant activity obviously harms the quality of the music, since it takes the rapper away from his primary occupation – rapping. Already in 2006 an article on the website of the hip-hop magazine *XXL* proclaimed the year as the one in which "rappers became so busy trying to be entrepreneurs and pitchmen and Hollywood actors that they didn't have the time or the inclination to make dope music anymore" (Not a rapper..., 2006).

The voices that stand out are those belonging to rappers who decided to take a different route and instead of boasting about their riches, prefer to present themselves as slackers more concerned with the comfort of 'laziness' provided by their lyrical talents. I am referring here to a certain carelessness that comes from inbred self-confidence and not the luxury afforded by accumulated wealth. In the title of this article I am putting the word laziness in quotation marks, as I do not claim that the rappers themselves are lazy people, only that their refusal to hustle and afford themselves some time-off from constant activity makes them perceived as such from the perspective of the neoliberal economy which majority of rappers embrace. Ładyga claims that "laziness is unique in how it connects the material sphere of the body with the non-material sphere of the mind. As a signifier for corporeal laxation, recalibration of the senses, intellectual drifting and withdrawal from the world, the motif of laziness maps the same cognitive field that is targeted by the norm of productivity" (Ładyga, 2019, p. 12). Such is the case in mainstream hip-hop, where the hustler is the norm, while a rapper that openly refuses to sell out, even on his own terms, is labeled as unproductive.

Redman as a Case Study

As a case study I have selected a well-known rapper, Redman (1970, real name: Reggie Noble), who is respected in the community and has enjoyed

some mainstream success, yet never commodified his image. I claim that it was not because of himself lacking the ability to 'sell out', but rather him making a conscious decision not to. For mainstream rappers finding a sense of belonging is possible through material possessions, serving as representations of wealth. In consequence, wealth becomes synonymous with identity, which was best expressed by early 21st century hip-hop magazines, where, as pointed out by Alf Rehn and David Sköld, "you will learn more about rap artists' financial strategy and career plans, than about their music" (2005, p. 20). This makes the artists caring primarily about the quality of their music even more notable.

While Redman is mostly appreciated for his comedic style, it sometimes seems to overshadow his lyrical craft. The persona that Redman created for himself is that of a slacker and a marijuana smoker, and he references both in his lyrics. There is however not a more accurate representation of him being the pioneer and foremost propagator of inaction in the hip-hop community than the 2001 episode of *MTV Cribs* (Redman's Staten Island..., 2001). The program was constructed in order to establish an exaggerated and more desirable picture of celebrity. In order to do that MTV cameras arrived at the homes of the rich and famous, and celebrities were giving them, and in extension the viewers, a tour, presenting how they (presumably) lived. Years later, when asked about the show, Redman said that he made the episode only half-jokingly, as he was actually living in a rather regular house, and was surprised how clean all of the homes presented by the celebrities seemed to be (Redman: MTV Tried to Get Me to Rent a House). MTV wanted him to rent a mansion so that he could seem richer than he actually was. The rapper refused to do that and the episode became one of the most popular in the series' history. Redman claimed it was due to its 'believability' (Redman: MTV Tried to Get Me to Rent a House).

This corresponds with the notion lying at the very foundations of hip-hop culture, *keeping it real*, which is exactly what Redman continued to do throughout his career. According to Marc Anthony Neal the phrase is representative of "the ambivalence of black hip-hop artists with the commercial success and widespread visibility afforded to the genre"

throughout the 1990s and early 2000s (Neal, 2004, p. 57). Defining authenticity is problematic in itself, let alone in the hip-hop community, which consists of various artists coming from various backgrounds. In hip-hop authenticity is everything, and yet, it is not always synonymous with reality. In the media rap lyrics are often characterized as 'gangster', but clearly this is not always the case when discussing realness (Alim, 2006, p. 73).

When in *Rock da Spot* (1996) Redman raps: "I don't push a lot of vehicles, but I push a used one/ with a tape deck, if it's feasible./Tell the truth, I don't own a Lex coupe/But I get you souped when I rock respect due," it becomes obvious that he is not really concerned with money, which can be seen as him defying the impulse of constant hustle. Redman is not a hustler, he is a rapper. In *The Wellness Syndrome* Cedestrom and Spicer describe how since the 1960s "no longer assumed to be boring, alienating or dehumanizing, work became seen as an avenue for people to explore their untapped potentials and to express themselves. The artistic critique against capitalism – that corporations make us inauthentic – is now inverted and used by firms to launch a new cultural ideal, partly based on artists and their presumed creativity, entrepreneurial ability and countercultural edge" (Cedestrom, & Spicer, 2015, p. 19). With almost all celebrities becoming branded, it seems almost desirable to commodify one's image after achieving a certain level of fame. As Cedestrom and Spicer put it, "the culture of cool is also the culture of overwork" (2015, p. 19).

Redman however achieves the effect of coolness with seemingly little effort put into honing his image. Instead, he presents himself as a rather regular marijuana smoker, as well as often stresses how little money he actually has. In fact, he is one of the few rappers whose authenticity is never disputed, and because of that he is able to perform acts which for other rappers would be transgressive. When Redman recorded a song with popstar Christina Aguilera, it was never seen as an act of selling out, not only because it was in agreement with the persona Redman created for himself, but also because Aguilera's *Dirty* (2002) was actually an interpretation of Redman's single *Let's Get Dirty* (2001). It was Redman who was supposed to make Aguilera more 'cool' with his presence in the song, and not Redman using the singer in order to become

more marketable. The fact that *Dirty* was originally a Redman song is also significant, because the usage of already recorded material bears the notion of laziness, which is in agreement with Redman's 'lazy' persona.

How Redman Projects Laziness

Redman's lyrics have always stood out because of his extraordinary rapping ability, as well as the fact that he is one of the few mainstream rappers not ashamed to make fun of himself. This also applies to his inability to motivate himself to make money, as well as to hold on to it. Ever since The Sugarhill Gang rapped about having a swimming pool and a color TV, in the genre's first mainstream hit in the year 1979[1], rap was closely associated with commodities. While the music itself was considered rebellious, even revolutionary, as it was created by those suffering from economic oppression, the content was often about accumulating capital. As noted by Akilah N. Folami: "historically, Hip-hop arose out of the ruins of a post-industrial and ravaged South Bronx, as a form of expression of urban Black and Latino youth, who politicians and the dominant public and political discourse had written off, and, for all intent and purposes, abandoned" (Folami, 2007, p. 240). That is why, in response to the oppressive environment, the hustler understands that he is to focus primarily on himself. As pointed out by Melissa Wright: "loyalties to particularized identities are misplaced if the experience of those identities is one of oppression" (2006, p. 94). To liberate himself, the hustler intentionally projects a certain persona – that of a successful businessman– of who he is going to become rather than who he is.

While rappers usually describe their humble beginnings to make an impression on the listener and show how they evolved thanks to their ability to hustle – Notorious B.I.G. or Jay-Z are the obvious two that come to mind – Redman almost treats it as a sense of pride that he has never left the projects

[1] I use this song as an example of rap's reliance on objects as symbols of status not without merit, as Redman, Erick Sermon and Keith Murray have covered it on their joint album as Def Squad, *El Nino* (1998).

and still continues to struggle financially. In that sense he comes off as a truly defiant figure, especially when compared to the other big name rappers that were his competition in the 1990s, when Redman was making a name for himself. That is why I have selected some of his lyrics from that decade to illustrate laziness as not only a source of identity, but also as means of rebellion. I have selected that particular time period because that was when Redman was building his reputation among rap fans, as well as his peers.

In the song *Check N' Me Out* (1998) from a collaborative album Redman recorded with Erick Sermon and Keith Murray as Def Squad, Redman paints the picture of desperation, when he raps: "I'm broke, I lost my deal, my car, my broad/And me and my landlord be at war for the rent." What makes these lines different from numerous descriptions of life in the projects by other artists is that he is not referring to the past, but uses the present tense, making himself look like someone who still suffers from poverty. That declaration should not be taken at face value. Redman uses the phrase 'rob and steal' in order to present his affinity for easy money, instead of willingness to do actual work. With that he puts himself on the margins of American society, but also refuses to take on the role of the hustler. While the figure in itself is subversive, reminiscent of the outsider, whose role is to serve as a social critic (Trachtenberg, 1963, pp. 427–434), here the slacker becomes the outcast, as the hustler is a representative of the order that needs to be restored.

In other raps he takes on the role of a marijuana smoker who is always struggling financially. In *Yesh Yesh Y'All* (1996) he raps: "I should own a fly bitch, house, and a Benz/But I got chickenheads, criminals, and broke friends." In the process he can be seen as an egoist who puts himself above his surroundings. It is as if his extraordinary talent makes him better than everyone else. Instead of underlying close ties he has with his community, fulfilling the naive neoliberal dream of making others better by achieving personal success, he blends in with his surroundings, which are filled with individuals who lack a sense of belonging. It is clear that everyone from his community wants to move on to something better, which makes Redman, due to the extraordinary focus on himself, a clear candidate for the representative of the mindset of an egotist struggling with poverty. Philosopher Aaron James

refers to such a figure quite straightforwardly as an 'asshole', who "acts out of a firm sense that *he is special*, that the normal rules of conduct do not apply to him" (2013, pp. 5–6).

This observation especially applies to Redman's habit of smoking marijuana, which he is going to support no matter what. He comes clean about it in *Smoke Buddah* (1996) stating: "I got a slight problem, I smoke weed too much," although he is still not willing to admit the seriousness of dependence. The 'problem' comes to light in *Whateva Man* (1996) where he raps: "I don't got a pot to piss in/But still spend my last on hydroglycerin," implying that what little money he has left, Redman will spend on marijuana. In *Can't Wait* (1994) and *Smoke Buddah* (1996) Redman states that he is not willing to share his weed with anybody who has not contributed financially to obtaining the drug, while in *Green Island* (1994) he claims to 'smoke everybody else's shit up'. These are clearly traits of an egotist or even worse, an asshole, as defined by James, which, surprisingly, also make Redman relatable, as he does not pretend to be better or more noble than he actually is. By recognizing his own flaws and bringing them to light, Redman is showing little concern for his public image.

Lyrics are one thing, but it is their visual representations that made the rapper more believable to the audience. John Berger writes that "it is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world" (1972, p. 7). Witnessing something with one's own eyes is supposed to affirm its status as real, and realness is, after all, the ultimate goal in hip-hop. The above quoted rap line from *Green Island* is revisited in *How High*, the 2001 comedy directed by Jesse Dylan (2001). In the movie Redman and fellow rapper Method Man play two marijuana smokers, Jamal and Silas respectively, who get into Harvard thanks to smoking a special brand of cannabis, which makes them see a ghost of Silas' dead friend, who provides them with answers during crucial tests. While Silas is a botanist, who has an impressive knowledge of plants, Jamal is uninterested in any activities that do not involve smoking marijuana or having sex. The two meet at a parking lot before a fictional THC (Testing for Higher Credentials) test and immediately strike an understanding, as Silas is in the possession of marijuana, while Jamal has a Philly Blunt, necessary to digest the drug.

Throughout the movie Jamal constantly smokes Silas' marijuana supply, which is in agreement with Redman's rap lines about using someone else's drugs in order to get high. The character is rather poorly developed, as he has no distinguishing features other than being lazy and vulgar. Unlike Silas, he has not got any talents or shows any willingness to become a better version of himself. Instead, he is unreliable and simply lazy, the two characteristics being a source of humor. Silas is the one who moves the story forward, Jamal is good for just a few laughs, but not much else. His failure to grow up is underlined by the fact that he lives with his mother, who constantly belittles him in front of her friends.

The mother is played by Anna Maria Horsford, who reprises the role in the sitcom *Method & Red Show* (Cahoon, & Method Man, 2014). While this time she plays Method Man's mother, she continues to ridicule Redman's character. He is not a member of her family, yet she constantly hits him over the head for no apparent reason, as if she were his mother. People who have not seen *How High* will definitely not understand why she is doing that. In the series rappers Method Man and Redman play fictionalized versions of themselves, who live in an all-white neighborhood and continue to cause problems for their neighbors with their loud parties. The show enforces racial stereotypes, with whites being uptight and boring, and blacks being loud and obnoxious.

After watching it for a couple of minutes, it becomes obvious why the series was canceled after just 10 episodes, as it is bland, cliched and uninspired. Still, it serves as a vital tool in understanding the way Redman constructs his rap persona. In the first episode the two rappers are seen playing video games and partying, and those are their go-to activities throughout the series. Of course each episode involves them getting out of some trouble, but it is generally Method Man who has to save the day, while Redman shows little initiative or action, relying on his friend to straighten things out. Just like *How High*, *Method & Red Show* is a typical fish out of water comedy, but the problems are rather predictable and solved during the span of 20-minute episodes. Here laziness refers not to the uninspired plots of episodes, but to Redman's character, who serves as a source of easy laughs and not much else.

There is however no clearer representation of his slacker persona, none epitomizing more the laziness that he started to project in his lyrics, than the 2001 episode of *MTV Cribs*, a reality television series in which celebrities invited the station's film crew to their homes. In it Redman presents his rather humble – judging from his status in the hip-hop community during that time, as well as the homes presented by other rappers – house in Staten Island. The episode was shot in winter, which is already something out of the norm, as celebrities used to present their homes during perfect, sunny weather so that they would look more stunning. Redman on the other hand seems to aim for the opposite effect, as he pretends to be woken up by the filming crew when they enter his room. Calling his home a total mess is not an overstatement. He has his video game consoles next to his bed, and proudly claims that he plays them 'all day boy'. Various items are lying around all over the floors, ranging from clothes to DVDs to gold plaques to... his friend, who is also sound asleep on the floor. Redman has a shoebox filled with money in his kitchen. Years later, when retelling the story behind the making of the episode, Redman said: "While everybody was trying to show a lavish house, the lavish life of living, that's not always the case... and that's what I wanted to display to my fans... I always try and think about what the 'hood would say when I do things" (Faraone, 2015).

These examples help to explain what makes Redman so special in the hip-hop community. Even when starring in movies and television series, he still remained loyal to his rap persona, convincingly presenting it as true to himself, hence real. The notion of realness permeates his work, whether we are discussing his records, music videos or movie roles. While it is clear that he is playing a certain character, Reggie Noble manages to make it impossible to distinguish between himself and Redman. In consequence he makes himself relatable.

Conclusion

Ładyga claims that laziness is a trope of defiance. She presents laziness as a concept-metaphor (understanding one idea in terms of the other),

which puts into question the capitalist norm of activity and productivity. In Redman's work laziness is not presented as clearly or outspokenly, however, it takes on various forms in the visual representations of his persona, which makes it helpful in expressing his defiance to being just another hustler in the rap game, more concerned with money than with his primary occupation. When asked on the podcast *Drink Champs* about what hip-hop has done for him, Redman says that it allowed him not to listen to anybody (Redman/ Drink Champs). He goes on to say that he was fired from every job he ever had, as he was unable to take orders from somebody else. Instead of being frustrated with his inability to fit into societal norms, Redman embraced the identity of a slacker and took on laziness as one of the main characteristics of his rap persona. Still, he managed to remain productive, while rejecting the aforementioned neoliberal impulse of constant activity, finding time for work and leisure, which is not something normally associated with the rap industry, forcing onto rappers the role of hustlers. The word 'industry' itself brings to mind an obligation and an occupation.

Redman willingly participates in the process of production, but does so on his own terms. In the second and third decades of the 21st century Redman has not been as prolific or as popular as during the earlier stages of his career. With the changing market and the record sales not really being indicative of a rapper's popularity, branding is currently a necessity for a modern-day celebrity. The issue that arises concerns the overall quality of the music. Such was the case with rapper 6ix9ine, who used digital marketing and branding in order to promote himself and not his music (Pouye, 2021, pp. 64–77). His strategies included using bots to increase the number of views of his videos and engaging in violent behaviors for publicity. With that the controversial rapper created a blueprint for others to follow, while artists such as Redman remain exceptions to the rule.

References

Agamben, G. (2014). The Power of Thought. Trans. Kalpana Seshadri. *Critical Inquiry*, *40*(2), 480–491.

Alim, S. (2006). *Roc the Mic Right: The Language of Hip Hop Culture*. London: Routledge.

Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin Books.

Cedestrom, C., & Spicer, A. (2015). *The Wellness Syndrome*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Chang, J. (2006). Introduction. In J. Chang (Ed.), *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop* (pp. ix-xv). New York: Basic Civitas Books.

Copes, H., Hochstetler, A., & Williams, P. (2008). 'We Weren't Like No Regular Dope Fiends': Negotiating Hustler and Crackhead Identities. *Social Problems*, 55(2), 254–270.

Crary, J. (2014). *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*. London: Verso.

Diamond, S., Bermudez, R., & Schensul, J. (2006). What's the Rap About Ecstasy? Popular Music Lyrics and Drug Trends Among American Youth. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *21*(3), 269–298.

Faraone, C. (2015, September 11). An Oral History of Redman's Notorious MTV Cribs Episode. *Thrillist*. Retrieved from https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/inside-the-redman-mtv-cribs-episode-an-oral-history. Accessed 25 November 2021.

Ferranti, S. (2008). *Street Legends, Vol. 1*. Gorilla Convict Publications.

Folami, A. (2007). From Habermas to 'Get Rich or Die Trying': Hip Hop, The Telecommunications Act of 1996, and the Black Public Sphere. *Michigan Journal of Race and Law, 12*(2), 237–303.

Herd, D. (2008). Changes in Drug Use Prevalence in Rap Music Songs, 1979–1997. *Addiction Research & Theory, 16*(2), 167–180.

Dylan, J. (Director) (2001). *How High.* Universal Pictures.

Hunnicutt, G, & Andrews, K. H. (2009). Tragic Narratives in Popular Culture: Depictions of Homicide in Rap Music. *Sociological Forum*, *24*(3), 611–630.

James, A. (2013). *Assholes: A Theory.* London: Nicholas Brealey.

Lafargue, P. (2016). *The Right to be Lazy* (L. Bracken, trans.). Fairford: Echo Library.

Ładyga, Z. (2019). *The Labour of Laziness in the Twentieth-Century American Literature*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Cahoon, K., & Method Man (Creators) (2014). *Method & Red Show*. Fox.

Neal, M. A. (2004). No Time for Fake Niggas: Hip-Hop Culture and the Authenticity Debates. In M. Forman, M. A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the Joint! The Hip-Hop Studies Reader* (pp. 57–60). New York: Taylor and Francis,.

Not a rapper, just a hustler that can rap good (2006, November 16). *XXL*. Retrieved from https://www.xxlmag.com/not-a-rapper-just-a-hustler-that-can-rap-good. Accessed 16 January 2022.

Perry, I. (2004). *Prophets of the Hood: The Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Pouye, M. B. (2021). Digital Marketing and Brand Capital: 6IX9INE Syndrome. *Journal of Economics Library*, *8*(2), 64–77.

Redman / Drink Champs (Full Episode). Youtube. Uploaded by Revolt TV on 22 February 2019. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IqgknH6dWcY&t=3453s. Accessed 26 November 2021.

Redman: MTV Tried to Get Me to Rent a House. Youtube. Uploaded by Dj Vlad on 30 July 2015. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0n1zbtju5o. Accessed 26 November 2021.

Redman's Staten Island 'De la Casa' (2001). *Youtube*. Uploaded by MTV on 1 May 2020. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNtKT9_1KXQ. Accessed 26 November 2021.

Sköld, D., & Rehn, A. (2005). 'I Love The Dough': Rap Lyrics as a Minor Economic Literature. *Culture and Organization*, *11*(1), 17–31.

Sköld, D., & Rehn, A. (2007). Makin' It, by Keeping It Real: Street Talk, Rap Music, and the Forgotten Entrepreneurship From 'the 'Hood.' *Group & Organization Management*, *32*(1), 50–78.

Smart, B. (2005). *The Sport Star. Modern Sport and the Cultural Economy of Sporting Celebrity*. London: SAGE Publications.

Spence, L. K. (2015). *Knocking the Hustle: Against the Neoliberal Turn in Black Politics*. New York: Punctum Books.

Spencer, D. (2016). *The Architecture of Neoliberalism: How Contemporary Architecture Became an Instrument of Control and Compliance*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Trachtenberg, S. (1963). The Hustler as Hero. *The Antioch Review*, *22*(4), 427–34.

Weitzer, R., & Kubrin, C. (2009). Misogyny in Rap Music: A Content Analysis of Prevalence and Meanings. *Men and Masculinities*, *12*(1), 3–29.

Wright, M. (2006). Differences that Matter. In N. Castree, D. Gregory (Eds.), *David Harvey: A Critical Reader* (pp. 80–101). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.