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ON HIP-HOP MUSIC AS POP-POLITICS: A LOOK AT THE POETICS IN TRAJECTORIES OF CONTENT AND FORM

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Abstract. Hip-hop music in Bulgaria is not just a style of popular music but a cultural choice and political stance. This paper explores Bulgarian hip-hop songs and artists as bearers of the communal and political through the poetic. The analyzed songs and videos of Zhlich, Atila and Upsurt from the latest wave of Bulgarian rap are symptomatic examples of the unifying characteristics of the two lines (“joking around”, “folk” and “high”, “intellectual”) of rapping as a pop culture with a dynamic nature of tension and struggle. The musical play and intertextual references illuminate the role of technology as a means and form in the political game: remixes, digital sampling as expressions of the fun, contrasting, parodic, and carnivalesque recreation of reality are catalysts for challenging the status quo.

Keywords: Bulgarian rap waves; videos on YouTube; pop politics; resistance

Introduction: Why Hip-Hop and how?

Rap music as a media product and idiom of popular music is heavily loaded with symbolic and identity resources: as part of the entertainment and global music trends, but also as a field for civic activism, political resistance, and cultural wars. I will argue that in present day Bulgaria hip-hop emerges as one of the most vibrant and current “cultural scenes of the political” (Ivaylo Dichev). Hip-hop music in Bulgaria is not just a style of popular music but a cultural choice, a political stance, and a form of civil resistance and alternative journalism.

I will continue the research interest towards the hip-hop song as a carrier of the communal and political by also focusing on the poetic. Poetic, on one hand, refers to the characteristic expression through song intonations, measured speech, rhythmic wording saturated with metaphors and puns, and seeking rhymes – this content expressiveness has its distinctive features in hip-hop songs. It is an individual act of creativity with aesthetic and psychological dimensions but also a collective act of sharing values. On the other hand, the hip-hop song is a medium, i.e. a means that

defines the message: researching the poetics in the trajectory of form and content requires focusing on the media essence that makes a specific expressive system a communal screen of the meaning shared and expected by the audience. Here I will analyze the media fixations of some Bulgarian hip-hop artists and specific units from their repertoire as verbal and musical texts, media contexts, and videos. How are the poetic political screens of hip-hop constructed? What is the role of the artist and their media in the process of constructing of these poetic political screens? What are the features of the political discourse in Bulgarian hip-hop, how is this this discourse expressed in the media by mainstream and alternative artists? What messages do hip-hop artists want to convey and how are these messages expressed?

I will note that this text only sketches important processes and problems. At first glance, the visible framework of hip-hop as content and form presents a challenge for the researcher because it is a bundle of intersecting lines that may require complex tracking: an “internal” viewpoint of the artist and their chosen strategy, a “side” viewpoint of the audience and their assessment, an “external” viewpoint of the analyst, commentator, interpreter. The last “external” viewpoint is also multifaceted: unlike the first two viewpoints, which are “emic,” it is “etic” (see Bauman 1993, p. 34). The analytical reading should include rap music as lyrics and content: the words that are “arranged” are connected with the “beat,” i.e., the music which with its melodic, rhythmic, and sound elements is the foundation and framework of the lyrics assumes their organization in rhythmic steps and rhymes. However, rap is not just a song made of music and lyrics but a unit of a larger meta-musical whole: the song is media reaching a wide audience mostly through digital platforms and media. The most characteristic format observed and analyzed in this paper is the YouTube video. Besides the music (sound beat) and lyrics (the flow arrangement), the media operation components of the song include the moving images as a visual narrative in the video, as well as the processes of media reconstructions in the acts of content production, media formatting, reception, and creative consumption by the audience. The researcher is required to engage in a complex and in-depth understanding of the representation processes.

Due to the limited contents of this paper, I will select several highlights of the possible anthropological interpretation of Bulgarian hip-hop in the media as pop-politics, which will be projected onto the screen of the global rap music.

Global Rap Music: Historical Strokes and Bulgarian Impulses

Rap, a part of the emerging hip-hop culture during the 1970s, has become the most popular and influential genre of African-American music, blending the heritage of the African oral tradition of griot singers and the storytelling of slave plantation songs as a form of resistance in the past, with the underground culture of young African-Americans from low social classes and ghettos in contemporary times (Lipsitz 1997, pp. 23 – 48; Krims 2000; Shuker 2005, pp. 220 – 223).

Born as a peripheral dance style among black and Hispanic teenagers from the ghettos of New York, rap has evolved into a musical hub of a new, broad cultural phenomenon – hip-hop: a way of dressing, speaking, dancing, graffiti painting, and other cultural expressions. By becoming a media industry in the 1990s, rap turned into the most popular music genre in the US, primarily among a Caucasian teenage audience (Krimm 2000, pp. 4 – 5). Researchers of the hip-hop culture (Mitchell 2001, pp. 1 – 39; Chang, 2005) affirm that today hip-hop and rap cannot be considered merely expressions of African-American culture; they are also means for global youth activities and instruments for reworking local identities worldwide. Global rap is a hybrid cultural form: practised as a local culture everywhere from the bottom up, it is simultaneously the result of a global commercial invasion and aggressive media marketing; being a capitalist form of cultural hegemony, hip-hop still carries the strong ethical charge of local resistances and minority voices.

The Bulgarian-native viewpoint presents the history of Bulgarian rap music in terms of its distinctive features, prominent figures, and emblematic songs across three or four waves. The initial wave (the late 1980s to late 1990s) saw the first steps in the rap scene, studio recording, and media. The second wave (2000 – 2005) is associated with the emergence of a hip-hop focused music industry and the rivalry between two labels, Sniper Records and R'n'B Records, over the music market, audience, and identity of Bulgarian rap. The third wave (post-2010) marks the rise of Bulgarian hip-hop: new scenes (music clubs, awards for best performing hip-hop artists in Bulgaria), and new digital media platforms (music videos, YouTube, Spotify). Among those seeking new paths, and having established themselves and their influence among hip-hop fans are Atila, Ndoe (DRS), Illmate (Wosh MC, Logo 5, FARS), Zhлuch, Yavkata DLG, etc. They confirm the opinion¹ that in recent years, rap has become a space for authorial exploration and youth resistance. Hip-hop artists like Upsurt, Zhлuch, and Wosh MC create street art described as “the folk music of the humiliated and insulted, of the marginalised, the minorities, the wronged, and the eccentric” (Avramov 2021, p. 349). Precisely these artists, emblematic for the new demands in recent years, and considered part of the fourth rap wave, will be discussed in the following lines.

Mastery and Intellectuality: 'the High-Level Rapping' of Zhлuch from the Emic Perspective

'High-level rapping' is a term used by journalist Konstantin Mravov² to answer my question about what distinguishes So Called Crew (SCC) and Zhлuch³ from other Bulgarian hip-hop artists: “The erudition they have. Here you really have people who have read books and who manage – I do not know how to say it – to make erudition accessible. This wasn't present in Bulgarian rap before. Mattyu stands out the most with this: he simultaneously possesses the skills valued in hip-hop – what we call „flow“, the way of stringing words, but also more specific things: double, triple rhymes. The idea is that he is technically at a very high level and at the same

time, he brings in this erudition, which was quite different from [what] the others [were doing]. The actual rapping was high-level (...) At that time when Mattyu appeared, SCC appeared, as well as Logo5. Farce was a very important group as far as technical gradation is concerned. But also Nockout... Endo, this is the Second Wave. (...) But after that wave, there was a period during which only a group of baggy people remained to listen to hip-hop. And since then, technical things have evolved a lot. Alongside such bands as Farce, alongside DRS at one point, and Logo5, Wosh MC came out with their tunes and – this developed some artistry in the actual stringing, moving of lyrics up a level compared to the previous period”⁴.

Zhluch says in an deep conversation and argues in his songs as well: what will help “all the music made in Bulgaria” and the rap community, especially “the alternative fans” is: “just to get out of their own heads,” to not just do “extrovert stuff” but something “more engaging, something that carries with it a sense of community,” while at the same time being “playful” and “carnavalesque”⁵. He gives examples of the engaged and satirical messages of the American rapper 2Pac, of his own childhood memories of people hugging each other after the 1994 World Cup victories of the Bulgarian footballers, and people dancing in the streets after the arrest of Boyko Borisov in 2022: “we need carnivals”⁶. From the quoted free interview with Zhluch, it is clear that his concept of intelligent rap involves “carnival” not so much as humorous content but as a game of constant change, of not being boring, “repetitive,” of not “sticking to the same aesthetics,” of showing people that what matters is not the clichés and copying someone’s hit records as a way to profit but ideas and the mastery to share these ideas and engage the audience in the ‘carnival’ of ideas. According to Zhluch, this is exactly the opposite of the tendency for popular rap in Bulgaria to turn into “gym and *changa* (pop folk) club music.” Thus, at the bottom level, Zhluch’s basic concepts of rap and the history of his development as an artist, i.e. carnival and playfulness, are defining: he shares in his biographical narrative how he was formed by three different things that he had to combine: his family (intellectuals: his father is an artist, one of his grandmothers was a teacher, and the other – a translator, and he speaks in English with her); his street in a Sofia neighborhood (“teaches you terrible things” but also useful: “bully your way to survive”); and his school (the National High School of Ancient Languages and Cultures, where he graduates with a thesis – an anthropological view on hip-hop culture in Bulgaria). He reveals the models that influenced him and their contrasting nature also features play: the dancing James Brown but also his dance beats, Bruce Lee and the kung-fu movies, but also Miguel Piñero⁷ and the American Inner city poetry⁸; ‘the catchphrase kings’ Upsurt but also Kendrick Lamar⁹.

“High-Level Rapping” as Play and Contrasts: Beats and Images

In the hip-hop that Zhluch and his partners (SCC; Grigorov and Gena before that, Atila, Yavkata DLG, Rusty, Homelesz) make, constant searching and contrasts

are a leading principle. The artist plays with mixing old sound and melodic motifs: "...I've been rummaging through my parents' entire music collection, I've listened to everything they listened to when they were young – CDs, old tapes. And the records that are almost scrapped, which screech terribly, I find very interesting even now... I've incorporated that theme into my music. I really like to occasionally throw in a few such dissonant things, drawn out. I'm a person who, for many people, is an independent underground artist in my own head but at the end of the day, I write pop choruses. And I really like to put them exactly in those songs, where the verses are ruthless, fierce. This contrast, the love for contrast, for the eternal search for variety, is what brought me here, where I am now. And maybe it's what has made me fall in love with this culture - writing rhymes over beats..."¹⁰.

Contrasts as a musical carnival, combining forgotten but emblematic motifs from pop music with newly created beats (instrumental basis), and authorial flow (stringing of words) are characteristic of the music of Zhлuch and other rap artists he works with. In the video for one version of the song "Disgrace" by Zhлuch and Gena, part of the melody of a rock hit from the 1950s, "Skinny Minnie" by Bill Haley, which has a popular Bulgarian cover from the 60s, "Dance Lesson" by Stefan Voronov¹¹, is used for the instrumental introduction. In the song "And Tomorrow is Another Day" by Zhлuch, from the channel One Shot (music by Evgeni – Gena), the 'intro' with the effects of cracking a record is a sampled instrumental introduction from "Believe Me Now" by Electric Light Orchestra; the rap song also intertwines samples from a Bulgarian estrada song – "Love" by Emil Dimitrov¹². The interplay of old samples in newly created rap songs stands out in another video from the One Shot series: "Fire Extinguisher" by Yavkata DLG, in which Zhлuch and Keranov participate – the beat samples parts of the soul song "Sexy Ways" from 1974¹³.

The social and political aspects in many of the 'high' rap songs are not just an outer layer. Zhлuch shares that he avoids clichés, "does not like art that waves a finger." His music and lyrics are about "how we think, how we stay informed, how we perceive the processes around us." For Zhлuch, the political aspect of rap is not external or declarative: "Hip-hop is a protest. When I hear that, it's as if Lyuba Kulezich was facing me." Zhлuch shares that rap is many things, but mainly it is being authentic, living your messages. His message through rap is: "To think – that is to protest"¹⁴. An example of a call to the audience for critical thinking and sarcastic criticism of the authorities is Zhлuch's video of "And Tomorrow Is Another Day" – currently with over a million views on the platform FacingTheSun; 81 thousand likes and 507 comments¹⁵. The message of the lyrics, addressed to the young and expressed in a sarcastic version of the way Bulgarian leareds speak is to think and act, to be together against what oppresses them:

*When dealers boldly rang each other's landlines,
The sicadzhiya from Bankya was not yet their boss...
To let you play, fine, we'll beat it,*

*But you – you'll be forgotten by noon today.
And the future is ours!*

The cartoonish image of the transience of power in the lyrics – “the henchman from Bankya” – is shown and allegorically debunked in the video with putting a soccer ball on fire. Similar metaphors are used to personify power in many of the most popular cartoons and verses in “the organ of rude cartoonists,” the newspaper “Pras-press”: Borisov is a footballer kicking a ball labelled “Mandate,” “the Bulgarian Messi”, who, instead of carrying a load of golden balls and trophies, carries bars of gold and wads of money (issue no. 21/7 December 2022). Two years later, during the general election campaign in May 2024, a similar cartoon of “the rude cartoonist from Pras-press,” Chavdar Nikolov, was circulated on posters, provoked stormy reactions from GERB and Borisov. In the cartoon, a pig is stepping on a pumpkin-ball, recognizable as Peevski and Borisov. The caption “#Who wins if you don't vote” aims to encourage people to think and vote in the elections so that the votes bought and controlled by the “the pig” and “the pumpkin” do not bring the pair back to power. Commentators point out that the PP-DB political coalition uses the posters to suggest that “what sociologists don't say, the cartoonists do,” and that those who dislike corruption are more than those weaving the nets of dependence¹⁶.

In the process of editing this paper a few days ago, on his YouTube channel, Atila, defined as a 'lyricist' with 'intelligent rap'¹⁷, has published his latest song “Amnesia.” The song is visualized only with a black-and-white image: the grotesque faces of the characters Boko and Shishi (respectively Borisov and Peevski) with a halo of European stars. Earlier in 2007, Atila and Prim released the song “Boyko Borisov” – one of the early political rap messages. By that time Borisov was already a pop culture star – a former bodyguard of the ousted Zhivkov, then of Simeon Saxe-Coburg, then a mayor of Sofia, Borisov is extolled in the chalga hit “Triple Coalition” (Dimov 2020, pp. 34 – 36). An emblematic face of populism in politics, Boyko Borisov is “entirely a media product,” “the anomalous character,” established as a personification of symbolic power, a media-erotic figure equating popularity with quality in politics (Spasov 2011a, pp. 229 – 237). Almost two decades later, “Amnesia” is a political call for awareness in which the satirical names and images of politicians sound like bright and recognizable pop-culture memes:

*...Listen to the old tale of the Pumpkin Pinocchio,
Their whole scheme is banal and thieving,
They snatch credits and funds, launder and cover up,
With your money, boy, take a look, it shows
Shishi squeaks and pounces, while you sit and remain quiet?
... We understand each other, he's a bumpkin and so are we
Folk singers and judges are delivered for free
Journalist gals and anal-izers with muddy lips*

*I've got a card up my sleeve, what shall I play?
1001 shares – from the Shishirizade
... The greasy one works, and we argue with each other,
That patriot is a bought bot – sowing hatred,
Who wants to divide – just to rule,
And the Bankya boy is a sly dog who doesn't always bark,
A thug before us but a tail-wagger at the feet of Von der Leyen,
As he was a cute dog in front of comrade Putin...
The chorus repeats the call to action:
Let me examine you. Have you got amnesia?
And yet you vote for them again, mocked and plundered!
In my shoes, just tell me, what would you do?
And wouldn't you burn down their entire pigsty?¹⁸*

The Catchphrase Kings Become Pop Culture: Upsurt and Itso Hazarta

Itso Hazarta and Upsurt are defined as the funniest artists in Bulgarian rap: Hazarta from the time of Upsurt is “a great lyricist”¹⁹; Upsurt are “pop culture,” “immortal catchphrases,” “polished rap known to all,” “sound witty”²⁰. The politically engaged rap pieces by Hazarta from the time he moved towards or entered politics such as “I Have a Guy” with Homelesz from 2019 and “The Member of Parliament Hristo” from 2022 (Dimov 2023) owe their millions of views and hundreds of thousands of likes largely to the popularity gained with Upsurt over the previous two decades. The popularity of the rap bands from Sofia grew from their first album in 1996 through the separation of the artists in 2019. Besides the released albums, Upsurt gained popularity with videos on YouTube and social networks, concert and media appearances, dubbing popular movies (in 2007, distributors from Sunny release in Bulgaria the feature-length animated film “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” in which the characters Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo speak with the voices of the three from the group Itso Hazarta, Bat` Ventsi, and Buch), appearances in reality formats (in 2009, Itso Hazarta was among the stars of the show VIP Brother 3 along with Todor Slavkov, Sofi Marinova, Emil Koshlukov, Anya Pencheva, Ivayla Bakalova, Preslava, and others; he was a member of the jury for three consecutive seasons – 2017, 2019, and 2021, of Bulgaria's Got Talent – a reality show on bTV). Upsurt are defined as the creators of their own style, Bulgarian rap, characterized by more social lyrics compared to other rap artists and bands. The songs by Upsurt can be accepted as a soundtrack of the life of the ordinary Bulgarian during the governments of Simeon Saxe-Coburg and NDSV (2001 – 2005), Sergey Stanishev and the Triple Coalition (2005 – 2009), the three governments of Boyko Borisov (respectively 2009 – 2013, 2014 – 2016, 2017 – 2021). Most of the lyrics by Upsurt are the work of Itso Hazarta. When analysing these rap songs, it becomes apparent that over

the years, the political aspect becomes increasingly distinct amid the abundance of names and idiomatic expressions that at first glance sound like a stream of random words due to the rhymes and rhythm, but in fact are metaphors verbalizing certain social and political relations in the language, which, as a medium of equality, becomes a means for the ordinary person to challenge those in power (Groys 2014, pp. 100 – 109).

Accepted as an “underground” song with political lyrics is “Colleague” by Upsurt, but it is also controversial in the comments about its contextual placement. It is known that “Colleague” was released in 2005 as a hip-hop single. It became popular after being performed on September 1, 2005, on Slavi's Show and was awarded by the show's screenwriters the prize Best Political Song representing the real political development of Bulgaria over the previous 15 years. In 2012 it was published on YouTube (12,534,570 views, 51 thousand likes) and since then has received similar comments like: “July 24, 2022, just after midnight. Exactly 21 years after the first day of the 'Saxe-Coburg' cabinet. I'm listening to this song and remembering my childhood. Something is choking me. We live in the same crap (7 months ago); “The lyrics are always relevant even though 15 years have passed!” (6 years ago); “This is the top song of BG rap! The whole Bulgarian reality described in 4 minutes!” (5 years ago) or (2 years ago) “Unfortunately, reality continues to be the same and will continue to be so for many years ahead”²¹. From the song's lyrics with political messages:

At the moment, you are like everyone else – a beaten dog.

*(In Parliament, licking d*cks is a business)*

... “I want to go to the Parliament!”

Go! – you'll never have hemorrhoids.

Mr. MP looks virginal,

Of course, he doesn't snort something cheap (...)

God, let's go up and let it be a sin!

I want to shit on them one day!

How does “Colleague” function in the political context? According to an unsigned publication on the Trud website, Lena Borislavova, being the chief of staff of Prime Minister Kiril Petkov, admitted that her favorite song was “Colleague” by Upsurt, but she referred to her colleague from the parliamentary group We Continue the Change, Hristo Petrov, with the same title, which caused bewilderment among Members of Parliament familiar with the lyrics of the song in which Hazarta sings “in the Parliament, licking d*cks is a business”²². According to a publication in Deutsche Welle commenting on Itso Hazarta's entry into politics as “a good marketing move by Kiril Petkov,” the sarcastic lyrics of “Colleague” and the swearing against the parliament and MPs does not contradict the desire of Hristo Petrov to become one of them but shows how the rapper has politically and socially evolved after expressing his political position several times: in support

of Radan Kanev as a candidate for MEP from Democratic Bulgaria, in support of Hristo Ivanov and the “landing on Rosenets beach,” in support of the protesters in 2020²³.

Conclusion

A key component of the commercial success of hip-hop in the mainstream music industry is the combination of audio and visual forms of communication primarily through the music video (Hesmondhalgh 2013, p. 146). The effects of such a combination resonate with the definitive understanding of the political potential of music as the solidification of values and attachments described by Hesmondhalgh is indicative of the influence of music on collective thought. The role of technologies and media that determine not only entertainment and popular culture but also civil and political movements in network society participate in the construction of legitimizing identities, resistance identities, and project identities (see Castells 2010, p. 8).

The analyzed songs and videos of Zhloch, Atila, Upsurt, Yavkata DLG from the latest wave of Bulgarian rap are symptomatic examples of the unifying characteristics of the two trends (“catchphrases”, “popular” and “high”, “intellectual”) of rapping as a pop culture with a dynamic nature of tension and struggle. According to Stuart Hall, popular culture is a continuous process in which relations of control and subordination are constantly changing; cultural facts and forms are not static, they gain or lose support, there is constant movement and exchange between them (Hall 2005). The dialogical nature, dynamism, and exchange inherent to popular music find vivid examples in Richard Middleton's interpretation of American rap: the extravagant brutality of rap narratives is a function of social, class, and racial intersections, but also reflect the inherent play of identity and voice in rap, woven into complex dialogues, in processes of change and fragmentation (Middleton 2003, pp. 259 – 261). The political aspect in the popular messages of Bulgarian rappers is expressed in the language and poetics, lyrics and music, media contexts, and the dialogue with the audience. Beyond the schematic vision of rap as protest and the cliché of the total politicization of popular music, observations on the new waves of Bulgarian rap point to its potential for resistance in challenging power. This potential is expressed not only in the themes and lyrics of rap songs but also in their rhetoric, expressed in specific verbal choices: poetics and lexicon, and characteristic musical techniques. Street language, obsessive speech, and dysphemism are expressions of resistance against the status quo and elites; plays on rhymes, rhythms, and words as expressions of artists' individual “flow” are acts of redefining order and a political expression. The musical play and intertextual melodic references in beats and rhythmic bases of rapping illuminate the role of technology as a means and form in the political game: remixes, digital sampling as expressions of the fun, contrasting, parodic, and carnivalesque recreation of reality are catalysts for challenging the

status quo. The new digital scenes of rap – videos on YouTube as aggressive and 'rebellious' media bits – with their visual aesthetics (pulsations and repetitions, unusual cause-effect relationships, intermediality, etc.) and 'virality' engage the audience (Vernallis 2013, pp. 127 – 162). Thus, the limitations of physical places (the street, music clubs) of Bulgarian rap are overcome. The digital scenes vastly expand the public space and democratize access to artists and their messages, which in itself is a political function that resonates with the popular expressions of the political aspect contained in rap songs and videos.

Videos like those of Upsurt are watched by millions of people on YouTube. Social networks, accessible and free, are mainly used for entertainment (Spasov 2011b, p. 324). But entertainment with forms of popular culture, in this case of sharing of hip-hop music and videos, is part of the formation of political engagement. Bulgarian artists like Itso Hazarta, Zhлuch, Atila, and others are examples of hip-hop and rap as alternative and new terrains of political struggles and civic engagement. The reservations about “show politics” and the danger of individualization and disintegration of society are well known (Castells 2010, p. 416). However, precisely through the communication “from below” of the “network people” and the “soft power” of popular culture, there occurs that media reversal in which the characteristic intertwining of culture and politics today may lead to the “aestheticization of the political” and the politicization of the popular, the entertaining, and the funny (Ditchev 2019; Popova 2019; Neykova & Koleva 2022; Dimov 2023), which makes Bulgarian rap music an interesting media terrain for anthropological research.

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NOTES

1. Ллuc, Dimov, V. (2024). Intervyu s Matyu Stoyanov-Zhлach, hip-hop artist, r. 1993 v Sofiya. Zapisva V. Dimov na 24. 02. 2024 [Интервю с Матю Стоянов-Жльч, хип-хоп артист, р. 1993 в София. Записва В. Димов на 24. 02. 2024]. Mravov, K., Dimov, V. (2024). Intervyu s Konstantin Mravov, zhurnalist, r. 1988 v Sofiya. Zapisva V. Dimov na 01. 04. 2024 [Интервю с Константин Мравов, журналист, р. 1988 в София. Записва В. Димов на 01. 04. 2024].
2. Konstantin Mravov (born in 1988 in Sofia) is not coincidentally one of the respondents in my anthropological study of Bulgarian hip-hop. His biographical narrative (Mravov, Dimov, 2024) reveals how an enthusiast becomes a connoisseur and participant in the media scenes of rap: he tried rapping as a

- teenager, created his own online rap radio, and later as a journalism student at Sofia University, he ran a freestyle rap column on the student radio "Reaction" – see Dimov, 2024, pp. 43 – 44. Currently, he is a journalist at BNR and hosts the podcast "Pop Culture," featuring So Called Crew in two of its episodes.
3. Zhлuch – Matyu Stoyanov (born 1993 in Sofia) made his first songs under the artistic name Razkrit, later as Zhлachezar he performed freestyle hip-hop on radio "Reaction"; known as Zhлuch for his individual projects and as part of the band So Called Crew (SCC). Other artists from the band include Gena (Evgeni Enchev), who creates the music, and the master of rapping Grigorov (Iliya Grigorov), previously part of the band Logo5.
 4. Mravov, K., Dimov, V. (2024).
 5. Jлuc, Dimov, V. (2024).
 6. Jлuc, Dimov, V. (2024).
 7. Miguel Piñero – a poet and artist, founder of the Nuyoricano Poets Café movement.
 8. Inner city poetry – African-American and Puerto Rican street poetry from the neighborhoods and the "inner city."
 9. Kendrick Lamar – an influential rapper, a prominent figure in pop culture, regarded by his peers as "one of the greatest lyricists in contemporary hip-hop," a "master storyteller", compared to filmmakers Martin Scorsese and Quentin Tarantino; the only rapper to have won a Pulitzer Prize in 2018.
 10. Jлuc, Dimov, V. (2024).
 11. Jлuc, Gena. (2015). Nemilost [Немилост]. SoCalledCrew. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeM5C24Bmxc> , accessed on 26.08.2024.
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 18. Atila & Worst (2024). Amnesia. shanoshamanizum. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fICNi54nnPs&ab_channel=shanoshamanizum, accessed on 29.09.2024.
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