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Eminem Rap God? Welcome Back, Max Headroom

Marcia Alesan Dawkins · Wednesday, November 27th, 2013

For your consideration, Eminem's "Rap God" video, where the real Slim Shady looks a lot like the real Max Headroom, the 1980s artificial intelligence character known for his wit and stuttering, distorted, electronically sampled voice. The controversial MMLP2 track, co-produced by DVLP and Fithy, shows us exactly how the rap god updated his operating system. Equal parts 1970s poverty and racial tension, 1980's media like Max Headroom, old school video games and comic book heroes, 1990's transhuman Neo from *The Matrix*, underground cyphers and black outlaw gangsta rappers, 2000's MMLP1 spiritual and social criticism and 2010s wearable technology. During the Max headroom sequences, only Em's head and shoulders are seen against a "computer-generated" backdrop of a slowly rotating wire-frame cube interior. The distinguishing sounds are chaotic speech patterns—as Eminem's voice pitches up and down and occasionally gets stuck in a robotic-sounding loop. Like the original, the Rap God's personality is interpreted best as a satire of egotistical media personalities (a/k/a talking heads) and their insincere, unqualified opinions.

And here's the Real Max Headroom.

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