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**Stylistic Analysis of Rap Album good kid, m.A.A.d  
city by Kendrick Lamar**

Bachelor Thesis

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## Zásady pro vypracování:

Tato bakalářská práce bude analyzovat všech 12 skladeb z alba good kid, m.A.A.d city vydaného Kendrickem Lamarem v roce 2012. V úvodní části analýzy textů budou popsány fonologické, sémantické a gramatické prvky použité autorem v jeho díle. Analýza bude spočívat v hledání společných a nejčastějších prvků, které autor používá napříč skladbami. Tyto prvky budou zároveň analyzovány z pohledu funkce v textech. Poslední část bude obsahovat argumentaci zjištěných faktů z analýz. Texty budou využity z internetové stránky specializované na jejich přepis s názvem genius.com.

## Seznam doporučené literatury:

Brown, Gillian, and George Yule. 1991. *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
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V Olomouci dne

Podpis .....

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## 1. Introduction

The popularity of rap music is on the rise, with streaming platforms such as *Spotify* and *Soundcloud* making it more accessible to a global audience. While anyone can create rap music, achieving critical and commercial success requires exceptional talent and creativity. Originating in urban neighborhoods during the 1970s, rap music began as a medium for artists to depict the harsh realities of their lives against catchy beats (French 2017, 259). What began as a marginal cultural phenomenon has evolved into one of the most prominent music genres of the present era. Rappers utilize their music to convey a diverse range of messages, ranging from quotidian struggles to impassioned social critiques. This is exemplified by groups such as *N.W.A.*, whose iconic protest song “*Fuck Tha Police*,” exemplifies the genre's capacity to convey powerful social critiques.

Since the release of “*Fuck Tha Police*” in 1988, the genre has undergone a significant evolution, becoming more mainstream and, in some cases, less focused on conveying meaningful messages. Consequently, there is a growing tendency to prioritise the creation of catchy tunes with the objective of maximizing streams on digital platforms, which have become the primary revenue source, replacing the traditional sales of CDs. This shift has prompted concerns that there is a decline in albums that offer profound storytelling and thought-provoking content compared to literature. Nevertheless, Kendrick Lamar stands out as a notable exception to this trend.

The artist Kendrick Lamar has been selected for analysis in this thesis due to his distinctive status as the inaugural rapper to be awarded a Pulitzer Prize. The artist's celebrated album, “*good kid, m.A.A.d city*,” released in 2012, serves as the primary focus of this stylistic analysis. Following the release of his critically acclaimed album, Lamar went on to produce three further albums that received similar acclaim: “*To Pimp a Butterfly*,” “*DAMN.*,” and “*Mr. Morale & The Big Steppers*,” as well as the mixtape “*untitled unmastered*”. The first two albums received ratings above 9 from Pitchfork, an acclaimed music review website, and “*DAMN.*” earned Lamar the Pulitzer Prize.

The album commences with the assertion, “*Lord God, I come to you a sinner and I humbly repent for my sins*,” which establishes a solemn and reflective ambience that persists throughout the project. The introduction, which resembles a prayer during a family dinner as depicted on the album cover, introduces the themes that Lamar subsequently explores, including love, death, alcoholism, and the everyday struggles of growing up amid gang violence. The album has been described by the author as “*A Short Film by Kendrick Lamar*,” and it presents these themes in a cinematic narrative that enhances its storytelling depth.

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of Kendrick Lamar's artistic work, it is essential to examine his biography in the period leading up to the release of this project. Lamar's upbringing, characterised by significant cultural and socio-economic influences, has had a profound impact on his artistic vision and the thematic content of his music. By



examining the environmental factors that have shaped his identity and perspective, it becomes possible to gain a deeper understanding of the profound messages and viewpoints embedded within his artistry. Consequently, a comprehensive examination of Lamar's personal background enables listeners to appreciate the depth and complexity of his creative expression within a broader cultural context.

Kendrick Lamar was born on 17 June 1987 in Compton, California, a city with a reputation for high crime rates. Despite growing up in an environment where gang activity was prevalent, Lamar himself remained distant from gang involvement. At the age of 16, in 2003, he commenced his foray into music by releasing his first mixtape, entitled "*Youngest Head Nigga in Charge*" (Graham 2011). This garnered considerable attention, leading to his signing with the label "*Top Dawg Entertainment*." He proceeded to create three additional mixtapes and later an album, known as "*Section.80*". Subsequently, he signed with Dr. Dre's label, Aftermath Entertainment, under which he released the critically acclaimed "*good kid, m.A.A.d city*."

The album adopts a distinctive narrative strategy characterised by its multifaceted approach to storytelling. Unlike narratives solely confined to Kendrick Lamar's perspective, the album integrates diverse viewpoints, blending them seamlessly. For instance, in the song "*Sing About Me, I'm Dying of Thirst*," Lamar portrays Keisha, a woman he is familiar with from his city, and her perspective, illustrating her exploitation by her own family through her voice. The album was described as "self-interrogation on black male youth culture, recidivism, and alcohol and drug use but also personal and social redemption" (Haile 2018, 493). As this was already discussed in the mentioned work by Haile, I will in this thesis adopt a different approach by concentrating on Kendrick Lamar's use of figures of speech and his overall manipulation of language. This focus aims to provide a deeper understanding of the rhetorical strategies and linguistic techniques that underpin his artistic expression.

My objective in this bachelor thesis will be to address the following questions: (1) How and why does Lamar use figures of speech, foregrounding, dialect, and register? (2) How do these stylistic elements contribute to the atmosphere that Lamar seeks to create? The methodology outlined below will be employed in order to explore these questions and to uncover the layers of Lamar's work. The thesis will analyse four songs from the album in detail, with the remaining eight songs from the album being analysed in the appendices. The lyrics will be highlighted in different colours to facilitate the analysis.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

My objective in this section is to introduce the methodology employed in the practical part, thereby underscoring the significance of the selected framework. This will enable the reader to comprehend the comprehensive structure of the methodology and its application to the analysis. Additionally, the reader will become familiar with the structural components of the songs, including the use of "Intros" and "Outros", as well as "Features" in the selected musical work.

## 2.1. Methodology

The methodology employed in this thesis is derived from *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* written by Geoffrey Leech (1991), as it provides a comprehensive framework for analysing texts from the stylistic point of view. Leech's framework is designed for the analysis of poetry and will therefore be modified and adapted to meet the specific needs of rap work analysis. The following paragraphs will set out the categories into which the analysis will be divided. Although there are similarities between rap and poetry, it is important to recognise that rap is a distinct and evolving genre. In contrast to poetry, rap incorporates both verbal and musical elements. While poetry is often read silently, rap is listened to with its beats. This oversight may result from the fact that the contributions of beat, instrumentation, and vocal delivery are not fully considered in the analysis. It is necessary to state that the following analysis will be qualitative, in order to understand his work with the selected framework.

The first category I will explore is "*Figures of Speech*," which encompasses phenomena reliant on audience interpretation. The second category is "*Honest Deceptions*," which, as Leech (1991, 166) argues, are "connected in that in a sense they misinterpret the truth." The third category, "*Foregrounding*," will focus on parallelism and repetition, particularly how the author employs these techniques to draw the audience's attention to specific parts. The final category in the selected methodology is "*Varieties of Language*," where I will analyse the use of linguistic diversity throughout the album

### 2.1.1. Figures of speech

In the first part I will examine how Kendrick uses language and figures of speech. Given that Leech's book is specific to poetry, I have selected figures of speech from the framework of his book, *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*. These include synecdoche, metaphor, and metonymy. This was done based on previous analysis of the lyrics and the prevailing presence of these figures of speech compared to the other ones listed in the book. The objective is to find out how Lamar uses these figures of speech to achieve his goals in storytelling. The selection of specific figures of speech in this analysis was informed by a prior examination in which I have revealed a prevalence of synecdoche, metaphor, and metonymy within the lyrics.

#### 2.1.1.1. Metaphor

A metaphor is the figure of speech that enables the author to convey their message by foregrounding their thoughts through the use of the metaphor itself. It may be regarded as an instrument for the differentiation between reality and figurative meaning (Malmkjær 1991, 415). It represents the connection between the language and context through the use of terms that share similar traits or visual characteristics. This can be observed in (1) where the "*gold mines*" share a similar trait with the author's thoughts, which are valuable for the listener. The metaphor can be understood as a vehicle of meaning (Leech 1991, 151) or, in other words, a carrier of thought, thus comparable to a vehicle. Consequently, it is essential to utilize metaphors in a comprehensive manner, ensuring that both auditory and textual audiences can

comprehend its intended meaning. The interpretation of metaphors is contingent upon the audience and their experiences.

1. *“Read slow and you'll find gold mines in these lines” (taken from lyrics of “Poetic Justice”)*
2. *“Pakistan on every porch is fine, we adapt to crime” (taken from lyrics of “m.A.A.d. city”)*

For the foreign listener who is not familiar with the country, the metaphor in (2) *“Pakistan”* can be understood as a dangerous place, as evidenced by the news reports of drug trafficking. For the native Pakistani, however, the metaphor may evoke nostalgic feelings or thoughts of their home. The author's assertion that *“we adapt to crime”* elucidates the ambiguity of the metaphor. Although the interpretation of the metaphor is dependent on the listener, it is also dependent on the intentions of the speaker, who can respond to the ambiguity of their metaphors.

If the metaphor is to be considered a comparison, I have to ask what is the distinction between it and a simile? A simile explicitly explains the comparison through the use of elements such as *“like”* or *“as”*, whereas a metaphor must be hypothesized from the context of the text (Leech 1991, 153).

#### **2.1.1.2. Synecdoche**

A synecdoche concerns various expressions that denote a part representing the whole or vice versa. Malmkjæker posits this notion, asserting that when a word functions as a synecdoche, it operates by standing in for a segment of a larger entity to reference the entirety (Malmkjæker 1991, 602).

3. *“Two niggas, two black hoodies” (taken from lyrics of “Sherane a.k.a. Master Splinter’s Daughter”)*

In (3) the phrase *“two black hoodies”* functions as a reference to the two persons mentioned in the same sentence, using part of their clothing to represent the larger entity. This can be employed to dehumanise individuals by treating them as objects, thereby preventing the listener from empathising with them.

4. *“I hit the back window in search of any Nintendo” (taken from lyrics of “The Art of Peer Pressure”)*

Leech comments on synecdoche, which occurs when a proper noun transcends its individual identity and assumes the role of a common noun (Leech 1991, 150), as observed in (4). This indicates that synecdoche can extend beyond the typical part-whole relationship, encompassing instances where individual elements are generalized within language usage.

### 2.1.1.3 Metonymy

A metonymy refers to the interchanging of terms that are associated with one another. The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines metonymy as “consisting of the use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated”. In contrast to synecdoche, which concerns the part representing the whole, metonymy can be more abstract, depending on which terms a person associates together. In instance (5), the metonymy can be formed from the association of colors with representations of different gangs. The individual need not be attired in a specific color in order to be associated with the color of their gang.

5. *“We seen three niggas in colors we didn't like” (taken from lyrics of “The Art of Peer Pressure”)*

### 2.1.2. Honest deceptions

In the next category my focus will be specifically concerned with the literary devices of hyperbole and irony, both of which play a significant role in shaping the meaning and impact of a text. Those who listen to rap music will be aware that rappers are known for exaggerating situations in their works. This is crucial for establishing their credibility and respect within the community, commonly referred to as “*street cred.*” Kubrin argues that: “As a way to display a certain predisposition to violence, rappers often characterise themselves and others as “mentally unstable” and therefore extremely dangerous” (Kubrin 2005, 370). Therefore, it can be expected that this album will contain similar exaggerations. Conversely, there are individuals who adopt a humble demeanor in order to appeal to listeners who prefer conscious rap, which suggests that the author will utilize understatements, as he is often categorized as a conscious rapper. It is evident that irony is a common device employed in all forms of art. Consequently, it would be beneficial to examine the use of irony in this album, whether it is a simple or more complex device employed by the author.

#### 2.1.2.1. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is an overstatement or exaggeration. Leech (1991, 167) divides hyperbole according to the amount of knowledge about a specific topic. Hyperbole is exaggerated in any situation such, as in (6), where it is impossible for a person to feel another’s energy nor from a distance of two planets. It is also out of bounds of possibility.

6. *“I can feel your energy from two planets away” (lyrics taken from “Bitch Don’t Kill My Vibe”)*
7. *“Seventeen with nothin' but pussy stuck on my mental” (lyrics taken from “Sherane a.k.a. Master Splinter’s Daughter”)*

In (7) we gain insight into the teenage boy’s behavior, which is characterised by an excessive sexualization and hormonal influence, manifesting as dreams about the opposite sex. Although

it is not accurate to state that there is nothing else on their mind, it is not entirely implausible, and in individual cases, it can be the case.

Leech further develops the concept of hyperbole by stating that it is concerned with personal values and sentiments (Leech 1991, 168). This results in the confirmation of his previous statements that a person needs knowledge to understand exaggerated claims.

### **2.1.2.2. Irony**

Irony can be defined as a type of communication where the explicit meaning diverges from, or is often contrary to, the intended message (Schaeffer 1975, 178). This results in contrast with the apparent meaning, which may be conveyed through deliberate understatement and certain forms of sarcasm (Gray 1960, 220). As hyperbole, it is used to convey the message through absurdity. This results in the possibility of interpretation not being accepted for the absurdity, as it might be unacceptable in the specific situation or in any situation (Leech 1991, 173). The connection between irony and hyperbole can be observed in (8) where the irony “*movin’ backwards*” appears to be explicit and almost interchangeable with hyperbole while in (9) the irony is more subtle with what it conveys. Another noteworthy observation from both (8) and (9) is that irony is employed as a form of commentary on social issues, rather than as a direct means of addressing them.

8. “*You movin’ backwards if you suggest that you sleep with a TEC*” (lyrics taken from “*m.A.A.d city*”)
9. “*You hired me as a victim*” (lyrics taken from “*good kid*”)

### **2.1.3. Foregrounding**

In the category of “*Foregrounding*,” my focus will be directed towards the phenomena of parallelism and repetition. I find this category particularly important within the context of songs, where hooks frequently serve as pivotal elements in conveying the main message of the song. Accordingly, my analysis will prioritise the identification and examination of instances of parallelism and repetition within the lyrics.

Leech argues that parallelism is often employed to enhance aesthetic pleasure. This observation holds significant weight in songs, which are predominantly crafted to gratify listeners and generate commercial success. Such considerations will be integral to my analytical approach when scrutinizing these songs.

#### **2.1.3.1. Parallelism**

While deviations are a common means of foregrounding, another mechanism that can be employed is parallelism. De Beaugrande and Dressler define it as the reuse of similar structures with different content or material within them (De Beaugrande & Dressler 2016, 80). It can be interpreted as establishing a connection based on either similarity or contrast (Leech 1991, 67).

A defining feature of rap songs is the chorus or hook, which may be either identical or modified as the song progresses. The parallelism within the lyrics contributes to the overall structure and thematic development of the song. This technique can be employed to reinforce key themes or ideas, as well as to provide a sense of cohesion and rhythm within the text.

### **2.1.3.2. Repetition**

The repetition of certain words or phrases in lyrics serves multiple purposes, providing the author with a versatile tool to foreground specific thoughts and ideas within their texts. The repetition of words or phrases can be employed in various ways to achieve different effects and enhance the overall impact of the song. Repetition can be classified into two distinct categories: simple repetition and complex repetition (Malmkjæker 1991, 627). In the case of simple repetition in lyrics, the repetition remains unaltered or only varies minimally. This is often observed in aspects such as the use of the third person singular. Conversely, in complex repetition, morphemes may vary in word class and other linguistic features. The repetition serves to recall the earlier description, thus shaping the narrative that unfolds in between (Clarvoe 2009, 31). The reintroduction of familiar elements or themes through repetition creates a cyclical pattern that reinforces key ideas and motifs throughout the narrative. This cyclicity not only facilitates memory recall but also guides the reader or listener through the progression of the narrative, providing a framework for understanding and interpretation.

### **2.1.4. Varieties of language**

Linguistic diversity is important for rappers, as it distinguishes them in the perception of their audience. Their adeptness in manipulating language to complement the beat not only enhances the listening experience but also showcases their verbal ability. Moreover, this linguistic variety allows listeners to associate the rapper with their specific geographical origin, as rappers often exhibit strong loyalty to their hometowns or states as can be seen later in this thesis. Beyond geographical markers, linguistic cues also signal affiliation with particular groups or gangs, further shaping their identity and image. For instance, musicians affiliated with the Crips gang are noted for their distinctive dance, the “*Crip Walk*,” or “*C-Walk*,” which further emphasizes their unique cultural and social identity. Therefore, in this analysis I will be examining the linguistic varieties employed by Kendrick Lamar in his lyrics to confirm these observations and identify the distinctive features of his lyricism.

Lamar was born and raised in the city of Compton in California, a locale renowned for its gang violence and the prevalence of gang members. It can be reasonably presumed that these circumstances have shaped his life, and particularly his vocabulary. In this context, it will be necessary to analyse his use of register and dialect. With regard to the issue of dialect, we shall be examining words that are specific to the region of his birth and his environment. The focus of this analysis will be on the register or registers that Lamar is using most frequently, as well as on any instances of register change throughout the album.

#### 2.1.4.1. Dialect

Dialect is a phenomenon that gives rise to linguistic diversity. To be precise, it pertains to the geographical variety of language (Malmkjæker 1991, 123). Leech posits that the variety is not solely contingent upon the geographical area, but also upon social dialects, which manifest in different social classes or communities (1991, 9). The linguistic variation within dialects can be remarkably diverse, extending to the point that neighboring villages may exhibit distinct linguistic features and characteristics. A review of Kendrick Lamar's biography reveals the influence of dialect influenced by both geographical locations, specifically Compton, California, and social status on his use of dialect. Although Lamar's social status underwent considerable change time, from his humble origins in a disadvantaged area to his ascension to one of the most celebrated rappers, his lyrical style exhibits a distinct slang and deviation from standard English.

#### 2.1.4.2. Register

The term register encompasses a variety of perspectives regarding the diversity of texts. The term register is dependent upon the medium of communication, whether written or spoken, as well as the social dynamics between the communicator and recipient, and the degree of formality inherent in the communicative context (Leech 1991, 9). Agha further develops this definition, proposing that specific registers are linked to various social practices, occupations, levels of respect, etiquette, and demonstrations of civility from a functional perspective (Agha 1999, 216). The categorization of text or speech varieties into basic classifications, as adopted in this thesis, is based on Joos's research in the book *The Five Clocks* (Joos 1961).

- *Casual register* denotes a mode of communication commonly observed among friends. The use of slang, informal language, occasional vulgarities, frequent interruptions, and colloquial expressions is often indicative of this register.
- *Consultative register* is a formal mode of communication typically employed in professional contexts, such as lawyer-defendant interactions. It maintains an element of formality and professionalism, while also fostering a dialogue that is friendly yet conducted with professionalism.
- *Formal register* is employed in various formal settings, such as courtrooms or business meetings, where communication is characterised by its impersonal nature and adherence to established protocols. It is a mode of communication commonly employed between individuals who may be unfamiliar with each other yet necessitate a respectful and professional exchange.
- *Intimate register* comprises a personal form of communication primarily reserved for close family members or individuals in intimate relationships. It is distinguished by its informality and is reserved for the individuals or social group involved. This register may encompass both verbal and non-verbal modes of communication.

- *Frozen* register pertains to the utilization of specific terminology within particular contexts. In such circumstances, the mode of communication remains consistent, and the phrasing remains unchanged (Glazzard & Palmer 2015, 7–8).

### **2.1.5. Features**

Although the album is primarily a creation of Kendrick Lamar, it features contributions from several other notable artists who provide their own verses on his songs. In this context, these contributions are referred to as “features.” These featured verses can serve multiple purposes. Firstly, they can enhance the narrative that Lamar is constructing by incorporating perspectives from fellow artists who have experienced similar socio-cultural environments, thereby enriching the thematic depth and authenticity of the storytelling. This can be seen in the song “*m.A.A.d city*” where rapper Mc Eiht contributes with a verse, as another person born in Compton. This inclusion of diverse voices not only broadens the scope of the narrative but also offers listeners a multifaceted view of the themes being explored.

Additionally, features can act as a collaborative project, linking Lamar with other prominent artists to cater to the interests of fans who appreciate the work of all involved musicians. This collaborative element not only amplifies the album's appeal by bringing together fan bases of the different artists but also fosters a sense of community and shared experience among the artists and their audiences.

It is also necessary to state that I will not be analyzing features that are on this album, as in this thesis I will be solely focusing on Kendrick Lamar’s artistic work, to maintain a clear and concise focus on his unique style and creative vision, as opposed to the stylistic choices of other artists such as Jay Rock, who contributed to the album. By limiting the scope to only Lamar’s work, the thesis will provide a more in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the personal issues and cultural influences present in this album.

### **2.1.6. Intros and outros of the songs**

In this thesis, I will be giving particular attention to the beginning and ending segments of the songs. The so-called intros and outros of songs are strategically positioned at their beginning and end, respectively. These segments often contain spoken word elements rather than singing or rapping, and, in this album, they characteristically feature discourse between Lamar's family members or friends. These components are integral in establishing the song's atmosphere and providing additional context that can aid the listener in comprehending its meaning. In the context of storytelling, these segments might also serve to indicate the timeline, thereby enhancing the narrative structure.

In examining the musical works of Kendrick Lamar, it is crucial to consider not only the lyrics themselves but also the spoken word elements that are included in the intros and outros, which typically contain discourse between people. These elements will not be analysed in terms of previous categories, however, they will play a crucial role in the understanding of the context, as they serve to fill in the story that the author is pushing through his songs. These elements



serve to connect the different parts of the song, thereby creating a more complete and cohesive narrative experience for the listener. It is therefore crucial to recognize these spoken word elements as an intrinsic and indispensable aspect of the artist's creative expression.

In the subsequent section, I will apply the defined methodology to the selected album to address the research questions outlined in the "Introduction." To reiterate, these questions are: (1) How and why does Lamar use figures of speech, foregrounding, dialect, and register? (2) How do these stylistic elements contribute to the atmosphere that Lamar seeks to create?

### 3. Practical part

In the practical part, my goal will be to analyse songs on the album. To gain a comprehensive understanding of Kendrick Lamar's usage of figures of speech it is important to identify the various types of figures of speech that he employs. Once identified, my next step will be to discern the intended purpose behind each usage of these figures of speech and gain in-depth understanding of the ways in which the author employs them to convey the message. For the sake of the length of the thesis, I will analyse only four songs in depth in this part, while the rest are analysed in appendices.

#### 3.1. Analysis of the song "Sherane a.k.a Master Splinter's Daughter"

*[Intro]*

*Lord God, I come to you a sinner  
And I humbly repent for my sins  
I believe that Jesus is Lord  
I believe that You raised him from the dead  
I would ask that Jesus come to my life  
And be my Lord and Savior  
I receive Jesus to take control of my life  
And that I may live for him from this day forth  
Thank you, Lord Jesus, for saving me with your precious blood  
In Jesus' name, amen*

*[Verse]*

*I met her at this house party on El Segundo and Central  
She had the credentials of strippers in Atlanta  
Ass came with a hump, from the jump she was a camel  
I want to ride like Arabians, push an '04 Mercedes-Benz  
"Hello, my name is Kendrick," she said, "No, you're handsome"  
Whispered in my ear, disappeared, then found her dancin'  
Ciara had played in the background  
The parade music we made had us all wearin' shades now, cool  
"Where you stay?" She said, "Down the street from Dominguez High"  
Okay, I know that's borderline Compton or Paramount*

*"Well, is it Compton?" "No," she replied  
Then quickly start battin' her eyes  
I strictly had wanted her thighs around me  
Seventeen with nothin' but pussy stuck on my mental  
My motive was rather sinful,  
"What you tryna get into?"  
She didn't tell, just gave me her Nextel  
Dropped the number, we chirped the whole summer, and, well  
The summer had passed, and now I'm likin' her  
Conversation we havin' probably enticin' her  
Who can imagine? Maybe my actions'll end up wifin' her  
Love or lust, regardless, we'll fuck 'cause the trife in us  
It's deep-rooted, the music of bein' young and dumb  
Is never muted, in fact, it's much louder where I'm from  
We know a lot 'bout each other, her mother was a crack addict  
She live with her granny and her younger two brothers  
Her favorite cousin Demetrius is irrepitable  
Family history of gangbangin' did make me skeptical  
But not enough to stop me from gettin' a nut  
"I wanna come over, what's up?"  
That's what I told her soon as this episode  
Of Martin go off, I'm tryna get off  
I was in heat like a cactus  
My tactics of bein' thirsty probably could hurt me  
But fuck it, I got some heart  
Grabbed my mama keys, hopped in the car, then, oh boy  
So now I'm down Rosecrans in a Caravan  
Passin' Alameda, my gas meter in need of a pump  
I got enough to get me through the traffic jam  
At least I hope, 'cause my pockets broke as a promise, man  
I'm thinkin' 'bout that sex  
Thinkin' 'bout her thighs or maybe kissin' on her neck or maybe what  
position's next  
Sent a picture of her titties, blowin' up my texts  
I looked at 'em and almost ran my front bumper into Corvette  
Enthused by the touch of a woman, she's a masseuse  
And I'm a professional pornstar when off the Goose  
I had a fifth in the trunk like Curtis Jackson for ransom  
I'm hopin' to get her loose like an Uncle Luke anthem  
I'm two blocks away, two hundred and fifty feet  
And six steps from where she stay, she wavin' me 'cross the street  
I pulled up, a smile on my face, and then I see  
Two niggas, two black hoodies, I froze as my phone rang*

*[Outro]*  
*Please leave your message for three-two-three*  
*Record your message after the tone*  
*Kendrick, where you at?*  
*Damn, I'm sittin' here waitin' on my van*  
*You told me you was gon' be back in fifteen minutes*  
*Man, I gotta go up to the county buildin', man, these kids ready to eat*  
*I'm ready to eat, shit*  
*I gotta get them food stamps, come on now*  
*You on your way or what?*  
*I hope you ain't out there messin' with them damn hoodrats out there, shit*  
*'Specially that lil' crazy-ass girl Sherane*  
*And plus you got school tomorrow*  
*You keep fuckin' around in them streets, you ain't gon' pass to the next grade*  
*Eleventh grade*  
*(Is that Kendrick on the phone?)*  
*Your daddy callin' about some damn dominoes (Let me holler at him)*  
*He want to holler at you too, go ahead, Kenny, go'n, shit*  
*Hello? Yak, where my motherfuckin' dominoes at?*  
*(Kenny), What?*  
*I'm on his voicemail, damn fool (Oh), shit*  
*Yak, where my motherfuckin' dominoes at?*  
*This the second time I asked you to bring my fuckin' dominoes*  
*Just give me the damn phone, shit, don't hang up, damn, let me*  
*Kendrick, when you get this message, man, call me back (Keep losin' my*  
*goddamn dominoes, we gon' have to go in the backyard)*  
*I need to know when you gon' bring back my damn car (And squab, homie)*  
*This man fussin' 'bout some damn dominoes*  
*It ain't all that serious, fuck, damn dominoes*  
*Shit, I'ma miss my damn appointment, fuck*  
*Fuck some damn dominoes, nobody wanna hear that*  
*Nobody wanna hear your ass*  
*Matter fact, cut my motherfuckin' oldies back on*  
*You killin' my motherfuckin' vibe*

The first song of the album chosen for analysis is “*Sherane a.k.a Master Splinter’s Daughter.*” The song serves as an introduction to the album. The beginning contains a sinner’s prayer which sets the atmosphere of the album, where Kendrick repels from his sins. Concurrently, he introduces the character of Sherane, a pivotal figure recurrent throughout the album, whose significance extends to subsequent tracks such as “*Poetic Justice.*”

### 3.1.1. Figures of speech

When it comes to figures of speech, there are metaphors, synecdoche and metonymy to be found in the lyrics of this song.

The metaphors are the most frequent ones. The use of them is diverse, one of them being self-censoring, which can be seen here:

1. *“Ass came with a hump, from the jump she was a camel”*
2. *“I want to ride like Arabians, push an '04 Mercedes-Benz”*

In line (1), Kendrick Lamar employs a metaphor likening the volume of Sherane’s behind to a camel hump. This comparison forces the listener to forge a mental connection between the two terms, thereby elucidating Lamar’s observation without necessitating a pause to judge the line for potential disrespect or tactlessness. Subsequently, in line (2), this observation seamlessly transitions into a depiction of desire, specifically sexual intercourse. Lamar reinforces this imagery by referencing Arabians, who historically rode both camels and older model Mercedes-Benz cars, thereby further contextualizing the choice of metaphors.

Another reason for the usage of figures of speech is their capacity to enrich a situation by establishing a connection to the associated emotion.

3. *“Ciara had played in the background”*

In the line (3) the author constructs an atmosphere with the metonymy “Ciara” where the listener can imagine Ciara's music playing in the background. It can be assumed that the specific album playing in this scenario was “*Goodies*,” considering its release in 2004. This timeframe aligns with the narrative context of Lamar's album “*good kid, m.A.A.d city*,” which is set during the same period. Lamar himself references his age as seventeen during this time, as evident in the line “*Seventeen with nothin' but pussy stuck on my mental.*”

When considering metonymy, its occurrence may not be as prevalent as metaphors, yet instances of its usage can be identified within these lyrics:

4. *“It's deep-rooted, the music of bein' young and dumb”*
5. *“Is never muted, in fact, it's much louder where I'm from”*

In (4), the term “*music*” symbolizes the sensation of being “*young and dumb*,” leveraging the volume of the music to amplify the notions of youthfulness and folly. Conversely, in (5), the phrase “*never muted*” insinuates an enduring quality to this sensation, suggesting an inability to suppress or alter this behavioral tendency. Furthermore, the assertion “*in fact, it's much louder where I'm from*” implies a heightened prevalence of such behavior within his community compared to others, highlighting the significant influence of environmental factors on individual conduct. This suggests that he is under the impression that his actions are not

solely affected by his personal choice but are profoundly shaped by upbringing and surroundings.

6. *“I was in heat like a cactus”*

The author adeptly intertwines two metaphors within the lyrics of this song. He first mentions the image of the Arabs riding camels and then uses the metaphor “*cactus*” in (6) and both are happening in the desert. Metaphor of a desert can be understood as an empty place where no one can fulfil his needs both physical and emotional as there is nothing to find there. It is a common trope in literature, and we can find it also in the work of T. S. Eliot called “*The Waste Land*” where he uses the desert as a metaphor for spiritual emptiness and decay in a modern society. This shows Lamar’s ability of connecting two seemingly unrelated metaphors together to create this imagery and unified message.

7. *“I’m hopin’ to get her loose like an Uncle Luke anthem”*

Another instance of metaphorical usage, aimed at conveying the artist's intentions and eliciting a response from the listener is “*Uncle Luke anthem*” which is a direct reference to a member of rap group called “*2 Live Crew*” whose name was “*Uncle Luke.*” By referencing their album, “*As Nasty As They Wanna Be,*” Lamar draws a parallel between the album's controversial content and the portrayal of the woman as “loose,” suggesting a lack of restraint or moral boundaries. It is worth noting that “*As Nasty As They Wanna Be*” was considered so obscene which led to its classification as the first legally obscene album (Deflem 2019). This was due to the songs containing many explicit sexual lyrics.

8. *“Two niggas, two black hoodies, I froze as my phone rang”*

The sentence (8) contains an instance of a synecdoche, in which Lamar refers to the “*two niggas*” as “*two black hoodies*” based on their clothing. From the context it is clear that Lamar lacks familiarity with them, leading to their dehumanization by reducing them to their clothing — “*black hoodies.*”

### 3.1.2. Honest Deceptions

The first song does not contain many cases of phenomena from the category “*Honest Deceptions.*” However, one of them is present in the line:

9. *“Seventeen with nothin’ but pussy stuck on my mental”*

Lamar employs exaggeration through hyperbole in the line (9) suggesting a preoccupation with sexual intercourse. He strategically deploys hyperbole to underscore the recurring theme of grappling with the distinction between love and lust prevalent throughout the album. This exaggerated expression serves to foreground his internal conflict, particularly considering his

youthful age and the challenges of navigating complex emotions without the clarity that comes with maturity.

10. *“And I’m a professional pornstar when off the Goose”*

Through the hyperbole “*professional pornstar*” in (10) Lamar explains how alcohol consumption, particularly Grey Goose Vodka referred to as “*Goose*,” enhances his sexual performance. By likening himself to a “*professional pornstar*,” he suggests the profound impact of alcohol on his abilities. Moreover, this phrase conveys the notion that alcohol can provide a positive influence on individuals, particularly in the terms of sexual experiences, challenging the prevailing narrative of its solely negative effects. Notably, Lamar's struggles with alcohol are further explored in the later song titled “*Swimming Pools (Drank)*.”

The pervasive irony within this song narrative where a contrast emerges between the protagonist's anticipation of a romantic relationship and the unforeseen turn of events. Initially, the protagonist eagerly anticipates meeting Sherane with the expectation of engaging in sexual activity. However, the narrative takes an unexpected twist, resulting in the protagonist encountering two unfamiliar characters, as described in line (9). This narrative device underscores the danger that can accompany romantic pursuits when one's judgment is full of love, as seen in line (8). Thus, the author illustrates how the preoccupation with romantic endeavors can inadvertently lead to perilous circumstances.

### 3.1.3. Foregrounding

There is not present parallelism or repetition in these lyrics.

### 3.1.4. Varieties of language

When looking at the dialect we can see the contracted form of the words such as “*nothin*” in (9) or “*hopin*” in (7). What is especially noticeable is African American Vernacular English contained in the lyrics, such as the word “*nigga*” in (8). One of the other instances of the use of African American Vernacular English is in (11) omitting the auxiliary verb “*are*”.

11. *“Conversation we havin' probably enticin' her”*

The presence of contracted forms such as “*didn't*” or “*you're*” and apocope “*dancin*” or “*havin*” indicates the casual register of the song. Such linguistic phenomena are characteristic of colloquial language. On the other hand, lines like (9) may suggest an inclination towards an intimate register, as Lamar articulates his sentiments in a manner that conveys a sense of personal disclosure. Nonetheless, given the public context depicted within the song, I argue that the predominant register remains casual, as Lamar appears to treat his expressions as non-confidential or secretive.

### 3.2. Analysis of the song “Bitch, Don't Kill My Vibe”

*[Chorus 1: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise, Kendrick Lamar]*

*I am a sinner*

*Who's prob'ly gonna sin again*

*Lord, forgive me, Lord, forgive me*

*Things I don't understand*

*Sometimes I need to be alone*

*Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe*

*I can feel your energy from two planets away,*

*I got my drink, I got my music, I would share it, but today I'm yellin'*

*Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe*

*Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe*

*[Verse 1: Kendrick Lamar]*

*Look inside of my soul and you can find gold and maybe get rich*

*Look inside of your soul and you can find out it never exist*

*I can feel the changes, I can feel a new life,*

*I always knew life can be dangerous, I can say that I like a challenge*

*And you tell me it's painless, you don't know what pain is*

*How can I paint this picture when the color blind is hangin' witcha?*

*Fell on my face and awoke with a scar, another mistake livin' deep in my heart*

*Wear it on top of my sleeve in a flick, I can admit that it did look like yours*

*Why you resent every makin' of his?*

*Tell me your purpose is petty again*

*But even a small lighter can burn a bridge, even a small lighter can burn a bridge*

*[Pre-Chorus: Kendrick Lamar]*

*I can feel the changes,*

*I can feel the new people round me just wanna be famous,*

*you can see that my city found me then put me on stages,*

*to me, that's amazin' to you, that's a quick check,*

*with all disrespect, let me say this*

*[Chorus 1: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise, Kendrick Lamar]*

*I am a sinner*

*Who's prob'ly gonna sin again*

*Lord, forgive me, Lord, forgive me*

*Things I don't understand*

*Sometimes I need to be alone*

*Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe*

*I can feel your energy from two planets away,*

*I got my drink, I got my music,*

*I would share it, but today I'm yellin'  
Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe  
Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe*

*[Verse 2: Kendrick Lamar]*

*I'm tryna keep it alive and not compromise the feelin' we love  
You're tryna keep it deprived and only co-sign what radio does  
And I'm lookin' right past ya, we live in a world, we live in a world  
On two different axles, you live in a world, you livin' behind  
The mirror, I know what you're scared of, the feeling of feeling emotions  
inferior  
This shit is vital, I know you had to, this shit is vital, I know you had to  
Die in a pitiful vain, tell me a watch and a chain is way more believable  
Give me a feasible gain, rather a seasonal name, I'll let the people know  
This is somethin' you can blame on yourselves, you can remain stuck in a box  
I'ma breakout and then hide every lock, I'ma breakout and then hide every  
lock*

*[Pre-Chorus: Kendrick Lamar]*

*I can feel the changes,  
I can feel the new people round me just wanna be famous.  
You can see that my city found me then put me on stages.  
To me, that's amazin' to you, that's a quick check,  
with all disrespect, let me say this*

*[Chorus 1: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise, Kendrick Lamar]*

*I am a sinner  
Who's prob'ly gonna sin again  
Lord, forgive me, Lord, forgive me  
Things I don't understand  
Sometimes I need to be alone  
Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe  
I can feel your energy from two planets away,  
I got my drink, I got my music,  
I would share it, but today I'm yellin'  
Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe  
Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe*

*[Bridge: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise, Anna Wise]*

*Bitch, don't kill my vibe, you ain't heard the coast  
Like this in a long time, don't you see that long line?  
And they waitin' on Kendrick like the 1st and the 15th  
Threes in the air, I can see you are in sync  
Hide your feelings, hide your feelings, now, what you better do*



*I'll take your girlfriend then put that pussy on the pedestal*

*[Chorus 2: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise, Anna Wise]*

*Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe*

*Walk out the door and they scream, "It's  
alive!"*

*My New Year's resolution is to stop all the pollution*

*Talk too motherfuckin' much, I got my drink, I got my music*

*I say, bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe*

*Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe*

*[Skit]*

*"K-Dot, get in the car, nigga!*

*Come on, we finna roll out!*

*Nigga, I got a pack of blacks and a beat CD*

*Get yo' freestyles ready!*

The song “*Bitch, Don’t Kill My Vibe*” serves as a commentary on the state of rap music in 2012. In contrast to merely advancing the storyline, the song encapsulates Lamar's personal vision of the essence of rap and the importance of authenticity. He himself said in the interview in *Complex*: “That’s really one big subliminal at everybody getting mixed in a situation where everyone wants to have creative control. That’s the vibe I wanted to kill” (Ahmed, 2023).

### **3.2.1. Figures of speech**

The song “*Bitch, Don’t Kill My Vibe*” contains many phenomena from the category figures of speech, as can be seen in the line:

1. *“I can feel your energy from two planets away,”*

In terms of synecdoche, the “*energy*” in (1) functions as a representation of human essence, including emotions, attitudes, their outlook on life, and their overall presence. It aligns with the central theme of the song, which revolves around Lamar's desire for the preservation of his positive vibes. By emphasizing the significance of sensing others' energy, Lamar underscores the importance of surrounding himself with positivity and avoiding interactions that may disrupt his inner peace. The emphasis is further empowered by repetition in chorus.

As in the first song, the prevalence of metaphors can be observed in this one as well.

2. *“Look inside of my soul and you can find gold and maybe get rich”*
3. *“Look inside of your soul and you can find out it never exist”*

In the opening verse (2) he employs a metaphor to convey a deeper message about his identity. By inviting the listener into his innermost self, he suggests that beneath the surface lies

something valuable and precious, the metaphorical “gold” within his soul. This metaphor implies that gaining insight into Lamar's character can be rewarding, as it unveils aspects of his persona that are enriching and valuable. Furthermore, the phrase “*maybe get rich*” suggests that the rewards extend beyond mere material wealth but rather, it can lead to the potential personal enrichment and fulfillment that comes from understanding and connecting with Lamar on a deeper level. In the subsequent verse (3), Lamar presents a contrasting perspective. Here, he says that one may discover that the essence of their being, represented by the concept of the “*soul*,” is non-existent. This statement implies a skepticism towards the authenticity of others' people, implying that some individuals lack the genuine substance or qualities that he believes define his own identity.

Lamar's utilization of metaphors extends to a satirical dimension, where he employs them as a means of mocking, as can be seen in the following lines.

4. “*How can I paint this picture when the color blind is hangin' witcha?*”

Lamar complains in (4) about the individuals surrounding him and expresses his discomfort in their presence. Here, the metaphor “*paint this picture*” symbolizes his attempt to articulate his thoughts and ideas effectively. The term “*color blind*” represents individuals who are either unwilling or unable to comprehend his perspective. Just as a painter requires colors to render a picture comprehensible, Lamar requires receptivity and understanding from his audience to convey his message accurately. When confronted with individuals who lack this openness, conveying his ideas becomes challenging, comparable to painting a picture without the necessary colors for clarity.

5. “*But even a small lighter can burn a bridge, even a small lighter can burn a bridge*”

The introduction of this thesis highlighted Lamar's upbringing in Compton, a city notorious for its rough neighborhoods and gang activity. This background is reflected in the verse (5) where the metaphorical use of “*bridge*” symbolizes the connection between his past life, characterised by the presence of gang members and other negative influences, and his present life as a musician pursuing his passions. The “*small lighter*” represents Lamar's starting passion for music in his youth, which serves as a catalyst for his transformation from a potential gangster to a dedicated artist.

6. “*I can feel the changes, I can feel a new life*”

Lamar displays his thoughts and emotions publicly, although he chooses to hide them behind the metaphors. As he advances in his career and produces more music, his success continues to escalate. He articulates this evolution in the line (6). By likening his experience to birth, Lamar vividly captures the sense of transformation and renewal that he perceives in his journey. It reflects his anticipation and recognition of the positive changes unfolding in his life, affirming his intuition regarding the trajectory of his career and personal growth.

7. *"I got my drink, I got my music, I would share it, but today I'm yellin'"*

The phrase *"I got my drink, my music"* in (7) exhibits potential for metonymic interpretation, beyond its superficial connotation. The term *"drink"* operates metonymically to symbolize relaxation or escapism, as individuals seek temporary escape from reality with the use of alcohol. Concurrently, *"music"* may function metonymically to denote both enjoyment and Lamar's artistic vocation. It embodies his sense of pride and accomplishment, within the cultural landscape and resonating deeply with his audience. Thus, the phrase encapsulates Lamar's multifaceted sources of gratification and fulfillment, whether derived from the elemental joys of existence or the profound satisfaction inherent in creative expression and cultural impact.

8. *"You can see that my city found me then put me on stages."*

Lamar employs the metonymy *"stages"* in (8) to portray both his rise within the music industry and the global reach of his artistry. It suggests widespread recognition of his work, from his hometown to international platforms. *"Stages"* encompasses both physical performance spaces and broader opportunities within the music industry, reflecting Lamar's journey to fame and success. Furthermore, the use of metonymy *"city"* in (8) is to pay homage to his fans and family, who are represented under said word.

9. *"Threes in the air, I can see you are in sync"*

The use of metonymy to represent his surroundings can also be seen in (9), where he pays tribute to his West Coast roots. Here, *"threes"* refers to the three fingers forming a *"W"* gesture, symbolizing affiliation with the West Coast. This hand sign is a nod to the region's cultural identity and contrasts with the *"E"* sign commonly associated with the East Coast, particularly New York.

### **3.2.2. Honest Deceptions**

The use of hyperbole is not prevalent in this text, although one can be found here in the line (1). This hyperbolic expression enhances the depiction of perceiving an energy. By extending it with *"from two planets away,"* Lamar emphasizes the perceptibility and intensity of this energy, suggesting a profound and unmistakable connection. However, the hyperbolic nature of the statement underscores its impossibility in a literal sense, highlighting the exaggerated yet impactful nature of it.

### **3.2.3. Foregrounding**

Following line is present both in the name of the song and in the chorus, repeated several times:

10. *"Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe"*

As previously mentioned, Lamar's message in the song is to protect his personal space and preserve his preferred state of enjoyment, referred to as his “vibe.” To emphasize it, he employs repetition. The phrase “*Bitch, don't kill my vibe*” in (10), recurs multiple times throughout the lyrics and serves as the title of the song itself. This deliberate repetition reinforces the central message, urging the listener to pay close attention to Lamar's plea for uninterrupted state.

The repetition in (5) foregrounds the message that even a seemingly insignificant change can have profound consequences and serve as a pivotal moment in one's life trajectory.

### 3.2.4. Varieties of language

Dialect used in the song is again African American Vernacular English using the words like “*witcha*” in (4). There are also instances of simplified syntax, such as omission of the demonstrative pronoun “*that*” in (11).

1. *“I'm tryna keep it alive and not compromise the feelin' we love”*

In the terms of register, there are present contracted forms and apocopes, indicating casual register. Contracted forms can be found for example in (10) “*don't*” and apocopes in (7) such as “*yellin*” and in (4) “*hangin*”. The song is also very explicit, containing the slur “*bitch*” in (10) which is repeated in the chorus of the song. This is why I argue the register of the song is casual.

### 3.3. Analysis of the song “good kid”

*[Verse 1]*

*Look inside these walls and you see I'm havin' withdrawals*

*Of a prisoner on his way*

*Trapped inside your desire to fire bullets that stray*

*Track attire just tell you I'm tired and ran away*

*I should ask a choir: "What do you require*

*To sing a song that acquire me to have faith?"*

*As the record spin I should pray*

*For the record, I recognize that I'm easily prey*

*I got ate alive yesterday*

*I got animosity buildin', it's prob'ly big as a buildin'*

*Me jumpin' off of the roof is me just playin' it safe*

*But what am I 'posed to do when the topic is red or blue*

*And you understand that I ain't*

*But know I'm accustomed to just a couple that look for trouble*

*And live in the street with rank*

*No better picture to paint than me walkin' from Bible study*

*And called his homies because he had said he noticed my face*

*From a function that tooken place, they was wonderin' if I bang*

*Step on my neck and get blood on your Nike checks  
I don't mind 'cause one day you'll respect  
The good kid, m.A.A.d city*

*[Verse 2]*

*All I see is strobe lights, blindin' me in my hindsight  
Findin' me by myself, promise me you can help  
In all honesty I got time to be copacetic until  
You had finally made decision to hold me against my will  
It was like a head-on collision that folded me standing still  
I can never pick out the difference and grade a cop on the bill  
Every time you clock in the morning, I feel you just want to kill  
All my innocence while ignorin' my purpose to persevere  
As a better person; I know you heard this and probably in fear  
But what am I 'posed to do when the blinkin' of red and blue  
Flash from the top of your roof and your dog has to say woof  
And you ask: "Lift up your shirt," because you wonder if a tattoo  
Of affiliation can make it a pleasure to put me through  
Gang files, but that don't matter because the matter is racial profile  
I heard 'em chatter: "He's prob'ly young, but I know that he's down  
Step on his neck as hard as your bullet-proof vest  
He don't mind, he know we'll never respect  
The good kid, m.A.A.d. city."*

*[Verse 3]*

*All I see in this room: 20's, Xannies and these 'shrooms  
Grown-up candy for pain, can we live in a sane society?  
It's entirely stressful upon my brain  
You hired me as a victim,  
I quietly hope for change when violence is the rhythm, inspired me to obtain  
The silence in this room with 20's, Xannies and 'shrooms  
Some grown-up candy, I lost it, I feel it's nothin' to lose  
The streets sure to release the worst side of my best  
Don't mind, 'cause now you ever in debt to good kid, m.A.A.d. City*

The seventh song on the album, and also first half of its title “*good kid, m.A.A.d city*,” addresses Lamar's experience as a “*good kid*” surrounded by gang members and violence. In the eyes of authorities, this association makes him indistinguishable from the gang members. This theme connects to the song “*Poetic Justice*,” where Lamar is attacked by two unknown people in black hoodies. In the seventh track, he is racially profiled by the police, highlighting the parallel between gang violence and police brutality. Both entities, the gangs and the police, are depicted as perpetuating violence on similar levels.

Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that this song is significantly less explicit compared to others on the album. Lamar deliberately omits slurs and vulgar language to emphasize his portrayal as a good person amidst a corrupt environment. This stylistic choice enhances the narrative of his struggle to maintain integrity and morality in a hostile setting.

### 3.3.1. Figures of speech

Author starts the song with informing the listeners about his current mental health state, which is described in the first line.

1. *“Look inside these walls and you see I'm havin' withdrawals of a prisoner on his way”*

In the sentence (1) the word “*walls*” in the context of mentality is usually used metaphorically for the fact that emotions and feelings are hidden behind the skull or inside the brain, that is surrounded by these metaphorical walls. The phrase “*look inside*” we can understand as “*listen to me*” as he is prepared to show the audience his true hidden emotions, which here are withdrawals.

2. *“Trapped inside your desire to fire bullets that stray”*
3. *“Track attire just tell you I'm tired and ran away”*

The line (2) goes back to the ones above, as he is trapped inside the walls in his head. He wants to solve this mental problem with “*firing bullets that stray*,” a metaphor which we can understand as he would do harmful decisions, which is implied by “*firing bullets*.” With the addition of “*that stray*” he says that he does not want to be held responsible for his decisions. When someone fires from a gun blindly, the bullet can stray and hit a person and do the damage. The person then might not feel responsible for this act, avoiding accountability. That is what Lamar is trying to say here. He wants to solve his problems without almost karmically being punished for it later.

4. *“For the record, I recognize that I'm easily prey”*
5. *“I got ate alive yesterday”*

Lamar compares himself metaphorically to the “*prey*” in (4) as he thinks of himself as being emotional and easily opens to people, which makes him a “*prey*” or a target for a person that wants to take advantage of his insecurities and emotions. He is also well aware of this fact. In the line (5) he tells us that he “*got ate yesterday*” which due to the previous metaphor means someone took advantage of him for being emotionally with them.

6. *“But what am I 'posed to do when the topic is red or blue”*
7. *“And you understand that I ain't”*

He uses in (6) wordplay on the known phrase “*white or black*” meaning topics have more than one side and cannot be judged easily. Not only that is present here, as he metaphorically uses

these two colors due to them being the most dominant gang colors present in the Compton area, his birthplace as mentioned in his biography. The red color stands for the gang of “*Bloods*,” while the blue stands for the “*Crips*,” which we can understand as two metonymies. The topic in this is the problem between these two gangs, which puts Kendrick in a complicated situation, as he is neither a member of “*Bloods*” or the “*Crips*.” The name of this song by itself can be interpreted as being connected to this fact, of his non-existing gang affiliation and him being “*good kid*” due to that.

8. *“But know I'm accustomed to just a couple that look for trouble”*
9. *“And live in the street with rank”*

He uses the word “*rank*” in (9) as a metaphor to explain to us that social status is present in the area he lives in, but not in the standard way of understanding how much money a person has but rather as his position in the hierarchy of a specific gang. Although ranks are common in the military, where there are people like general, major, private, gangs have a similar hierarchy, even though it is not possible for them to be official, due to them being an illegal organization.

10. *“All I see is strobe lights, blindin' me in my hindsight”*
11. *“Findin' me by myself, promise me you can help”*

This metaphor of “*lights*” in (10) compares his inability to understand certain situations to the overwhelming effect of strobe lights blinding him, hindering his sight to see clearly.

12. *“You had finally made decision to hold me against my will”*
13. *“It was like a head-on collision that folded me standing still”*

With the metaphor “*head-on collision*” in (11), he compares the difficult situation to the car crash, which devastated him, thus not being able to “*standing still*,” or immobilized. It means that he was left in shock when finding out the decision that was made as stated “*against his will*.” It is not mentioned in the text what the decision was so it will be better to leave assumptions and try to understand it in general.

14. *“But what am I 'posed to do when the blinkin' of red and blue”*
15. *“Flash from the top of your roof and your dog has to say woof”*

In this situation in (14), he again uses the metaphor “*red and blue*” but in this context due to the blinking it is for the police, as they have red and blue light on the top of the roof of their cars. He then proceeds to use derogatory term for the police officers and refers to them as “*dog who has to say woof*,” implying that the police officer must obey by the rules and orders of his superior, and has not his own opinions or values, thus being a “*dog*” which usually obey their owners.

16. *“All I see in this room: 20's, Xannies and these 'shrooms”*
17. *“Grown-up candy for pain, can we live in a sane society?”*

The metonymy “*Grown-up candy*” in (17) stands for drugs, especially those mentioned, “20’s” standing for twenty dollars worth of marijuana in this specific context, “*xannies*” as for xanax, used to cure depressions, and “*shrooms*” as mushrooms, that have psychedelic effects on a user. He then specifies that he uses those mentioned drugs or “*candy*” for pain, creating a false reality for himself, while wishing the people around him were sane, rather than be violent gang members and robbers, if summarized, he wants people to have good moral values.

18. “*You hired me as a victim*”

19. “*I quietly hope for change when violence is the rhythm, inspired me to obtain*”

20. “*The silence in this room with 20's, Xannies and 'shrooms*”

He follows up the previous metonymy with the metaphor in (19), that the violence is the rhythm, implying presence of violence and rhythmical nature of it in the speaker’s environment. He then explains in (20) that the drugs that he seeks are for him to have a pause from this violence that surrounds him, thus being the “*silence*” that he is obtaining.

### 3.3.2. Honest Deceptions

Here again, Lamar does not include many hyperboles or irony in the song, as it is presented more seriously, although I found examples in the following lines:

21. “*I got animosity buildin', it's prob'ly big as a buildin'*”

22. “*Me jumpin' off of the roof is me just playin' it safe*”

The author with use of hyperbole in (21) exaggerates the notion of his animosity and compares it to being big as a “*buildin'*.” We can argue that it depends on the type of building whether his animosity is as big as a skyscraper or a regular two-story house, but the fact that he compared it to the building suggests that it is rather high. Also, it is not known who the animosity is, whether it is to the people that “*ate him alive*” in (5) where he sees himself as a “*prey*” or towards gang members whom he talks about in the next sentence (6). He stays with the topic of buildings and continues with the irony of him “*jumping off the roof*” in (22) which he states is safe for him. I would argue that because of the quick death that would be a consequence of him jumping off the building would be safer and easier for him then dealing with the gang activities and other people, which would make his life harder.

23. “*Every time you clock in the morning, I feel you just want to kill*”

24. “*All my innocence while ignorin' my purpose to persevere*”

Author plays with the irony of police officers that should be saving lives and protect him, creating ironic contrast between this and Lamar’s innocence and purpose. He then follows this thought with these lyrics.



In (18) he states that he was “*hired as a victim*,” employing irony to suggest that he was utilized by society to be a victim, rather than, again, be protected by the police, which is their job.

### 3.3.3. Foregrounding

As seen from the analysis above the author repeats in the two different contexts colors blue and red, standing for either police or gangs. Throughout the whole album these two subjects appear to be his two sources of struggles and troubles. By referring to them only by those colors here, I would argue that he does not differentiate between them, they are both on the same level for him. This also achieves the perception of both as being dehumanized in order to either preserve their privacy or to react to them in the same manner as they do to him, as an object, as just another gang member or criminal, instead of a living person.

Not only is he repeating the colors, but also lists the drugs that help him to escape reality twice in the (17) and (20), implying that they play a bigger role in his life. The fact that in the song “*m.A.A.d. city*” says: “*And they wonder why I rarely smoke now. Imagine if your first blunt had you foamin' at the mouth.*” suggests that these situations destroy him much more than other situations if the result of them is him getting into drugs that he says he doesn't use much.

### 3.3.4. Varieties of language

The dialect is the same as in previous songs, with African American Vernacular English dominating, with contracted form of mushrooms “*shrooms*” in (20) or leaving out the subject of the sentence in (25). Apocopes can be found in (14) “*blinkin*” or (24) “*ignorin*”.

25. “*Trapped inside your desire to fire bullets that stray*”

Due to the theme of the song and internal struggles which Lamar discusses on this track; I would argue the register is intimate. His open discussion about the drugs in (17) or (20) that is present in this song more than in the others, or his admission for being easily taken advantage of in (4) shows us his openness in this part of the album. This claim also supports the fact he left out explicit language from this track, indicating seriousness and intimacy of his delivery of lyrics.

### 3.4. Analysis of the song “*m.A.A.d city*”

*[Refrain]*

*If Pirus and Crips all got along  
They'd probably gun me down by the end of this song  
Seem like the whole city go against me  
Every time I'm in the street, I hear—  
Yawk! Yawk! Yawk! Yawk!*

*[Chorus]*

*Man down, where you from, nigga?*

*Fuck who you know—where you from, my nigga?  
Where your grandma stay, huh, my nigga?  
This m.A.A.d city I run, my nigga*

*[Verse]*

*Brace yourself, I'll take you on a trip down memory lane  
This is not a rap on how I'm slingin' crack or move cocaine  
This is cul-de-sac and plenty Cognac and major pain  
Not the drill sergeant, but the stress that weighin' on your brain  
It was me, L Boog, and Yan Yan, YG Lucky ride down Rosecrans  
It got ugly, wavin' yo' hand out the window — check yourself  
Uh, Warriors and Conans, hope euphoria can slow dance  
With society, the driver seat, the first one to get killed  
Seen a light-skinned nigga with his brains blown out  
At the same burger stand where \*\*\*\* hang out  
Now this is not a tape recorder sayin' that he did it  
But ever since that day, I was lookin' at him different  
That was back when I was nine, Joey packed the nine  
Pakistan on every porch is fine, we adapt to crime  
Pack a van with four guns at a time with the sliding door, fuck is up?  
Fuck you shootin' for if you ain't walkin' up, you fuckin' punk?  
Pickin' up the fuckin' pump, pickin' off you suckers  
Suck a dick or die or sucker punch  
A wall of bullets comin' from AK's, AR's, "Ayy, y'all—duck"  
That's what mama said when we was eatin' that free lunch  
Aw man, goddamn, all hell broke loose  
You killed my cousin back in '94, fuck yo' truce  
Now crawl your head in that noose  
You wind up dead on the news  
Ain't no peace treaty, just piecin' BGs up to pre-approve  
Bodies on top of bodies, IVs on top of IVs  
Obviously the coroner between the sheets like the isleys  
When you hop on that trolley, make sure your color's correct  
Make sure you're corporate, or they'll be callin' your mother collect  
They say the governor collect all of our taxes, except  
When we in traffic and tragic happens, that shit ain't no threat  
You movin' backwards if you suggest that you sleep with a TEC  
Go buy a chopper and have a doctor on speed dial, I guess  
m.A.A.d. city*

*[Chorus]*

*Man down, where you from, nigga?  
Fuck who you know—where you from, my nigga?  
Where your grandma stay, huh, my nigga?*

*This m.A.A.d city I run, my nigga*

*[Refrain: Kendrick Lamar & ScHoolboy Q]*

*If Pirus and Crips all got along  
They'd probably gun me down by the end of this song  
Seem like the whole city go against me  
Every time I'm in the street, I hear—  
Yawk! Yawk! Yawk!—*

*[Verse]*

*Fresh outta school 'cause I was a high school grad'  
Sleepin' in the living room of my mama's pad  
Reality struck, I seen the white car crash  
Hit the light pole, two niggas hopped out on foot and dashed (Watch out, cuz)  
My pops said I needed a job, I thought I believed him  
Security guard for a month and ended up leavin'  
In fact, I got fired 'cause I was inspired by all of my friends  
To stage a robbery, the third Saturday I clocked in  
Projects tore up, gang signs get thrown up (Sup?)  
Cocaine laced in marijuana  
And they wonder why I rarely smoke now  
Imagine if your first blunt had you foamin' at the mouth  
I was straight tweakin', the next weekend we broke even  
I made allegiance that made a promise to see you bleedin'  
You know the reasons but still'll never know my life  
Kendrick a.k.a. "Compton's Human Sacrifice"*

*[Verse]*

*If I told you I killed a nigga at sixteen, would you believe me?  
Perceive me to be innocent Kendrick you seen in the street  
With a basketball and some Now and Laters to eat?  
If I mentioned all of my skeletons, would you jump in the seat?  
Would you say my intelligence now is great relief?  
And it's safe to say that our next generation maybe can sleep  
With dreams of bein' a lawyer or doctor  
Instead of boy with a chopper that hold the cul-de-sac hostage  
Kill 'em all if they gossip The Children of the Corn,  
they vandalizin' the option of livin' a lie, drown their body with toxins  
Constantly drinkin' and drive  
Hit the powder, then watch this flame that arrive in his eye  
Listen, coward, the concept is aim and then bang it and slide  
Out that bitch with deposit, a price on his head, the tithes  
Probably go to the projects  
I live inside the belly of the rough, Compton, USA*

*Made me an Angel on Angel Dust, what?*

*[Interlude]*

*m.A.A.d city*

*Compton*

*[Outro/Skit]*

*Nigga, pass Dot the bottle, damn*

*You ain't the one that got fucked up*

*What you holdin' it for?*

*Niggas always actin' unsensitive and shit*

*Nigga, that ain't no word*

*Nigga, shut up*

*Hey, Dot, you good, my nigga?*

*Don't even trip*

*Just lay back and drink that*

The following song, which is the second half of the title track, offers a retrospective look at Lamar's past and how it shaped him as an individual. It builds on the theme introduced in the preceding song, where Lamar articulates his feelings as a "good kid" living in a "m.A.A.d city." This track delves deeper into the specifics of his experiences. For instance, the line "*Seen a light-skinned nigga with his brains blown out*" vividly describes Lamar witnessing a homicide, while "*That's what mama said when we was eatin' that free lunch*" alludes to his family's struggles and provides insight into his upbringing.

This song also provides context for Lamar's relationship with drugs, as he recounts an experience with marijuana laced with other substances. This incident discourages him from experimenting with drugs further, as reflected in the line, "*And they wonder why I rarely smoke now. Imagine if your first blunt had you foamin' at the mouth.*" The final verse serves as a reflection on his experiences, presenting the listener with the limited choices available to a person growing up in Compton.

Lamar also questions his credibility as a narrator, asking, "*If I told you I killed a nigga at sixteen, would you believe me?*" This line invites listeners to question the authenticity of his narrative. Is he really a credible narrator? It raises the possibility that Lamar might omit significant details to maintain his image as a "*good kid*" in a violent environment. The fact that he has never served time in prison suggests either that he is telling the truth or that he has never been caught. Ultimately, it is up to the listener to decide whether to believe his account or to question the omissions and potential biases in his storytelling.

### **3.4.1. Figures of speech**

I observed again prevalence of metaphors and metonymies in this song, such as:

1. *“Seem like the whole city go against me”*
2. *“Every time I'm in the street, I hear—Yawk! Yawk! Yawk! Yawk!”*

I would argue that the phrase *“the whole city”* in (1) can be understood here both as a metonymy or as a hyperbole. The metonymy here would be all of the gangs present in the city of Compton are against him as he does not have any gang affiliation, therefore being both friend and enemy of every gang. If he were a gang member of a certain gang, others would know his intentions and who his friends are, but while being non-affiliated nobody knows his true intentions due to this fact. The word *“street”* is commonly used in the author's lyrics throughout the album, metonymically representing the whole city where Kendrick lives and surrounds himself by it.

3. *“Uh, Warriors and Conans, hope euphoria can slow dance”*
4. *“With society, the driver seat, the first one to get killed”*

The usage of the metonymy *“the driver seat”* in (4) instead of using the word *“driver”* functions here as a form of dehumanization of the person that is deceased because of the homicide in order to show the lack of media cover and empathy shown with the situation that is surrounding Kendrick, who is repeatedly putting himself into the position of victim of society.

5. *“Pakistan on every porch is fine, we adapt to crime”*
6. *“Pack a van with four guns at a time with the sliding door, fuck is up?”*

The metaphor *“Pakistan”* is in (5) employed to compare crime existing in Compton to the state of Pakistan, which is known for drug trafficking, especially heroin, as Pakistan is used as a passageway to smuggle the drugs originated from Afghanistan (McCoy 2016).

7. *“You killed my cousin back in '94, fuck yo' truce”*
8. *“Now crawl your head in that noose”*
9. *“You wind up dead on the news”*

The author stated that someone, we as the listeners do not know who, killed his cousin when he was young in (7). He then metaphorically proceeds to tell him to end his life due to his previous actions, with the phrase *“crawl your head in that noose”* in (8), representing the hanging of a person. From what we know so far from his storytelling, I can argue that he is not a violent person, who would do the revenge himself, but here it can be seen that he is spiteful towards this person and wishes him the same destiny as the one that met his cousin in the hands of the said person.

10. *“Bodies on top of bodies, IVs on top of IVs”*
11. *“Obviously the coroner between the sheets like the Isleys”*

The *“IV”* is an acronym for a medical supply called intravenous drip that is used to insert fluids into the body of an injured person in the hospital. Kendrick here uses this to complement the

previous phrase in (10) “*Bodies on top of bodies*” meaning dead people, while “*IV*” stands for injured people who need them in order to survive.

12. “*When you hop on that trolley, make sure your color's correct*”
13. “*Make sure you're corporate, or they'll be callin' your mother collect*”

The word “*color*” metonymically standing in (12) for gang affiliation continuous to appear in the lyrics throughout the whole album as can be seen here. He warns the listener to be on the right side of gangs in order to not be injured while being present in the different city areas.

14. “*If I mentioned all of my skeletons, would you jump in the seat?*”
15. “*Would you say my intelligence now is great relief?*”

The metaphor in (14) “*skeletons*” comes from the phrase “*skeletons in the closet*” which means secrets. He is curious if revelation of his secrets would make his fans still support him. For them he might be perceived as a good person, but people know him only from what he is willing to reveal to them. It is also important to think of this in the broader way, as this song is right after one called “*good kid*” and him presenting himself as almost an anomaly in a world that is full of gangbanging and violence.

16. “*And it's safe to say that our next generation maybe can sleep*”
17. “*With dreams of bein' a lawyer or doctor*”
18. “*Instead of boy with a chopper that hold the cul-de-sac hostage*”

He wishes for a better future for the children that come after him, instead of affiliating with gangs. For this he uses the metaphor “*hold the cul-de-sac hostage*” in (18), “*cul-de-sac*” being the dead end of a street, usually round with houses around it. He mentioned young people or “*boy with a chopper*” from his surroundings are generating gang violence around it thus “*holding it hostage*,” making it impossible to move forward into the prosperous future, which he does not want for people who will be brought up in the city after him.

19. “*Constantly drinkin' and drive*”
20. “*Hit the powder, then watch this flame that arrive in his eye*”

The metaphor “*powder*” is in (20) used to not specifically name drug that the person uses but it is also to compare it to the gunpowder, which when ignited is very flammable, which he also mentioned in the same sentence where drugs that were used changed the eyes of the said person, and in them there could be seen “*flame*,” anger or joy from the life.

21. “*I live inside the belly of the rough, Compton, USA*”
22. “*Made me an Angel on Angel Dust, what?*”

From the metaphor “*belly of the rough*” in (21) the listener can understand that the city Compton is the center of crime and violence for Kendrick. He also reveals what the acronym in the name of this song means - m.A.A.d standing for “*Made me an Angel on Angel Dust*,” where metaphor “*Angel Dust*” stands for the drug PCP or phencyclidine. This is creating contrast between an “*angel*” who is perceived as divine, good and drugs, which are the opposite of divinity, often connected to criminality and violence.

### 3.4.2. Honest Deceptions

The first bars of the song “m.A.A.d city,” Kendrick Lamar opens with the sentence:

23. “*If Pirus and Crips all got along*”

24. “*They'd probably gun me down by the end of this song*”

The statement in (23) that the two rival gangs named “*Pirus*” which is a part of a gang “*Bloods*” and “*Crips*” could get along in order to hurt the author for his lyrics that denounce their lifestyle and expose the truth to the world throughout the use of music, is ironic. Kendrick captures here the desire for the two rival gangs to “*get along*,” which represents peace and unity and puts in contrast the fact that the end for the rivalry and peaceful thing would happen only to hurt a person, contradicting the peaceful message that it has.

While using the metaphor “*IVs*” for injured people, Lamar also used hyperbole here. The phrase “*bodies on top of bodies*” is used in (10) to exaggerate the number of deaths coming from the gang activities and overall homicides and any other crime that is present in his environment. He also links the “*coroner between the sheets like the isleys*” to this, comparing the bodies laying in the morgue on the tables to islands in the ocean which are close to themselves, but a person can pass next to them.

25. “*You movin' backwards if you suggest that you sleep with a TEC*”

26. “*Go buy a chopper and have a doctor on speed dial, I guess m.A.A.d. city*”

Kendrick ironically critiques here in (25) the ownership of a weapon, referred to as a “*TEC*” which is a semi-automatic pistol manufactured in the United States of America. While the gun owner thinks he is safe, because he always has this weapon with him, which is said by the fact that he sleeps with it, he actually is contributing to the gun problem that is happening in the area. He then adds to it in (26) that he should buy a “*chopper*” which is a slang word for assault rifle AK-47, giving him advice to upgrade his arsenal as the pistol is not enough for the problem that is present. To finish it the line “*have a doctor on a speed dial*” is telling the person Kendrick aims to that he will be most certainly injured due to him participating in the violence, advising to be prepared to call the ambulance.

### 3.4.3. Foregrounding

The chorus in this song is containing lines, where parallelism can be found:

27. *“Man down, where you from, nigga?”*
28. *“Fuck who you know—where you from, my nigga?”*
29. *“Where your grandma stay, huh, my nigga?”*
30. *“This m.A.A.d city I run, my nigga”*

The use of the parallel structure in the chorus aims at providing to the listener a feeling compared to being interrogated. The repeated word “*nigga*” at the end of every line in this context suggest the person is speaking at his “*enemy*” rather than a friend, as the rest of the text has intimidating connotations. This is interesting, as he uses the word in both positive and negative connotations in different situations.

31. *“But ever since that day, I was lookin' at him different”*
32. *“That was back when I was nine, Joey packed the nine”*

Repetition of “*nine*” is foregrounding the absurdity of the fact he was in contact with crime and weapons, represented here as “*nine*” which is a slang for 9mm pistol, since he was young.

#### **3.4.4. Varieties of language**

Lamar is explaining his observations here rather than talking about his emotional side, indicating casual register. The use of colloquial language, contracted forms and apocopes supports this claim.

Dialect is identical as in previous songs, usage of simplified syntax such as using “*ain't*” instead of “*there is not*” in “*Ain't no peace treaty, just piecin' BGs up to pre-approve,*” or omission of interrogative pronoun “*what*” in the phrase “*fuck is up?*” He also uses slang vocabulary for example in (26), where he employs the word “*chopper*” as a slang for automatic rifle AK-47.



### 3.5. Summary of the analysis

The present analysis underscores Lamar's utilization of various elements from the selected methodological framework to convey his message in a compelling manner, prompting listeners to engage critically with his lyrical content. In contemporary music, while intricate storytelling using figures of speech and other rhetorical devices is not always deemed essential for success, Lamar has demonstrated the opposite. His ability to combine detailed narratives of his upbringing and environment with infectious beats and fluid delivery has enabled him to achieve chart success and attain widespread acclaim, placing him among the ranks of revered rappers such as 2Pac, The Notorious B.I.G., and Nas.

His use of figures of speech serves multiple purposes, each contributing distinctively to his artistic expression. Firstly, figures of speech provide comedic relief, serving as a form of wit and entertainment within his lyrics. Secondly, he employs euphemisms to convey delicate or sensitive topics indirectly, often using comparisons or self-censorship techniques. Additionally, figures of speech enrich the emotional depth of situations by establishing connections between emotions and certain situations. Moreover, they are instrumental in creating atmospheres that resonate thematically with his message, exemplified in "*Sherane a.k.a Master Splinter's Daughter*," where he employs the metaphor of a desert to illustrate his thirst for a woman.

Although "*Honest Deceptions*" were not as prominent as figures of speech, Lamar utilized them strategically, particularly hyperboles, to emphasize the main themes of his songs in a deliberately exaggerated manner. The use of irony in his songs often served to inject humor into serious topics such as gang violence or police brutality and their severe consequences, which typically involve violence against innocent individuals or even death.

The category of "*Foregrounding*," which encompasses parallelism and repetition, served not only to reinforce the main ideas of the songs but also to compel listeners to engage with the central message repeatedly. Repetition, akin to a chorus often repeated two or three times within a song, played a crucial role in songs such as "*Bitch, Don't Kill My Vibe*." Here, Lamar repeatedly emphasized the core theme to underscore the importance of being uninterrupted and having the space to focus on his work and personal life.

In the last category of "*Varieties of language*," a predominant feature observed was the extensive use of African American Vernacular English, characterized by its distinctive slang, colloquial expressions, contracted forms, and informal language. Lamar's consistent utilization of these linguistic elements reflects his authenticity and connection to his roots in Compton. This choice is pivotal in establishing the authentic setting that Lamar aims to portray. It is evident that an ordinary person from Compton would not typically converse in formal English with a frozen register. Therefore, Lamar predominantly employs a casual register, occasionally incorporating elements of the intimate register. The intimate register functions almost as a form of foregrounding, drawing attention to specific aspects of Lamar's emotional landscape and internal struggles, thereby deepening the listener's engagement with his narrative.

The analysis presented in this thesis illuminates Kendrick Lamar's distinctive approach to employing figures of speech, foregrounding techniques, dialect, and register to craft compelling storytelling for his listeners. Lamar adeptly utilizes these literary and linguistic tools to create narratives that are not only engaging to listen to but also remain relevant in contemporary times. The stories he tells resonate because they reflect universal struggles that endure over time, while also addressing enduring issues such as gang violence that persist in today's world. Thus, Lamar's storytelling prowess transcends temporal boundaries, making his narratives both timeless and poignant.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This bachelor thesis focused on analyzing selected songs from Kendrick Lamar's album *good kid, m.A.A.d city*, with the specific aim of examining stylistic features such as figures of speech, repetition, parallelism, and other rhetorical devices. The aim was to identify these features and understand how Lamar uses them to convey messages and create the atmosphere of the album.

The methodology was based on Geoffrey Leech's book, *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*, with the necessary adaptations to suit the analysis of a rap album, which, although similar to poetry, has distinct characteristics.

For the sake of clarity, the thesis has been divided into two main parts. The first part deals with the theoretical background and introduces the framework for the analysis. The methodology subchapter provides essential definitions of the analysed concepts from linguistic stylistic theories and identifies their common features. The subchapter "Figures of Speech" introduces the definitions of metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche with detailed explanations and examples from the lyrics of the album. The "Honest Deceptions" subchapter describes exaggeration and irony, chosen because rappers often brag about money, fame and relationships, and irony is widely used in social commentary to explain complex issues without losing the listener's attention. The "Foregrounding" subchapter discusses parallelism and repetition, which are used to emphasise certain parts of the lyrics, highlighting the social issues Lamar addresses throughout the album. The "Varieties of Language" subchapter acquaints the reader with both register and dialect, essential to understanding the analysis of Lamar's dialect, which is significant given his roots in Compton, California. The "Featurings" subchapter explains that although Lamar collaborates with other musicians to enhance the musical experience, their contributions are not analysed as they are written by different people. Finally, the "Intros and Outros" subchapter discusses the presence of these elements in the songs. These segments, often consisting of spoken word, provide additional context to Lamar's storytelling and should be considered integral to the album rather than separate elements.

The second part of this bachelor thesis provides the practical part of the analysis of song lyrics. The analysis is divided into sub-chapters, each of which examines the lyrics of selected songs in chronological order, with specific examples provided.

The analysis of “Sherane a.k.a Master Splinter’s Daughter” revealed a predominant use of metaphors and a casual register, occasionally shifting to an intimate register. The subsequent song analysed, “Bitch Don’t Kill My Vibe,” showed a predominant use of metaphor. While the register was mostly casual, it appeared vaguer in presenting Lamar's internal struggles in comparison to the previous song. In “good kid,” the analysis yielded comparable results regarding the use of figures of speech, with an intimate register prevailing. Lamar articulates his internal struggles of residing in a violent city while striving to remain a good kid. The analysis of “m.A.A.d city” indicated a predominant use of metaphors and a casual register, as Lamar describes his observations of the events around him. The dialect he employs throughout the lyrics is African American Vernacular English, as indicated by simplified syntax, the omissions of words, and the apocope of certain sounds.

Overall, the analysis highlights the prevalent use of metaphors and a casual register in Kendrick Lamar's lyrics. The deliberate choice of employing a casual register serves a crucial communicative purpose, ensuring clarity and accessibility of his message across diverse social and geographical contexts. Its straightforwardness facilitates a deeper understanding of Lamar's perspective and presents him as relatable to ordinary individuals. Furthermore, the author's incorporation of vulgarities, informal language, slang, and colloquial expressions plays a pivotal role in depicting the environment of Compton and the presence of gang culture. Additionally, sporadic utilization of the intimate register fosters a sense of connection between Lamar and his audience by portraying his personal struggles, thereby contributing significantly to the establishment and growth of his fanbase.

In conclusion, Lamar employs a variety of figures of speech in diverse ways, whether to provide satirical or humorous comparisons or to convey more profound messages about his identity. Such devices facilitate the articulation of his thoughts in a more coherent and expedient manner. Furthermore, he alternates between intimate and informal registers, which facilitates the engagement of a broader audience, including listeners who may not be his typical fans.

The album demonstrates that even when presented with complex lyrics, full of figures of speech, foregrounding, and other stylistic elements, songs can still achieve commercial success and critical acclaim. Lamar’s combination of intricate lyrics and compelling music arguably constitutes a masterpiece that remains relevant over time.

## 5. Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřila na analýzu vybraných písní z alba Kendricka Lamara *good kid, m.A.A.d city*, se specifickým cílem prozkoumat stylistické rysy, jako jsou figury řeči, opakování, paralelismus a další rétorické prostředky. Cílem bylo tyto rysy identifikovat a pochopit, jak je Lamar využívá k předávání poselství a vytváření atmosféry alba.

Metodologie byla založena na knize Geoffreyho Leecheho *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* s nezbytnými úpravami, aby vyhovovala analýze rapového alba, které je sice podobné poezii, ale má odlišné charakteristiky.

Pro přehlednost byla práce rozdělena do dvou hlavních částí. První část, nazvaná „*Teoretický kontext*“, představuje rámec pro analýzu. Podkapitola metodologie poskytuje základní definice analyzovaných pojmů z lingvistických teorií stylistiky, identifikuje jejich společné rysy. Podkapitola „*Figures of Speech*“ zavádí definice metafor, metonymie a synecdoche, s podrobnými vysvětleními a příklady z textů alba. Podkapitola „*Honest Deceptions*“ popisuje nadsázku a ironii, zvolenou proto, že rappeři se často chlubí penězi, slávou a vztahy, a ironie převládá v sociálních komentářích, aby vysvětlila složitá témata, aniž by ztratila pozornost posluchače. Podkapitola „*Foregrounding*“ pojednává o paralelismu a opakování, používá se ke zdůraznění konkrétních částí textu, čímž se zdůrazňují sociální témata, kterým se Lamar věnuje v celém albu. Podkapitola „*Varieties of Language*“ seznamuje čtenáře s rejstříkem i dialektem, nezbytným pro pochopení analýzy Lamarova dialektu, který je významný vzhledem k jeho Comptonským, kalifornským kořenům. Podkapitola „*Featurings*“ vysvětluje, že zatímco Lamar spolupracuje s ostatními hudebníky na zlepšení hudebního zážitku, jejich příspěvky nejsou analyzovány, protože jsou autory různých jednotlivců. A konečně podkapitola „*Intros and Outros*“ pojednává o přítomnosti těchto prvků v písních. Tyto segmenty, často sestávající z mluveného slova, poskytují další kontext k Lamarovu vyprávění a měly by být považovány za nedílnou součást alba, spíše než za samostatné prvky.

Druhá část této bakalářské práce, nazvaná „*Praktická část*“, sestává z analýzy textů písní. Analýza je uspořádána do podkapitol, z nichž každá zkoumá texty vybraných písní v chronologickém pořadí, s uvedením konkrétních příkladů.

Analýza „*Sherane alias Master Splinter's Daughter*“ odhalila převládající použití metafor. Další analyzovaná píseň „*Bitch Don't Kill My Vibe*“ také vykazovala převládající použití metafor. V písni „*good kid*“ analýza ukázala podobné výsledky, pokud jde o používání básnických prostředků. Lamar vyjadřuje své vnitřní boje v násilném městě a zároveň se snaží zůstat dobrým člověkem. Analýza písně „*m.A.A.d city*“ naznačila převládající používání metafor. Dialekt, který používá v celém textu, je afroamerická hovorová angličtina, což je naznačeno zjednodušenou syntaxí, vynecháváním slov, specifickou slovní zásobou nebo smluvními formami, apokopy.

Celkově analýza zdůrazňuje převládající používání metafor a stručně sdělovací styl v textech Kendricka Lamara. Záměrná volba použití tohoto stylu přispívá ke klíčovému komunikačnímu

účelu, který zajišťuje srozumitelnost a přístupnost jeho sdělení napříč rozličnými společenskými a geografickými kontexty. Jeho přímočarost usnadňuje hlubší pochopení Lamarova pohledu a prezentuje ho jako jednoho z lidu. Dále autorovo využití vulgarity, neformálního jazyka, slangu a hovorových výrazů hraje stěžejní roli při zobrazení prostředí Comptonu a přítomnosti gangů. Sporadické intimní pasáže podporuje pocit spojení mezi Lamarem a jeho publikem tím, že zobrazuje jeho osobní problémy, čímž významně přispívá k růstu jeho fanouškovské základny.

Stručně řečeno, Lamar používá různé básnické prostředky mnoha způsoby, ať už k satirickým nebo humorným srovnáním nebo k předávání hlubších sdělení o své identitě. Používá tyto prostředky k tomu, aby své myšlenky formuloval souvisleji a rychleji. Navíc střídá intimní a příležitostné rejstříky, což pomáhá zaujmout širší publikum, včetně posluchačů, kteří nemusí být jeho typickými fanoušky.

Svým albem Lamar dokazuje, že i se složitými texty plnými básnických prostředků, foregroundingu a dalších stylistických prvků mohou písně stále dosáhnout komerčního úspěchu a uznání kritiky. Spojením složitých textů s podmanivou hudbou vytvořil Lamar pravděpodobně mistrovské dílo, které zůstává aktuální i v čase.

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## **7. Anotation**

**Name:** Kryštof Skalka

**Department:** Department of English and American Studies

**Supervisor:** Mgr. Ondřej Molnár, Ph.D.

**Year:** 2024

**Title:** Stylistic Analysis of Rap Album good kid, m.A.A.d city by Kendrick Lamar

**Number of attachments:** 12

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**Number of characters (Bibliography and appendices excluded):** 91 827

**Language of the thesis:** English

**Abstract:** This bachelor thesis analyses all 12 tracks from the album good kid, m.A.A.d city released by Kendrick Lamar in 2012. The introductory part of the analysis of the lyrics describes the elements used by the author in his work. The analysis consists in finding the common and most common elements that the author uses across the tracks. These elements will also be analysed from the point of view of the function in the lyrics. The last part contains the reasoning of the found facts from the analyses. The lyrics are used from a website specialised in their transcription called genius.com.

**Keywords:** stylistics, analysis, rap, music, album, gang, Compton



## 8. Anotace

**Jméno a příjmení:** Kryštof Skalka

**Katedra:** Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

**Vedoucí práce:** Mgr. Ondřej Molnár, Ph.D.

**Rok obhajoby:** 2024

**Název práce:** Stylistická analýza rapového alba good kid, m.A.A.d city od Kendricka Lamara

**Přílohy vázané v práci:** 12

**Počet stran:** 78

**Počet znaků:** 91 827

**Jazyk práce:** Angličtina

**Abstrakt:** Tato bakalářská práce analyzuje všech 12 skladeb z alba good kid, m.A.A.d city vydaného Kendrickem Lamarem v roce 2012. V úvodní části analýzy textů jsou popsány prvky použité autorem v jeho díle. Analýza spočívá v hledání společných a nejčastějších prvků, které autor používá napříč skladbami. Tyto prvky budou zároveň analyzovány z pohledu funkce v textech. Poslední část obsahuje argumentaci zjištěných faktů z analýz. Texty jsou využity z internetové stránky specializované na jejich přepis s názvem genius.com.

**Klíčová slova v jazyce práce:** stylistika, analýza, rap, hudba, album, gang, Compton,

## 9. Appendices

The remaining analysis is presented in the appendices, with different colours used to highlight the various elements. **Metaphors are indicated by red**, **metonymy by blue**, **synecdoche by green**, **hyperbole by purple** and **irony by orange**. Parallelism and repetition are underlined.

## 9.1. Appendix – “Sherane a.k.a Master Splinter's Daughter”

[Intro]

Lord God, I come to you a sinner  
And I humbly repent for my sins  
I believe that Jesus is Lord  
I believe that You raised him from the dead  
I would ask that Jesus come to my life  
And be my Lord and Savior  
I receive Jesus to take control of my life  
And that I may live for him from this day forth  
Thank you, Lord Jesus, for saving me with your precious blood  
In Jesus' name, amen

[Verse]

I met her at this house party on El Segundo and Central  
She had the credentials of strippers in Atlanta  
Ass came with a hump, from the jump **she was a camel**  
I want to **ride like Arabians**, push an '04 Mercedes-Benz  
"Hello, my name is Kendrick," she said, "No, you're handsome"  
Whispered in my ear, disappeared, then found her dancin'  
**Ciara** had played in the background  
The parade music we made had us all wearin' shades now, cool  
"Where you stay?" She said, "Down the street from Dominguez High"  
Okay, I know that's borderline Compton or Paramount  
"Well, is it Compton?" "No," she replied  
Then quickly start battin' her eyes  
I strictly had wanted her thighs around me  
**Seventeen with nothin' but pussy stuck on my mental**  
My motive was rather sinful,  
"What you tryna get into?"  
She didn't tell, just gave me her Nextel  
Dropped the number, we chirped the whole summer, and, well  
The summer had passed, and now I'm likin' her  
Conversation we havin' probably enticin' her  
Who can imagine? Maybe my actions'll end up wifin' her  
Love or lust, regardless, we'll fuck 'cause the trife in us  
It's deep-rooted, the **music** of bein' young and dumb  
Is **never muted**, in fact, it's much louder where I'm from  
We know a lot 'bout each other, her mother was a crack addict  
She live with her granny and her younger two brothers  
Her favorite cousin Demetrius is irrepitable  
Family history of gangbangin' did make me skeptical  
But not enough to stop me from gettin' a nut

"I wanna come over, what's up?"  
That's what I told her soon as this episode  
Of *Martin* go off, I'm tryna get off  
I was in heat like a **cactus**  
My tactics of bein' thirsty probably could hurt me  
But fuck it, I got some heart  
Grabbed my mama keys, hopped in the car, then, oh boy  
So now I'm down Rosecrans in a Caravan  
Passin' Alameda, my gas meter in need of a pump  
I got enough to get me through the traffic jam  
At least I hope, 'cause my pockets broke as a promise, man  
I'm thinkin' 'bout that sex  
Thinkin' 'bout her thighs or maybe kissin' on her neck or maybe what position's next  
Sent a picture of her titties, blowin' up my texts  
I looked at 'em and almost ran my front bumper into Corvette  
Enthused by the touch of a woman, she's a masseuse  
And I'm a **professional pornstar** when off the Goose  
I had a fifth in the trunk like Curtis Jackson for ransom  
I'm hopin' to get her loose like an **Uncle Luke anthem**  
I'm two blocks away, two hundred and fifty feet  
And six steps from where she stay, she wavin' me 'cross the street  
I pulled up, a smile on my face, and then I see  
Two niggas, **two black hoodies**, I froze as my phone rang

[Outro]

*Please leave your message for three-two-three*  
*Record your message after the tone*  
Kendrick, where you at?  
Damn, I'm sittin' here waitin' on my van  
You told me you was gon' be back in fifteen minutes  
Man, I gotta go up to the county buildin', man, these kids ready to eat  
I'm ready to eat, shit  
I gotta get them food stamps, come on now  
You on your way or what?  
I hope you ain't out there messin' with them damn hoodrats out there, shit  
'Specially that lil' crazy-ass girl Sherane  
And plus you got school tomorrow  
You keep fuckin' around in them streets, you ain't gon' pass to the next grade  
Eleventh grade  
(Is that Kendrick on the phone?)  
Your daddy callin' about some damn dominoes (Let me holler at him)  
He want to holler at you too, go ahead, Kenny, go'n, shit  
Hello? Yak, where my motherfuckin' dominoes at?  
(Kenny), What?

I'm on his voicemail, damn fool (Oh), shit  
Yak, where my motherfuckin' dominoes at?  
This the second time I asked you to bring my fuckin' dominoes  
Just give me the damn phone, shit, don't hang up, damn, let me  
Kendrick, when you get this message, man, call me back (Keep losin' my goddamn  
dominoes, we gon' have to go in the backyard)  
I need to know when you gon' bring back my damn car (And squab, homie)  
This man fussin' 'bout some damn dominoes  
It ain't all that serious, fuck, damn dominoes  
Shit, I'ma miss my damn appointment, fuck  
Fuck some damn dominoes, nobody wanna hear that  
Nobody wanna hear your ass  
Matter fact, cut my motherfuckin' oldies back on  
You killin' my motherfuckin' vibe

## 9.2. Appendix – “Bitch, Don’t Kill My Vibe”

[Chorus 1: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise, *Kendrick Lamar*]

I am a sinner

Who's prob'ly gonna sin again

Lord, forgive me, Lord, forgive me

Things I don't understand

Sometimes I need to be alone

**Bitch, don't kill my vibe**, bitch, don't kill my vibe

*I can feel your energy from two planets away,*

*I got my drink, I got my music, I would share it, but today I'm yellin'*

*Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe*

*Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe*

[Verse 1: Kendrick Lamar]

Look inside of my **soul** and **you can find gold and maybe get rich**

Look inside of your **soul** and you can find out it never exist

I can feel the changes, **I can feel a new life**,

I always knew life can be dangerous, I can say that I like a challenge

And you tell me it's painless, you don't know what pain is

**How can I paint this picture** when the **color blind** is hangin' witcha?

Fell on my face and awoke with a scar, another mistake livin' deep in my heart

Wear it on top of my sleeve in a flick, I can admit that it did look like yours

Why you resent every makin' of his?

Tell me your purpose is petty again

**But even a small lighter can burn a bridge**, even a small lighter can burn a bridge

[Pre-Chorus: Kendrick Lamar]

I can feel the changes,

I can feel the new people round me just wanna be famous,

you can see that my city found me then put me on **stages**,

to me, that's amazin' to you, that's a quick check,

with all disrespect, let me say this

[Chorus 1: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise, *Kendrick Lamar*]

I am a sinner

Who's prob'ly gonna sin again

Lord, forgive me, Lord, forgive me

Things I don't understand

Sometimes I need to be alone

**Bitch, don't kill my vibe**, bitch, don't kill my vibe

*I can feel your energy from two planets away,*

***I got my drink, I got my music,***

*I would share it, but today I'm yellin'*  
*Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe*  
Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe

[Verse 2: Kendrick Lamar]

I'm tryna keep it alive and not compromise the feelin' we love  
You're tryna keep it deprived and only co-sign what radio does  
And I'm lookin' right past ya, we live in a world, we live in a world  
On two different axles, you live in a world, you livin' behind  
The mirror, I know what you're scared of, the feeling of feeling emotions inferior  
This shit is vital, I know you had to, this shit is vital, I know you had to  
Die in a pitiful vain, tell me a watch and a chain is way more believable  
Give me a feasible gain, rather a seasonal name, I'll let the people know  
This is somethin' you can blame on yourselves, you can remain stuck in a box  
I'ma breakout and then hide every lock, I'ma breakout and then hide every lock

[Pre-Chorus: Kendrick Lamar]

I can feel the changes,  
I can feel the new people round me just wanna be famous.  
You can see that my city found me then put me on stages.  
To me, that's amazin' to you, that's a quick check,  
with all disrespect, let me say this

[Chorus 1: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise, *Kendrick Lamar*]

I am a sinner  
Who's prob'ly gonna sin again  
Lord, forgive me, Lord, forgive me  
Things I don't understand  
Sometimes I need to be alone  
Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe  
*I can feel your energy from two planets away,*  
*I got my drink, I got my music,*  
*I would share it, but today I'm yellin'*  
*Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe*  
Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe

[Bridge: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise, *Anna Wise*]

Bitch, don't kill my vibe, you ain't heard the coast  
Like this in a long time  
, don't you see that long line?  
And they waitin' on Kendrick like the 1st and the 15th  
[Threes in the air](#), I can see you are in sync  
Hide your feelings, hide your feelings, now, what you better do  
I'll take your girlfriend *then put that pussy on the pedestal*

[Chorus 2: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise, *Anna Wise*]

*Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe*

*Walk out the door and they scream, "It's  
alive!"*

My New Year's resolution is to stop all the pollution

Talk too motherfuckin' much, I got my drink, I got my music

I say, bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe

Bitch, don't kill my vibe, bitch, don't kill my vibe

[Skit]

"K-Dot, get in the car, nigga!

Come on, we finna roll out!

Nigga, I got a pack of blacks and a beat CD

Get yo' freestyles ready!"



### 9.3. Appendix – “Backseat Freestyle”

[Intro]

Uh, Martin had a dream

Martin had a dream

Kendrick have a dream

[Chorus]

All my life I want money and power

Respect my mind or die from lead shower

I pray my dick get big as the Eiffel Tower

So I can fuck the world for seventy-two hours

[Verse 1]

Goddamn I feel amazin', damn, I'm in the Matrix

My mind is livin' on cloud nine and this 9 is never on vacation

Start up that Maserati and – vroom-vroom! – I'm racin'

Poppin' pills in the lobby and I pray they don't find her naked

And I pray you niggas is hatin', shooters go after Judas

Jesus Christ, if I live life on my knees ain't no need to do this

Park it in front of Lueders, next to that Church's Chicken

All you pussies is losers, all my niggas is winnin', screamin'—

[Chorus]

All my life I want money and power

Respect my mind or die from lead shower

I pray my dick get big as the Eiffel Tower

So I can fuck the world for seventy-two hours

[Post-Chorus 1]

Goddamn I got bitches (Okay), damn I got bitches (Okay)

Damn I got bitches: wifey, girlfriend and mistress

All my life I want money and power

Respect my mind or die from lead shower

[Verse 2]

I've got twenty-five lighters on my dresser, yessir

Put fire to that ass, body cast on a stretcher

And her body got that ass that a ruler couldn't measure

And it make me cum fast, but I never get embarrassed

And I recognize you have what I've been wantin' since that record

That Adina Howard had pop it fast to impress her

She rollin', I'm holdin' my scrotum imposin'

This voice here is golden, so fuck y'all, I goes in, and—

[Chorus]

All my life I want money and power  
Respect my mind or die from lead shower  
I pray my dick get big as the Eiffel Tower  
So I can fuck the world for seventy-two hours

[Post-Chorus 2]

Goddamn I got bitches, damn I got bitches  
Damn I got bitches: wifey, girlfriend and mistress  
All my life I want money and power  
Respect my mind  
or, nigga, it's go time

[Verse 3]

I roll in **dough** with a good grind  
And I run that ho with a baton  
That's a relay race with a **bouquet**  
They say, "K, you goin' marry mines"  
Biatch! No way, biatch! No way  
Biatch! No way, biatch! Okay  
**I'm never livin' life confined**  
**It's a failure even if Im blind**  
I can tell you who, what, when, where  
How to sell your game right on time  
Biatch! Go play, biatch! Go play  
Biatch! Go play  
Biatch,  
I look like **O. J.**  
**Killin' everything from pussy to a mothafuckin' Hit-Boy beat**  
**She pussy poppin'** and I got options like an audible, I be  
C-O-M-P-T-O-N, I win, then ball at your defeat  
C-O-M-P-T-O-N, my city, mobbin' in the street, yellin'—

[Chorus]

All my life I want money and power  
Respect my mind or die from lead shower  
I pray my dick get big as the Eiffel Tower  
So I can fuck the world for seventy-two hours

[Post-Chorus 1]

Goddamn I got bitches, damn I got bitches  
Damn I got bitches, wifey, girlfriend and mistress  
All my life I want money and power

Respect my mind or die from lead shower

[Outro]

Let it run, Ali

Martin had a dream

Martin had a dream

Kendrick have a dream

#### 9.4. Appendix – “The Art of Peer Pressure”

[Part I]

[Intro]

Everybody, everybody, everybody  
Everybody sit yo bitch-ass down  
And listen to this true mothafuckin' story  
Told by Kendrick Lamar on Rosecrans, ya bitch

[Chorus]

Smokin' on the finest dope, ayy-ayy-ayy-ah  
Drank until I can't no mo', ayy-ayy-ayy-ah  
Really I'm a sober soul  
But I'm with the homies right now  
And we ain't askin' for no favors  
Rush a nigga quick, then laugh about it later, ayy-ayy-ayy-ah  
Really, I'm a peacemaker  
But I'm with the homies right now  
And Momma used to say (Say, say, say, say)  
One day it's gon' burn you out (Woo)  
One day it's gon' burn you out, out, out  
One day it's gon' burn you out (You, you, you, you, you, you)  
One day it's gon' burn you  
But I'm with the homies right now

[Part II]

[Verse 1]

Me and my niggas four deep in a white Toyota  
A quarter tank of gas, one pistol, an orange soda  
Janky stash box when the federales'll roll up  
**Basketball shorts with the Gonzales Park odor**  
We on the mission for bad bitches and trouble  
I hope the universe love you today  
'Cause the **energy** we bringin' sure to carry away  
A flock of **positive activists that fill they body with hate**  
If it's necessary;  
bumpin' Jeezy first album, lookin' distracted  
Speakin' **language** only we know, you think it's an accent  
The windows roll down, all I see is a hand pass it  
Hotboxin' like George Foreman grillin' the masses  
Of the workin' world;  
we pulled up on a bunch of workin' girls  
And asked them what they workin' with

Look at me, I got the blunt in my mouth  
Usually I'm drug-free, but, shit, I'm with the homies

[Chorus 1]

Yeah, nigga, we off a pill and Rémy Red  
Come through and bust ya head, nigga!

*Me and the homies*

Sag all the way to the liquor store  
Where my niggas pour up 4 and get twisted some more

*Me and the homies*

**I ride for my mothafuckin' niggas**

Hop out, do my stuff, then hop back in

*Me and the homies*

Matter of fact, I hop out that mothafucka

And be like "doo-doo-doo-doot, doo-doo-doo-doo-doot!"

[Verse 2]

It's 2:30 and the sun is beamin'

Air conditioner broke and I hear my stomach screamin'

**Hungry for anything unhealthy**

And if nutrition can help me

I'll tell you to suck my dick, then I'll continue eatin'

We speedin' on the 405, passin' Westchester

You know, the light-skinned girls in all the little dresses

Good Lord, they knew we weren't from 'round there

'Cause every time we down there

We pullin' out the Boost Mobile SIM cards

Bougie bitches with no extensions

**Hood niggas** with bad intentions, the perfect combination

Before we sparked a conversation

We seen three niggas in **colors** we didn't like

Then started interrogatin'

I never was a gangbanger, I mean

I never was stranger to the fonk neither, I really doubt it

**Rush a nigga quick and then we laugh about it**

That's ironic, 'cause I've never been violent

Until I'm with the homies

[Chorus 2]

(Just ridin', just ridin')

Me and the homies

(Bullshittin', actin' a fool)

Me and the homies

(Trippin', really trippin')

Me and the homies

(Just ridin', just ridin', just ridin')

[Verse 3]

Braggin' 'bout the **episode** we just had  
A shot of Hennessy didn't make me feel that bad  
I'm usually a true firm believer of bad karma  
**Consequences from evil will make your past haunt ya**  
**We tryna conquer the city with disobedience**  
**Quick to turn it up, even if we ain't got the CD in**  
But **Jeezy** still playin'  
And our attitude is still "nigga, what is you sayin'?"  
Pull in front of the house  
That we been campin' out for like two months  
The sun is goin' down as we take whatever we want

[Break]

Ayy, ayy, nigga, jackpot, nigga, pop the safe!  
*Ayy, nigga, I think there's somebody in this room!*  
Wait, what?!  
*Nigga, there's somebody in this room!*

[Verse 4]

I hit the back window in search of any **Nintendo**  
DVD's, plasma-screen TV's in the trunk  
We made a right, then made a left, then made a right  
Then made a left, **we was just circlin' life**  
My mama called: "Hello? What you doin'?" — "Kickin' it."  
I shoulda told her I'm probably 'bout to catch my first offense  
With the homies  
(Police sirens)  
But – they made a right, then made a left  
Then made a right, then another right  
**One lucky night** with the homies

[Outro]

K. Dot, you faded, hood?  
Yeah, we finally got that nigga faded  
I think he hit the wrong blunt though  
Ooh, which one?  
Well, which one he talkin' about?  
I was finna hit the one with the shenanigans in it  
I pray he ain't hit that  
Nah, that nigga straight, he ain't hit that one

Got the shenanigans? Give that nigga the shenanigans!  
Nigga, I think we should push back to the city, fo' real doe  
Nigga, for what?  
What that nigga— what's that Jeezy song say, nigga?  
"Last time I checked I was the man on these streets!"  
Yeah, yeah, that shit right there  
I'm tryna be the nigga in the street  
There he go. Man, you don't even know how the shit go  
Look, here's the plan, luv  
We gon' use the kickback as an alibi, wait 'til the sun go down, roll out,  
complete the mission, drop K. Dot off at his mama van, at the park  
'Cause I know he tryna fuck on Sherane tonight  
That's what he's not gon' do  
Then we all gon' meet back at the block at about 10:30  
That's straight, but we should meet up around 12  
I'm tryna fuck on somethin' too  
Nigga, sit yo dumb-ass back down!  
Nigga, you ain't doin' shit tonight!  
Matter of fact, nigga, get in the mothafuckin' car!  
We finna get active!

## 9.5. Appendix – “Money Trees”

[Verse 1: Kendrick Lamar]

Uh, me and my niggas tryna get it, ya bish (Ya bish)

**Hit the house lick:** tell me, is you wit' it, ya bish? (Ya bish)

Home invasion was persuasive (Was persuasive)

**From nine to five** I know it's vacant, ya bish (Ya bish)

Dreams of livin' life like rappers do (Like rappers do)

**Back when condom wrappers wasn't cool** (They wasn't cool)

I fucked Sherane and went to tell my bros (Tell my bros)

Then **Usher Raymond "Let It Burn"** came on ("Let Burn" came on)

**Hot sauce all in our Top Ramen,** ya bish (Ya bish)

Park the car, then we start rhymin', ya bish (Ya bish)

The only thing we had to free our mind (Free our mind)

Then freeze that verse when we see **dollar signs** (See dollar signs)

You lookin' like a **easy come-up,** ya bish (Ya bish)

A **silver spoon,** I know you come from, ya bish (Ya bish)

And that's a lifestyle that we never knew (We never knew)

Go at a reverend for the revenue

[Chorus: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise]

It go **Halle Berry** or **hallelujah**

Pick your **poison,** tell me what you doin'

**Everybody gon' respect the shooter**

**But the one in front of the gun lives forever**

The one in front of the gun, forever

And I been hustlin' all-day

This-a-way, that-a-way

**Through canals and alleyways,** just to say

**Money trees is the perfect place for shade**

And that's just how I feel

[Post-Chorus: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise]

Nah, nah

**A dollar might** just fuck your main bitch

That's just how I feel, nah

**A dollar might** say fuck them niggas that you came with

That's just how I feel, nah, nah

**A dollar might** just make that lane switch

That's just how I feel, nah

**A dollar might** turn to a million and we all rich

That's just how I feel



[Verse 2: Kendrick Lamar]

Dreams of livin' life like rappers do (Like rappers do)

Bump that new E-40 after school (Way after school)

You know, "Big Ballin' With My Homies" (My homies)

Earl Stevens had us thinkin' rational (Thinkin' rational, that's rational)

Back to reality, we poor, ya bish (Ya bish)

Another casualty at war, ya bish (Ya bish)

Two bullets in my Uncle Tony head (My Tony head)

He said one day I'll be on tour, ya bish (Ya bish)

That Louis Burgers never be the same (Won't be the same)

A Louis belt that never ease that pain (Won't ease that pain)

But I'ma purchase when that day is jerkin' (That day is jerkin')

Pull off at Church's, with Pirellis skirtin' (Pirellis skirtin')

Gang signs out the window, ya bish (Ya bish)

Hopin' all of 'em offend you, ya bish (Ya bish)

They say your hood is a pot of gold (A pot of gold)

And we gon' crash it when nobody's home

[Chorus: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise]

It go Halle Berry or hallelujah

Pick your poison, tell me what you doin'

Everybody gon' respect the shooter

But the one in front of the gun lives forever

The one in front of the gun, forever

And I been hustlin' all-day

This-a-way, that-a-way

Through canals and alleyways, just to say

Money trees is the perfect place for shade

And that's just how I feel

[Post-Chorus: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise]

Nah, nah

A dollar might just fuck your main bitch

That's just how I feel, nah

A dollar might say fuck them niggas that you came with

That's just how I feel, nah, nah

A dollar might just make that lane switch

That's just how I feel, nah

A dollar might turn to a million and we all rich

That's just how I feel

[Chorus: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise]  
It go Halle Berry or hallelujah  
Pick your poison, tell me what you doin'  
Everybody gon' respect the shooter  
But the one in front of the gun lives forever  
The one in front of the gun, forever  
And I been hustlin' all-day  
This-a-way, that-a-way  
Through canals and alleyways, just to say  
Money trees is the perfect place for shade  
And that's just how I feel

[Skit]

PAULA DUCKWORTH: Kendrick, just bring my car back, man. I called in for another appointment. I figured you weren't gonna be back here on time anyways. Look, shit, shit, I just wanna get out the house, man. This man is on one, he feelin' good as a motherfucker. Shit, I'm tryna get my thing goin', too. Just bring my car back. Shit, he faded. He feelin' good. Look, listen to him!

KENNETH DUCKWORTH: Girl, girl, I want your body, I want your body, 'cause you got a big ol' fat ass. Girl, girl, I want your body, I want your body, 'cause of that big ol' fat ass. Girl, I want your body, 'cause of that big ol'—

PAULA DUCKWORTH: See, he high as hell. Shit, and he ain't even trippin' off them damn dominoes anymore. Just bring the car back!

KENNETH DUCKWORTH: Did somebody say dominoes?

## 9.6. Appendix – “Poetic Justice”

[Intro: Kendrick Lamar]

Every second, every minute, man, I swear that **she can get it**  
Say, if you a bad bitch, put your hands up high  
Hands up high, hands up high  
Tell 'em dim the lights down right now, put me in the mood  
I'm talkin' 'bout dark room, perfume  
Go, go

[Verse 1: Kendrick Lamar]

I recognize your **fragrance**, hol' up, you ain't never gotta say shit, uh  
And I know your taste is a little bit, mmm, **high maintenance**, uh  
Everybody else basic, you live life on an everyday basis  
With poetic justice, poetic justice  
If I told you that a **flower bloomed in a dark room**, would you trust it?  
I mean, I write poems in these songs dedicated to you when  
You're in the mood for empathy, there's **blood in my pen**  
Better yet, where your friends and 'em? I really wanna know you all  
I really wanna show you off, fuck that,  
pour up plenty of champagne, cold nights when you curse this name  
You called up your girlfriends and y'all curled in that little bitty **Range**,  
I heard that she wanna go and party, she wanna go and party  
Nigga, don't approach her with that **Atari**, nigga, that ain't **good game**, homie, sorry  
They say conversation rule a nation, I can tell  
But I could never right my wrongs 'less I write it down for real, PS

[Chorus: Kendrick Lamar & Janet Jackson]

Anytime  
**You can get it, you can get it, you can get it, you can get it**  
And I know just, know just, know just, know just, know just what you want  
Poetic justice, put it in a song, alright  
Anytime  
**You can get it, you can get it, you can get it, you can get it**  
And I know just, know just, know just, know just, know just what you want  
Poetic justice, put it in a song, alright

[Chorus: Kendrick Lamar & Janet Jackson]

Anytime  
You can get it, you can get it, you can get it, you can get it  
And I know just, know just, know just, know just, know just what you want  
Poetic justice, put it in a song, alright  
Anytime

You can get it, you can get it, you can get it, you can get it  
And I know just, know just, know just, know just, know just what you want  
Poetic justice, put it in a song, alright

[Verse 3: Kendrick Lamar]

Every time I write these words they **become a taboo**  
Makin' sure my **punctuation curve**, every letter here's true  
Livin' my life in the margin and that metaphor was proof,  
I'm talkin' poetic justice, poetic justice  
If I told you that a flower bloomed in a dark room, would you trust it?  
I mean, you need to hear this, love is not just a verb  
It's you lookin' in the mirror, love is not just a verb  
It's you lookin' for it, maybe, call me crazy, we can both be insane  
A **fatal attraction is common**, and what we have common is pain  
I mean, you need to hear this, love is not just a verb  
**And I can see power steerin', sex drive when you swerve**  
I want that interference, it's coherent, I can hear it, mhmm  
That's your heartbeat, it either caught me or it called me, mhmm  
Read slow and you'll find **gold mines** in these lines  
Sincerely, yours truly, and **right before you go blind, PS**

[Chorus: Kendrick Lamar & Janet Jackson]

Anytime  
You can get it, you can get it, you can get it, you can get it  
And I know just, know just, know just, know just, know just what you want  
Poetic justice, put it in a song

[Skit]

"I'm gon' ask you one more time, homie  
Where is you from? Or it is a problem."  
"Ayy, ayy, ayy, ayy, ask him if he heard from Sherane  
Ayy, you out here for Sherane, homie?"  
"I don't care who this nigga over here for  
If he don't tell me where he from, it's a wrap! I'm sorry."  
"Hol' up, hol' up, hol' up, we gon' do it like this, okay?  
I'ma tell you where I'm from, okay?  
You gon' tell me where you from, okay?  
Or, or, or where your grandma stay  
Where your mama stay, or where your daddy stay, okay?"  
"Fuck all this talkin'."  
"Matter of fact, get out the van, homie! Get out the car 'fore I snatch you out that  
motherfucker, homie!"

## 9.7. Appendix – “good kid”

[Verse 1]

Look inside these walls and you see I'm havin' withdrawals

Of a prisoner on his way

Trapped inside your desire to fire bullets that stray

Track attire just tell you I'm tired and ran away

I should ask a choir: "What do you require

To sing a song that acquire me to have faith?"

As the record spin I should pray

For the record, I recognize that I'm easily prey

I got ate alive yesterday

I got animosity buildin', it's prob'ly big as a buildin'

Me jumpin' off of the roof is me just playin' it safe

But what am I 'posed to do when the topic is red or blue

And you understand that I ain't

But know I'm accustomed to just a couple that look for trouble

And live in the street with rank

No better picture to paint than me walkin' from Bible study

And called his homies because he had said he noticed my face

From a function that taken place, they was wonderin' if I bang

Step on my neck and get blood on your Nike checks

I don't mind 'cause one day you'll respect

The good kid, m.A.A.d city

[Verse 2]

All I see is strobe lights, blindin' me in my hindsight

Findin' me by myself, promise me you can help

In all honesty I got time to be copacetic until

You had finally made decision to hold me against my will

It was like a head-on collision that folded me standing still

I can never pick out the difference and grade a cop on the bill

Every time you clock in the morning, I feel you just want to kill

All my innocence while ignorin' my purpose to persevere

As a better person; I know you heard this and probably in fear

But what am I 'posed to do when the blinkin' of red and blue

Flash from the top of your roof and your dog has to say woof

And you ask: "Lift up your shirt," because you wonder if a tattoo

Of affiliation can make it a pleasure to put me through

Gang files, but that don't matter because the matter is racial profile

I heard 'em chatter: "He's prob'ly young, but I know that he's down

Step on his neck as hard as your bullet-proof vest

He don't mind, he know we'll never respect  
The good kid, [m.A.A.d. city.](#)"

[Verse 3]

All I see in this room: 20's, Xannies and these 'shrooms  
[Grown-up candy](#) for pain, can we live in a sane society?

It's entirely stressful upon my brain

You hired me as a victim,

I quietly hope for change [when violence is the rhythm, inspired me to obtain](#)

The silence in this room with 20's, Xannies and 'shrooms

Some grown-up candy, I lost it, I feel it's nothin' to lose

The streets sure to release the worst side of my best

Don't mind, 'cause now you ever in debt to good kid, [m.A.A.d. City](#)

## 9.8. Appendix – “m.A.A.d. City”

[Refrain: Kendrick Lamar & ScHoolboy Q]

If Pirus and Crips all got along  
They'd probably gun me down by the end of this song  
Seem like the whole city go against me  
Every time I'm in the street, I hear—  
Yawk! Yawk! Yawk! Yawk!

[Chorus: Kendrick Lamar]

Man down, where you from, nigga?  
Fuck who you know—where you from, my nigga?  
Where your grandma stay, huh, my nigga?  
This m.A.A.d city I run, my nigga

[Verse: Kendrick Lamar]

Brace yourself, **I'll take you on a trip down memory lane**  
This is not a rap on how I'm slingin' crack or move cocaine  
This is cul-de-sac and plenty Cognac and major pain  
Not the drill sergeant, but the stress that weighin' on your brain  
It was me, L Boog, and Yan Yan, YG Lucky ride down Rosecrans  
It got ugly, wavin' yo' hand out the window — check yourself  
Uh, Warriors and Conans, hope euphoria can slow dance  
With society, the **driver seat**, the first one to get killed  
Seen a light-skinned nigga with his brains blown out  
At the same burger stand where \*\*\*\* hang out  
Now this is not a tape recorder sayin' that he did it  
But ever since that day, I was lookin' at him different  
That was back when I was nine, Joey packed the nine  
**Pakistan** on every porch is fine, we adapt to crime  
Pack a van with four guns at a time with the sliding door, fuck is up?  
Fuck you shootin' for if you ain't walkin' up, you fuckin' punk?  
Pickin' up the fuckin' pump, pickin' off you suckers  
Suck a dick or die or sucker punch  
A **wall of bullets** comin' from AK's, AR's, "Ayy, y'all—duck"  
That's what mama said when we was eatin' that free lunch  
Aw man, goddamn, all hell broke loose  
You killed my cousin back in '94, fuck yo' truce  
**Now crawl your head in that noose**  
You wind up dead on the news  
Ain't no peace treaty, just piecin' BGs up to pre-approve  
**Bodies on top of bodies, IVs on top of IVs**

Obviously the coroner between the **sheets like the isleys**  
When you hop on that trolley, make sure your **color's** correct  
Make sure you're corporate, or they'll be callin' your mother collect  
**They say the governor collect all of our taxes, except**  
**When we in traffic and tragic happens, that shit ain't no threat**  
**You movin' backwards if you suggest that you sleep with a TEC**  
**Go buy a chopper and have a doctor on speed dial, I guess**  
**m.A.A.d. city**

[Chorus: Kendrick Lamar]

Man down, where you from, nigga?  
Fuck who you know—where you from, my nigga?  
Where your grandma stay, huh, my nigga?  
This m.A.A.d city I run, my nigga

[Refrain: Kendrick Lamar & ScHoolboy Q]

If Pirus and Crips all got along  
They'd probably gun me down by the end of this song  
Seem like the whole city go against me  
Every time I'm in the street, I hear—  
Yawk! Yawk! Yawk!—

[Verse: Kendrick Lamar]

Fresh outta school 'cause I was a high school grad'  
Sleepin' in the living room of my mama's pad  
Reality struck, I seen the white car crash  
Hit the light pole, two niggas hopped out on foot and dashed (Watch out, cuz)  
My pops said I needed a job, I thought I believed him  
**Security guard for a month and ended up leavin'**  
**In fact, I got fired 'cause I was inspired by all of my friends**  
**To stage a robbery, the third Saturday I clocked in**  
Projects tore up, **gang signs get thrown up** (Sup?)  
Cocaine laced in marijuana  
And they wonder why I rarely smoke now  
Imagine if your first blunt had you foamin' at the mouth  
I was straight tweakin', the next weekend we broke even  
I made allegiance that made a promise to see you **bleedin'**  
You know the reasons but still'll never know my life  
Kendrick a.k.a. "**Compton's Human Sacrifice**"

[Verse: Kendrick Lamar]

If I told you I killed a nigga at sixteen, would you believe me?  
Perceive me to be innocent Kendrick you seen in the **street**



With a basketball and some Now and Later's to eat?  
If I mentioned all of my **skeletons**, would you jump in the seat?  
Would you say my intelligence now is great relief?  
And it's safe to say that our next generation maybe can sleep  
With dreams of bein' a lawyer or doctor  
Instead of boy with a chopper that **hold the cul-de-sac hostage**  
Kill 'em all if they gossip The Children of the Corn,  
they vandalizin' the option of livin' a lie, drown their body with toxins  
Constantly drinkin' and drive  
Hit the **powder**, then watch this flame that arrive in his eye  
Listen, coward, the concept is aim and then bang it and slide  
Out that bitch with deposit, a price on his head, the tithes  
Probably go to the projects  
I live inside the **belly of the rough**, Compton, USA  
Made me an Angel on **Angel Dust**, what?

[Interlude]  
m.A.A.d city  
Compton

[Outro/Skit]  
Nigga, pass Dot the bottle, damn  
You ain't the one that got fucked up  
What you holdin' it for?  
Niggas always actin' unsensitive and shit  
Nigga, that ain't no word  
Nigga, shut up  
Hey, Dot, you good, my nigga?  
Don't even trip  
Just lay back and drink that

## 9.9. Appendix – “Swimming Pools (Drank)”

[Intro]

Pour up (Drank), head shot (Drank)

Sit down (Drank), stand up (Drank)

Pass out (Drank), wake up (Drank)

Faded (Drank), faded (Drank)

[Verse 1]

Now, I done grew up round some people **livin' their life in bottles**  
Granddaddy had the **golden flask**, backstroke every day in Chicago  
Some people like the way it feel, some people wanna **kill their sorrow**  
Some people wanna fit in with the popular, that was my problem  
I was in a dark room, loud tunes, lookin' to make a vow soon  
That I'ma get fucked up, fillin' up my cup I see the crowd mood  
Changin' by the minute and the record on repeat  
Took a sip, then another sip, then somebody said to me

[Chorus]

Nigga, **why you babysittin' only two or three shots?**  
I'ma show you how to turn it up a notch  
First, you get a swimming pool full of liquor, then you dive in it  
Pool full of liquor, then you dive in it  
I wave a few bottles, then I watch 'em all flock  
All the girls wanna play **Baywatch**  
I got a swimming pool full of liquor and they dive in it  
Po-Pool full of liquor, I'ma dive in it

[Post-Chorus]

Pour up (Drank), head shot (Drank)

Sit down (Drank), stand up (Drank)

Pass out (Drank), wake up (Drank)

Faded (Drank), faded (Drank)

[Verse 2]

Okay, now **open your mind up** and listen me, Kendrick  
**I am your conscience, if you do not hear me then you will be history, Kendrick**

I know that you're nauseous right now and I'm hopin' to **lead you to victory**, Kendrick  
If I take another one down, I'ma drown in some **poison**, abusin' my limit  
I think that I'm feelin' the vibe, I see the love in her eyes  
I see the feelin', the **freedom is granted as soon as the damage of vodka arrived**  
This how you capitalize, this is parental advised, and apparently, I'm over-influenced  
By what you are doin', I thought I was doin' the most 'til someone said to me

[Chorus]

Nigga, why you babysittin' only two or three shots?  
I'ma show you how to turn it up a notch  
First, you get a swimming pool full of liquor, then you dive in it  
Pool full of liquor, then you dive in it  
I wave a few bottles, then I watch 'em all flock  
All the girls wanna play Baywatch  
I got a swimming pool full of liquor and they dive in it  
Po-Pool full of liquor, I'ma dive in it

[Post-Chorus]

Pour up (Drank), head shot (Drank)  
Sit down (Drank), stand up (Drank)  
Pass out (Drank), wake up (Drank)  
Faded (Drank), faded (Drank)

[Bridge]

I ride, you ride, bang  
One chopper, one hundred shots, bang  
Hop out, do you bang?  
Two chopper, two hundred shots, bang  
I ride, you ride, bang  
One chopper, one hundred shots, bang  
Hop out, do you bang?  
Two chopper, two hundred shots, bang

[Chorus]

Nigga, why you babysittin' only two or three shots?  
I'ma show you how to turn it up a notch  
First, you get a swimming pool full of liquor, then you dive in it  
Pool full of liquor, then you dive in it  
I wave a few bottles, then I watch 'em all flock  
All the girls wanna play Baywatch  
I got a swimming pool full of liquor and they dive in it

Po-Pool full of liquor, I'ma dive in it

[Post-Chorus]

Pour up (Drank), head shot (Drank)  
Sit down (Drank), stand up (Drank)  
Pass out (Drank), wake up (Drank)  
Faded (Drank), faded (Drank)

[Interlude]

Sherane  
Sherane (Pool—Kendrick—Kendrick—lies in it)  
Sherane, Sherane  
(W-watch 'em all flock) Aw man...  
Sherane (Girls wanna play-play-play)  
Where is she takin' me?  
(I got)  
Where is she takin' me?  
(Pool full of liquor, I'ma die in...)

[Verse 3]

All I—all I—all I—

All I have in life is my new appetite for failure

And I got **hunger pain** that grow insane, tell me, do that sound familiar?  
If it do, then you're like me, makin' excuse that your relief  
**Is in the bottom of a bottle** and the greenest indo leaf  
As the **window open**, I release everything that corrode inside of me  
I see you jokin', why you laugh? Don't you feel bad? I prob'ly sleep  
And never ever wake up, never ever wake up, never ever wake up  
In God I trust, but just when I thought I had enough

[Skit]

"They stomped the homie out over a bitch?  
K-Dot, you good, blood?  
Now we can drop, ye we can drop you back off"  
"That nigga's straight, man, that nigga ain't trippin'"  
"We gon' do the same ol' shit  
I'ma pop a few shots, they gon' ru—they run opposite way  
Fall right in \*\*\*\*'s lap  
And he gon' tear they ass up, simple as that"  
"And I hope that bitch that set him up, out there

We gon' pop that bitch too"  
"Wait hold up, ayy, I see somebody"  
\*Car door opens and gunshots are fired\*  
"Aha! Got them niggas, K-Dot, you good?"  
"L\*\*\*\*, you good?"  
"Yeah, blood, I'm good – Dave, you good?  
Dave? Dave, say somethin' – Dave?  
These bitch-ass niggas killed my brother!"

## 9.10. Appendix – “Sing About Me, I’m Dying of Thirst”

[Chorus]

When the lights shut off and it's my turn  
To settle down, my main concern  
Promise that you will sing about me  
Promise that you will sing about me  
I said when the lights shut off and it's my turn  
To settle down, my main concern  
Promise that you will sing about me  
Promise that you will sing about me

[Verse 1]

I woke up this morning and figured I'd call you  
In case I'm not here tomorrow  
I'm hopin' that **I can borrow**  
**A peace of mind**, I'm behind on what's really important  
My **mind** is really distorted  
I find nothing but trouble in my life  
I'm fortunate you believe in a dream  
**This orphanage we call a ghetto is quite a routine**  
And last night was just another distraction  
Or a reaction of what we consider madness

I know exactly what happened  
You ran outside when you heard my brother cry for help  
Held him like a **newborn baby** and made him feel  
Like everything was alright in a fight he tried to put up  
But the type of **bullet that stuck**  
Had went against his will, that's blood spilled on your hands

My plan's rather vindictive  
Everybody's a **victim** in my eyes  
When I ride it's a **murderous rhythm**  
And outside became pitch black  
A **demon glued to my back**, whispering "Get 'em!"  
I got 'em and I ain't give a fuck  
That same mentality I told my brother not to duck

In actuality it's a trip how we trip off of **colors**  
I wonder if I'll ever discover a passion like you and recover

The life that I knew as a youngin  
In pajamas and dun-ta-duns  
When thunder comes it rains **cats and dogs**  
dumb  
Niggas like me never prosper  
**Prognosis of a problem child, I'm proud and well-devoted**  
**This Piru shit been in me forever**  
So forever I'ma push it, wherever, whenever  
And I love you 'cause you love my brother like you did  
Just promise me you'll tell this story when you make it big  
And if I die before your album drop, I hope—  
[Gunshots]

[Chorus]  
Promise that you will sing about me  
Promise that you will sing about me  
I said when the lights shut off and it's my turn  
To settle down, my main concern  
Promise that you will sing about me  
Promise that you will sing about me

[Verse 2]

You wrote a song about my sister on your tape  
And called it Section.80  
The message resembled "Brenda's Got a Baby"  
What's crazy was I was hearin' about it  
But doubted your ignorance  
How could you ever just **put her on blast** and shit?  
Judgin' her past and shit?  
Well, it's completely my future  
Her nigga behind me right now askin' for ass and shit  
And I'ma need that forty dollars  
**Even if I got to fuck, suck and swallow**  
In the parking lot, Gonzales Park, I'm followed  
By a married man, and father of three  
**My titties bounce on the cadence of his tinklin' keys**  
**Matter of fact, he my favorite 'cause he tip me with E's**  
He got a cousin named David and I seen him last week  
This is the life of another girl damaged by the system  
These foster homes, I run away and never do miss 'em  
See, my **hormones just run away** and if I can get 'em  
Back to where they used to be, then I'll probably be in the **denim**

Of a family gene that show women how to be woman  
Or better yet, a leader, you need her to learn somethin'  
Then you probably need to beat her, that's how I was taught  
Three niggas in one room, first time I was tossed  
And I'm exhausted, but fuck that "Sorry for your loss" shit  
My sister died in vain, but what point are you tryna gain  
If you can't fit the pumps I walk in?  
I'll wait... Your rebuttal a little too late  
And if you have a album date, just make sure I'm not in the song  
'Cause I don't need the attention, bring enough of that on my own  
And matter fact, did I mention that I physically feel great?  
A doctor's approval is a waste of time, I know I'm straight  
I'll probably live longer than you and never fade away  
I'll never fade away, I'll never fade away, I know my fate  
And I'm on the grind for this cake, I'ma get it or die tryin'  
I'm eyein' every male gender with intentions of buyin'  
You lyin' to these motherfuckers  
Talkin' about you can help 'em with my story  
You can help me if you sell this pussy for me, nigga  
Don't ignore me, nigga, fuck your glory, nigga, you ain't shit...

[Chorus]

When the lights shut off and it's my turn  
To settle down, my main concern  
Promise that you will sing about me  
Promise that you will sing about me  
I said when the lights shut off and it's my turn  
To settle down, my main concern  
Promise that you will sing about me  
Promise that you will sing about me

[Verse 3]

Sometimes I look in the mirror  
And ask myself: Am I really scared of passin' away?  
If it's today, I hope I hear a  
Cry out from Heaven so loud it can water down a demon  
With the Holy Ghost 'til it drown in the blood of Jesus  
I wrote some raps that made sure that my lifeline reekin'  
The scent of a reaper, ensurin' that my allegiance  
With the other side may come soon, and if I'm doomed  
May the womb of my mother be blessed for many moons  
I suffer a lot  
And every day that glass mirror get tougher to watch



**I tie my stomach in knots**

And I'm not sure why I'm infatuated with death  
My imagination is surely an aggravation of threats  
That can come about, 'cause the tongue is **mighty powerful**  
And I can name a list of your favorites that probably vouch  
Maybe 'cause I'm a dreamer and **sleep is the cousin of death**  
Really stuck in the schema of wonderin' when I'ma rest  
And you're right, your brother was a brother to me  
And your sister's situation was the one that pulled me  
In a direction to speak on somethin'  
That's realer than the TV screen  
By any means, wasn't tryin' to offend or come between  
Her personal life, I was like "It need to be told"  
Cursin' the life of twenty generations after her soul  
Exactly what'd happen if I ain't continue rappin'  
Or steady bein' distracted by money, drugs and 4-5's  
I count lives, all on these songs  
Look at the weak and cry, pray one day you'll be strong  
Fightin' for your rights, even when you're wrong  
And hope that at least one of you sing about me when I'm gone  
Am I worth it? Did I put enough work in?

[Chorus]

Promise that you will sing about me  
Promise that you will sing about me  
I said when the lights shut off and it's my turn  
To settle down, my main concern  
Promise that you will sing about me  
Promise that you will sing about me

[Outro]

Promise that you'll sing about me forever  
Promise that you'll sing about me for— oooh  
Promise that you'll sing about me forever  
Promise that you'll sing about me for— oooh  
Promise that you'll sing about me forever  
Promise that you'll sing about me for— oooh  
Promise that you'll sing about me forever  
Promise that you'll sing about me for— oooh

[Part II: "I'm Dying of Thirst"]

[Skit]

(On the phone)

"Ay, ay, ay, where you 'bout to go?"

"Nigga, the homie's brother—nigga, right here, he gone, my nigga, he gone!"

"Hey, come to the store for a nigga, one time."

"We on the block right now, my nigga, like, we—nigga, we right here, my nigga."

"Bring a nigga back a black!"

"Nigga—bruh—nigga, they just killed the homie's brother, my nigga. We right here on the block, my nigga... Al—alright, nigga—nigga, just come—alright, alright, just call me back, man, just call me back."

"Bring a nigga back a black!"

(\*Hangs up\*)

"Ahh, fuck... So, so, what we gon' do, my niggas? What we gon' do?"

"Bro, we can go back right now, my nigga. Like... nigga, I don't give a fuck, my nigga. We can go back right now."

"Fuck! I'm tired of this shit! I'm tired of fuckin' runnin', I'm tired of this shit! My brother, homie!"

[Verse 1]

Tired of runnin', oh, tired of huntin', oh  
My own kind, but retirin' nothin', oh  
Tires are steady screechin', the driver is rubbin', oh  
Hands on the wheel, oh, who said we wasn't, oh  
Dyin' of **thirst**, oh, dyin' of thirst, oh, dyin' of thirst, oh?

[Verse 2]

Dope on the corner, oh, look at the coroner, oh  
Daughter is dead, oh, mother is mournin' her, oh  
Stray bullets, oh, AK bullets  
Resuscitation was waitin' patiently, but they couldn't, oh  
Bring her back, oh, who got the footage, oh?  
Channel 9, oh, **cameras is lookin'**  
It's hard to channel your energy when you know he crooked, oh  
**Banana clip**, split his banana pudding, oh  
I'm like Tre, oh, that's Cuba Gooding, oh  
I know I'm good at, oh  
Dyin' of thirst, oh, dyin' of thirst, oh, dyin' of thirst, oh

[Verse 3]

How many sins, oh? I'm runnin' out, oh  
How many sins, oh? I lost count  
Dreams of ballin' like Spalding  
But only shotty bounce, oh  
The reaper callin', oh, I'm cottonmouth, oh  
**Money is power** (Money is power)  
Yours is ours (Yours is ours)  
Lay with a snitch, oh, die with a coward, oh  
Hope we get rich, oh, hope we can tower  
Over the city with vanity with the music louder, oh  
The same song, oh, a **black flower**, oh  
I'll show you how to, oh  
**Dye your thirst**, oh, dye your thirst, oh, dye your thirst, oh

[Verse 4]

What are we doin', oh? Who are we foolin', oh?  
Hell is hot, oh, fire is proven, oh  
To burn for eternity, return of the student  
That never learned how to live righteous but how to shoot it, oh  
Tired of runnin', oh, choirs is hummin', oh  
Tell us to visit, oh, we lie about comin', oh  
Now back to business, oh, loadin' the guns in  
Back of the **Buick**, your **hood** is feudin'  
The **beef** is bubblin', oh, it's no discussion, oh  
Hereditary, oh, all of my cousins, oh  
Dyin' of thirst, oh, dyin' of thirst, oh, dyin' of thirst, oh

[Verse 5]

Too many sins, oh, I'm runnin' out, oh  
Somebody send me a **well for the drought**, oh  
See all I know, oh, is takin' notes  
On takin' this life for granted, granted, if he provoke, oh  
My best days, oh, I stress days  
(Lord, forgive me for all my sins, for I not know—)  
My best days, oh, I stress days, oh  
Say "fuck the world", oh, my sex slave, oh  
Money, pussy, and greed—what's my next crave?  
Whatever it is, know it's my next grave, oh  
Tired of runnin', tired of runnin', tired of tumblin'  
Tired of runnin', oh, tired of tumblin', backwards  
My momma say "See, a pastor give me a promise  
What if today was the rapture and you completely tarnished?  
**The truth will set you free**, so to me be completely honest

You dyin' of thirst, you dyin' of thirst  
So hop in that water, and pray that it works

[Skit/Outro]

Fuck! I'm tired of this shit!  
I'm tired of fuckin' runnin', I'm tired of this shit!  
That's my brother, homie!  
Young man, come talk to me! Is that what I think that is?  
I know that's not what I think that is  
Why are you so angry?  
See, you young men are dying of thirst  
Do you know what that means?  
That means you need water, holy water  
You need to be baptized, with the spirit of the Lord  
Do you want to receive God as your personal savior?  
Okay, repeat after me:  
"Lord God, I come to You a sinner"  
(Lord God, I come to You a sinner)  
"And I humbly repent for my sins"  
(And I humbly repent for my sins)  
"I believe that Jesus is Lord"  
(I believe that Jesus is Lord)  
"I believe You raised Him from the dead"  
(I believe You raised Him from the dead)  
"I would ask that Jesus come into my life"  
(I would ask that Jesus come in my life)  
"And be my Lord and Savior"  
(And be my Lord and Savior)  
"I receive Jesus to take control of my life"  
(I receive Jesus to take control of my life)  
"And that I may live for Him from this day forward"  
(And that I may live for Him from this day forward)  
"Thank you, Lord Jesus  
For saving me with Your precious blood"  
(Thank you, Lord Jesus  
For saving me with Your precious blood)  
"In Jesus' name, amen"  
(In Jesus' name, amen)  
Alright now, remember this day  
The start of a new life, your REAL life

## 9.11. Appendix – “Real”

[Chorus: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise]

I do what I wanna do

I say what I wanna say, when I feel, and I

Look in the mirror and know I'm there

With my hands in the air, I'm proud to say yeah

I'm real, I'm real, I'm really, really, real

I'm real, I'm real, I'm really, really, real

I'm real, I'm real, I'm really, really, real

I'm real, I'm real, I'm really, really, real

[Verse 1: Kendrick Lamar]

I promise that I know you very well

Your eyes never lie, even if they tell

Sweet lullabies that come with a smell

Of a dozen roses flipping down the green hill

You're living in a world that come with plan B

'Cause plan A never relay a guarantee

And plan C never could say just what it was

And your plans only can pan around love

You love him, you love them, you love her

You love so much, you love when love hurts

You love red bottom and gold that say "Queen"

You love hand-bag on the waist of your jean

You love French tip and trip that pay for

You love bank slip that tell you we paid more

You love a good hand whenever the card dealt

But what love got to do with it when you don't love yourself?

[Chorus: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise]

I do what I wanna do

I say what I wanna say, when I feel, and I

Look in the mirror and know I'm there

With my hands in the air, I'm proud to say yeah

I'm real, I'm real, I'm really, really, real

I'm real, I'm real, I'm really, really, real

I'm real, I'm real, I'm really, really, real

I'm real, I'm real, ('Cause before you know it, everything's gone)

[Verse 2: Kendrick Lamar]

I promise that I know you very well

Your eyes never lie, even if they fell  
Out the sky and your optics turn stale  
Where they mold that's green, I can see you **fit the bill**  
Of living in a world that come with plan B  
'Cause plan A only can make another mistake  
And you can't see success coming from plan C  
When it all breaks, you'll still say you're lovely  
And love them and love when you love her  
You love so much, you love when love hurts  
You love fast cars and **dead presidents old**  
You love fast women, you love keepin' control  
Of everything that you love, you love **beef**  
You love **streets**, you love running, ducking police  
You love your **hood**, might even love it to death  
But what love got to do with it when you don't love yourself?

[Chorus: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise]

I do what I wanna do  
I say what I wanna say, when I feel, and I  
Look in the mirror and know I'm there  
With my hands in the air, I'm proud to say yeah  
I'm real, I'm real, I'm really, really, real  
I'm real, I'm real, I'm really, really, real  
I'm real, I'm real, I'm really, really, real  
I'm real, I'm real ('Cause before you know it, everything's gone)

[Verse 3: Kendrick Lamar]

The reason why I know you very well  
**'Cause we have the same eyes, can't you tell?**  
The days I tried to cover up and conceal  
My pride, it only made it harder for me to deal  
When living in a world that come with plan B  
**A scapegoat 'cause plan A don't come free**  
And plan C just an excuse like "because"  
Or the word "but," but what if I got love?  
I love them, I love when I love her  
I love so much, I love when love hurts  
I love first verse 'cause you're the girl I attract  
I love second verse 'cause you're the homie that pack  
Burner like a stove top, that love cooking from scratch  
I love what the both of you have to offer  
**In fact, I love it so much, I don't love anything else**  
But what love got to do with it when I don't love myself  
To the point I should hate everything I do love?

Should I hate living my life inside the club?  
Should I hate her for watching me for that reason?  
Should I hate him for telling me that I'm seizin'?  
Should I hate them for telling me "ball out"?  
Should I hate street credibility I'm talkin' about  
Hating all money, power, respect in my will  
Or hating the fact none of that shit make me real?

[Skit: Kenny Duckworth]

Kenny, I ain't trippin' off them dominoes anymore. Just calling, sorry to hear what happened to your homeboy, but don't learn the hard way like I did, homie. Any nigga can kill a man, that don't make you a real nigga. Real is responsibility. Real is taking care of your motherfucking family. Real is God, nigga

[Chorus: Kendrick Lamar & Anna Wise]

I do what I wanna do  
I say what I wanna say, when I feel, and I  
Look in the mirror and know I'm there  
With my hands in the air, I'm proud to say yeah  
I'm real, I'm real, I'm really, really, real  
I'm real, I'm real, I'm really, really, real  
I'm real, I'm real, I'm really, really, real  
I'm real, I'm real ('Cause before you know it, everything's gone)

[Skit: Kenny Duckworth & Paula Duckworth]

Alright, that's all I wanted to tell you. Just make sure you call us back when you get this message. Here go your mom. Boy, you better have my car on full all this time you done had my damn car, but look I ain't trippin'. Look, the neighbors say they seen you and your little friends over there by Food for Less and they was preaching to you over there telling you about the good book because right about now that's what y'all need. Oh, and Top Dawg called the house too. I guess they want you and Dave to come to the studio. But look, you take that music business serious, and put out something me and your dad can step to. Shit, you know we from Chicago, you know that's what we do

## 9.12. Appendix – “Compton”

[Verse 1: Kendrick Lamar]

Now everybody serenade the new faith of Kendrick Lamar

This is King Kendrick Lamar

King Kendrick and I meant it, my point intended is raw

Fix your lenses forensics would've told you Kendrick had killed it

Pretend it's a massacre and the masses upon us

And I mastered being the master at dodging your honor

And the chapter that read at 25 I would live dormant like five in the morning

They raid your spot while Kendrick's performing

And if they take everything, know I got

[Chorus]

Compton, Compton

Ain't no city quite like mine

[Verse 2: Dr. Dre & Kendrick Lamar]

Ay, Dre what's happening wit' it, my nigga?

Still I'm at it, peel the plastic off it, you can feel the magic

Still I'm laughing at the critics talking, I can see 'em gagging

When I'm back in the back of my city, back in the 'bach

With a batch of them banging Dre Beats with me, look where I'm at

It's the murder cap' and I'm captain at birthing this gangsta rap

It's a wrap when I'm done and I come a long way from a hundred dollars a month

To a hundred mil' in a day, bitch I'm from

[Chorus]

Compton, Compton

Ain't no city quite like mine

[Verse 3: Kendrick Lamar]

So come and visit the tire screeching, ambulance, policeman

Won't you spend a weekend on Rosecrans, nigga?

Khaki creasing, crime increasing on Rosecrans, nigga

Kendrick Conan, nigga

Where you sword at, hand on the cross and swore that

I do it big as Rasputia for them shooters

Kama Sutra scream fuck your position and make you hold that

I'm trying to stay grounded like four flats

But I know flats and Piru Crip tats

[Bridge]

Will swarm on me like a beehive



Hop in the G ride  
From the West to the Eastside  
Know that's just how Compton roll

[Verse 4: Dr. Dre & Kendrick Lamar, Both]

And that's a given  
I pass the blunt then pass the torch of course that's my decision  
I crash the Porsche then you report that you see me in Benzes  
I must report that we import the narcotics you bought it  
Then talked about it when crack hit the speakers, the music business  
I blow up every time we throw up a record  
Depending on what you expecting, I'm sure it's bigger than your religion  
Perfected by niggas that manifested music to live in

[Chorus]

Compton, Compton  
Ain't no city quite like mine

[Verse 6: Kendrick Lamar]

Now we can all celebrate  
We can all harvest the rap artists of N.W.A  
America target our rap market, as controversy and hate  
Harsh realities we in made our music translate  
To the coke dealers, the hood rich  
And the broke niggas that play  
With them gorillas that know killers  
That know where you stay  
Roll that kush, crack that case, ten bottles of rosé  
This was brought to you by Dre  
Now every motherfucker in here say:  
"Look who's responsible  
For taking Compton international  
I make 'em holla"

[Outro]

Ayo Just Blaze, good looking homie  
Just Blaze  
Ain't no city quite like mine, yeah  
In the city of Compton  
Ain't no city quite like mine

[Skit]

Mom, I finna use the van real quick!  
Be back, 15 minutes!