

Faculty of Arts

**Evolution of the Usage  
of the N-word in  
Popular American Prose**

Bachelor's thesis

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## Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá rozbořem textů populárních amerických rapových skladeb v letech 1990-2019 za účelem zjištění, jakým způsobem se v nich měnilo použití tzv. n-slov (nigger, nigga, negro) a jejich derivátů. Práce byla rozdělena do dvou částí. První část byla teoretická a popisovala historii užívání těchto slov, jejich etymologii, a také sloužila jako úvod do hudebního žánru rapu a jeho sub žánrů, jež byly v této práci analyzovány. Druhá část práce je praktická a obsahuje analýzu textů skladeb ze 30 vybraných alb. Tato analýza měla za účel spočítat celkový počet užití těchto slov a následně každé instanci přiřadila jaké citové zabarvení tato použití měla.

## Abstract

This bachelor's thesis deals with the analysis of lyrics of popular American rap music between the years 1990 and 2019 in order to find in what way did the way the usage of the n-word and its variants change. The thesis was sectioned into two parts, the first part was the theoretical part, and it described the history of the n-word usage, the etymology of the word "nigger" and "nigga" and it also served as an introduction to the rap music genre and its subgenres that were analyzed. The second part of the thesis was the analytical part where the lyrics of songs of 30 chosen albums have undergone the analysis which counted all the instances of the n-word and later assigned each of these instances a connotational value in order to find what changed in this regard during the three decades.

## Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis with title **Evolution of the Usage of the N-word in Popular American Rap Music (1990-2019)** I submit for assessment is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my thesis.

Brno May 16, 2021  
Leitgeb

..... Filip

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## Introduction

Hip hop music genre, or rap as it is usually called, is a relatively young music genre with the first rappers surfacing during the late 1970s/early 1980s, however, throughout its so far short lifetime the genre has undergone numerous changes not only in the style of the music changing from being a heavily disco influenced underground genre over to a rhythmic popular dance genre of the 80s to the controversial rise in popularity of the gangsta rap with today's trend being mumble and trap rap. It is not unusual for a music genre to branch out into all kinds of modifications of the original genre and spawn offspring genres that feature unique characteristics, such as specific backing tracks, style of singing/rapping and vocabulary. Thus, will vocabulary be the primary focus of this thesis and more precisely one specific word will be in the spotlight – nigga, that is just as prominent in black artists' rap music lyrics as it is controversial and causing conflicts about its usage. This thesis will deal with the evolving usage of the word nigga in mostly African American popular rap music lyrics, from the point of view of frequency of usage (whether the usage has increased or decreased in the last 30 years) and the meaning of the word (whether the meaning changed in any way, e.g., the connotation changed from being negative to positive, etc.). Language is a subject to constant evolution and change, and so is one of its foundational parts – vocabulary. Vocabulary changes usually consist of retiring older, archaic words for updated and modernized forms, inventing completely new and original words or updating the meaning of a word. All instances of the n-word and its forms in this thesis will either be taken from the music lyrics or used for the purposes of an academic research and will not in any way reflect the author's views.

The method of data obtaining for conducting the research will be textual analysis. For every year of the 30 year span an album was chosen that was considered to be one of the most popular

and prolific in the genre at the time. This thesis will not represent the usage of n-word in the hip-hop genre as a whole, as there are artists that are not so commercially successful as those mentioned in this thesis. The albums and artists that formed the basis for the conducted research have been chosen based on their popularity and success, the chosen individuals or groups were among the top artists in the years their albums debuted. The reason for this choice of source material is that these popular artists and albums are the primary representatives of the genre and would be subject to a lot of publicity and exposure and that would in turn shape the image the genre would have in the eye of the public. This thesis does not take into account underground and amateur artists. Individual tracks of each album were closely analyzed using the transcript of the lyrics. The analysis consisted of finding instances of the words “nigga”, “nigger”, “negro” or other forms in order to calculate a statistic for the average usage of the n-word per track. An in-depth analysis will be shown on only one track from the entire album in order to keep the thesis size manageable. After every decade had a total number of usages assigned, every decade’s result was compared to the other ones and it was concluded that the usage increased/decreased/remained roughly the same and whether the usage was positive/neutral/negative.

## History, Etymology and Uses of the N-Word

The n-word is most likely one of the most polarizing words in the English language and people from all kinds of ethnic backgrounds have differing opinions about its usage and whether it is okay to use the word or not. And while a greatly controversial word it is at the same time one of the words with some of the richest history during which the meaning shifted. The English form of the word – nigger is presumably adopted from other (mostly romance) languages which use similar words for describing the color black, namely Latin and its *niger* (“Nigger”). Another word used to label black people or people of African descent comes directly from the Spanish language and its word for black as well – *negro* (“Negro”). These words by themselves have no racial connotation and their meaning is solely occupied with the color, however, it seems that as European people were exposed to people of other ethnicities and more precisely with people who had darker skin the word black in many languages became synonymous with a person whose skin had darker pigmentation. This did not immediately mean that the people who used it were intentionally racist as it only later became the case. The usage of the color black to describe a darker skinned person was a matter of convenience as Europeans were used to seeing other Europeans who were considered white without the need to know their exact ethnicity and therefore anyone coming from Africa was conveniently initially labelled black. The lack of modern values such as political correctness also contributed to the wide spread of the usage and allowed it to gain the infamy it has today.

### Racial Prejudice Usage (by whites)

Probably the most widely known usage of the word (albeit with the hard -er ending as opposed to the soft -a) is with a deeply negative and racially motivated connotation. Throughout the

history of abuse and exploitation of black people by whites it gained infamy and the word is nowadays considered a serious derogatory term and its usage is nowadays prohibited, outlawed and rightfully labelled as hate speech. Although this was only a recent development as it was not considered to be as problematic prior to the era of civil rights movements of the 20th century, such as the 1960s in America. However, in the times before civil rights movements managed to prove themselves a worthy challenger to the deeply rooted racist tradition in America, the word “nigger” was a well-established word in the vocabulary of white Americans:

... white parents and teachers used the word to instruct children that blacks were deficient, but also to show how their own racial status was precarious. They disciplined white children with stories of nigger boogeymen ... Children absorbed their racial lessons and reacted with open hostility when they saw real black people. (Pryor 204-205)

The children mentioned in the excerpt essentially underwent a racially motivated indoctrination orchestrated by their parents or teachers who presumably inherited their racist tendencies from their own parents or teachers. The n-word has therefore become a part of their vocabulary even before they had a chance to meet actual black people and form their own opinion, their opinion was already skewed by hate that came from the prejudice of the first European settlers in America felt towards the enslaved Africans brought to the New World and continued being not only tolerated but encouraged and passed on from generation to another for more than two hundred years to come.

### Usage by Afro Americans

As opposed to the prejudicially and racially motivated form of the n-word ending with the -er the version adopted by African Americans was a modified form of the word which uses a softer -a

sound at the end. While not perfectly stripped of its original stigmatic meaning that many still nowadays consider problematic this form of the word is included in many black Americans' vocabulary where the n-word is a highly flexible word whose meaning changes depending on the words it collocates with, the tone with which the word is uttered and generally depends on the context in which the word is used. The word is considered to be "property" of black Americans in that sense that no non-black person should use it because if they were to use it would most likely be in an offensive manner. Randall Kennedy uses Clarence Major's 1970 *Dictionary of Afro-American Slang* to provide an example how the n-word is perceived by black people based on who says it:

When used by a white person in addressing a black person ... [nigger is usually] offensive and disparaging ... when used by black people among themselves, [nigger] is a racial term with undertones of warmth and good will reflecting ... a tragicomic sensibility that is aware of black history. (Kennedy 89)

However, this adoption of the word by the black community is not without problems. Many members of the community refuse to use this word in any of its forms because they still consider it a derogatory term. Musicians such as Chuck D from Public Enemy who tweeted that "The Word Nigger or Nigga is a STD of vocabulary ....a 'Slavery Transmitted Disease'" (@MrChuckD) or comedians, such as Bill Cosby:

Bill Cosby takes a similar position, arguing that black comedians who tell nigger jokes evince a deplorable lack of self-regard or racial pride. He therefore urges his fellow black comedians to stop employing the N-word in their comedy routines. (Kennedy 90)

Both Chuck D and Cosby are representatives of an older generation than rappers and younger black people who tend to use the n-word casually as part of their vocabulary. This creates a

generational rift between the usage of the n-word as younger people did not have to endure years of freely reigning oppression. Interestingly, music genre has undergone a completely opposite evolution as the early years of rap did not feature the n-word or any other vulgarisms and obscenities but with the rise of gangsta rap the usage of the n-word increased significantly compared to the early rap music.

### Usage in Music

As mentioned in the previous section, the n-word is not universally seen as a positive inclusion in the vocabulary of African Americans and such critics can be found even among the ranks of musicians of the rap genre. Such is the case of the aforementioned rapper Chuck D. Chuck D is a veteran of the genre that has performed with Public Enemy before the n-word started becoming a mainstream addition to the rap lyrics: “Public Enemy debuted in 1987” (Huey) and it seems that he is not in favor of this change to the genre. Chuck D still considers the word derogatory (not letting the controversial and complicated history of the word be forgotten and replaced by a meaning that would ignore these historical developments surrounding the word) and he compared its usage to the usage of other slurs: “If there was a festival and it was filled with anti-Semitic slurs... or racial slurs at anyone but black people, what do you think would happen? Why does there have to be such a double standard?” (Wyatt). Jeremy Helligar of *Variety* thinks that the complicated history of the word separates the fanbase: “Is it really fair to have one set of rules for black fans and another for white fans?” (Helligar) as he said in response to another prolific artist in the genre, Kendrick Lamar, who showed a stance against the usage of the word in rap music after an incident with a (white) fan that he invited on stage to sing with him, and the song featured

several instances of the n-word which the fan sang (Helligar). However, despite Chuck D's criticism and controversy surrounding Kendrick Lamar and other calls for the word's removal from the music industry it would seem that the n-word has firmly established in the genre ecosystem throughout the years of the genre's existence and the upcoming analysis in the latter sections of this thesis will investigate whether the frequency and tone of the word has increased or decreased.



## Rap Music

### Origins of the Genre

Compared to other widely popular genres of music (such as jazz, rock, soul, blues), rap is a relatively young genre because it started appearing in underground environments during the 1970s in New York (Dye) but quickly rose in popularity and soon entered the mainstream. Rap music is another music genre that was heavily shaped by African Americans and it would most likely not exist were it not for their contribution. Nowadays, an integral part of hip-hop music is the rapper and their lyrical proficiency, however, during the early days of hip-hop the most important person in the genre was a DJ. As David Dye writes: “DJs began isolating the percussion breaks of funk, soul, and disco songs and extending them” (Dye). They would sample the records (usually the percussive sections) learn to sequence between them smoothly in order to create a well-flowing beat, a sort of base, for rappers (or MCs/emcees) who introduced the rapping to accompany the beat with their lyrics. This type of hip-hop music was usually performed as a live performance rather than being primarily recorded in a studio as was traditional with other musical genres (maybe except for classical music). As rappers/MCs were at the forefront and usually at the center of attention of the audience the focus naturally shifted from the DJ on the MCs and that led to the reformation of the genre from a live performed art into a traditional music genre. Groups would still be the core of the genre for most of the 1980s with such groups as Run-DMC, Beastie Boys, Public Enemy being the most prominent ones and during the 1990s first big solo artists rose to fame, e.g., Ice Cube after his departure from the N.W.A group, Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smalls.

## Strains/Branches/Variations of the Genre

While hip-hop music is distinct enough with its nonharmonic rapping from the other traditional music genres it is similar in other ways. One of such similarities is the splitting of the base genre into subgenres and in this section the most important subgenres will be introduced and briefly described to provide insight into the evolution of the genre itself alongside the evolution of the n-word in order to find overlaps that would help specify the exact shift in the genre when the word started appearing.

### Gangsta Rap

Gangsta rap was one of the biggest changes to the genre and also one of the most controversial developments in the genre's history. Gangsta rap was a significant divergence from genre's original vision. It also went against the principles of black arts that were usually seeking inclusion in mainstream arts by showing that black people are not what many of the racial stereotypes say they are – i.e., uneducated thugs, criminals, and freeloaders. Most of the originally black music genres achieved a renowned status, e.g., jazz, soul, blues, and black artists gained recognition and popularity and proved the stereotypes wrong. Gangsta rap, on the other hand, embraces the stereotype of a violent, vulgar black gangster – gangsta and works with it to create a powerful and menacing image of a black person. When compared with the original version of hip-hop music, gangsta rap is much more vulgar, dealing with more explicit and violent themes (murders, gang violence, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, etc.) which were not only mostly unexplored in the hip-hop genre but even in music in general. One of the most important changes this subgenre brought to American rap music (that is also important for this thesis) is its

introduction of the n-word into its song lyrics. This genre has caused controversy upon its arrival with people claiming it incites violence, influences children, disrespects authorities, etc.: "Now, "gangsta" rap itself is being decried as a menace to society for its seeming glorification of violence -- gun violence in particular -- among black youth, where firearms are the leading cause of death for males 15 to 24" (Harrington). The genre gained the most notoriety when the rap group N.W.A (Niggaz Wit Attitudes) became popular during the late 1980s. As Jabar Asim writes:

Other developments may be contributing to this epochal shift, but none has done so as emphatically as the hip-hop subgenre known as gangsta rap. From 1979, when "Rapper's Delight" was released, until 1988, when "Straight Outta Compton" went gold, the N word was seldom uttered on hip-hop recordings. (Asim 220)

The success of N.W.A, who had the n-word incorporated into their group name, indicates a major turning point in the rap music genre which would influence many artists in the forthcoming years and decades. As was mentioned earlier not every artist had positive feelings about the n-word incorporating itself in music lyrics, however it is worth mentioning that the n-word was used in other genres before, albeit in a much different context. Oftentimes before African Americans started using the n-word in their lyrics the word was used in a mocking and blatantly racist manner predominantly by white artists. For example, the classic American folk song, *Oh! Susanna* by Stephen Foster, which had largely nonsensical lyrics featured an outright violent part "...and killed five hundred Nigger" (Resnikoff). Another example is the popular nursery rhyme song *Eenie meenie miney mo* which originally said: "Eenie, meenie, miney mo. Catch a nigger by the toe. If he hollers, let him go. Eenie, meenie, miney mo" (Abad-Santos). The inclusion of the n-word in a nursery rhyme serves no purpose other than being derogatory as it contributes nothing to the

structure of the rhyme, and it can be easily replaced by a different word. The new way of usage, while not all African Americans agree, is far less demeaning and it feels empowering for black people to use it as a sign of protest against hate speech – by taking the means of abuse from the abusers.

### East Coast vs. West Coast Rap

East Coast rap is a direct evolution of the genre from its original 1970s style: “East coast hip-hop is sometimes referred to as New York Rap because it originated from block parties thrown on the streets of New York City in the 1970's” (Adaso). The most prolific artists of this subgenre are the groups Wu-Tang Clan (and its members who worked solo) and Mobb Deep, and solo artists such as The Notorious B.I.G., Nas and Jay-Z. These artists are considered giants of not only the East Coast but rap genre in general. The evolution of the rap genre on the opposite side of the US is called West Coast rap and the division into these subgenres is usually done based on both the geographical location and the affiliation with either East or West coast based record companies. Fans and artists of East and West coast subgenres of rap are sometimes considered to be rivalling groups (Seng) and the feud transcended the musical stage it originated from, it was not a harmless exchange of opinions but an actual violent conflict that was similar to actual gang violence due to the heavy promotion of gangster personas and lifestyles in the rap genre. Rappers also promoted their affiliation with actual gangs which gained them recognition from the gangs they supported (some even in their lyrics) and notoriety from others. Casualties of this conflict were both fatal and non-fatal, with Tupac and Biggie being the most high-profile fatalities of the feud, both being victims of a drive-by shooting – a signature gang assassination method. Nowadays, the division is no longer even causing such substantial differences in style as the modern rap genre is either more

uniform in style or it differs from artist to another individually rather than being representative of the entire genre.

### Modern Rap

The most popular recent development in the rap genre is the trap style of rap which slowly pushed the gangsta rap genre out during the 2000s and has established itself as the main “strain” of hip-hop over the course of the 2010s. In 2017 Kendrick Lamar’s hit song “Humble” “... hits No. 1 on Billboard Hot 10” (Trust). The following year, in 2018 Cardi B “... becomes first female rapper to score two Billboard No. 1 hits” (Romano). The success of these two artists is not a success only in the rap genre but in music generally. Next to trap rap there was also the rise of the mumble rap subgenre. Similarly to other developments in the genre even mumble rap was a target of controversy and criticism, however, this time it was a criticism coming mostly not from the public but other artists in the genre because some of them felt like this type of rap is shallow, brings no innovation and rather pushes the genre back instead of forward and requires no real talent because of the usage of modern computer technologies and sound effects the vocals are enhanced and the rapper now does not even have to have a well-thought out flow and be perfectly on the beat as the beat can be easily modified to fit the rapper’s needs without the need of re-recording. One of those critics was Marshall Mathers, better known by his artist alias – Eminem, who is one of the most prolific artists in the genre, and he has presented criticism of this subgenre in his 2018 track *The Ringer*: “Do you have any idea how much I hate this choppy flow” (Eminem). And another time during his heated exchange with another rap artist Machine Gun Kelly/MGK also in 2018 and criticized both his mumble style of rapping and the usage of the so-called Auto-Tune vocal enhancement sound effect “Had enough of this tatted-up mumble rapper” and “And still usin’ that

mothafuckin' Auto-Tune, so let's talk about it (let's talk about it)" (Eminem). Eminem's lyrics suggest that he does not even consider MGK to be of equal importance that he is almost not worth his time because MGK is not on the same level of lyrical and musical proficiency as him: "I'm sick of your mumble rap mouth. How the fuck can him and I battle?" (Eminem).

In conclusion, the current landscape of hip-hop music is a mix of genres that prevents a clear, singular definition of the modern style of rap. There are older artists that are comfortable with using mostly the same style of gangsta rap as they used in their prime during the 90s, like Ice Cube and Snoop Dogg. Next to them there are the trap artists such as Drake, Cardi B or Kendrick Lamar that define the modern form of hip-hop with its distinct bassy and monotonous beats that are preferred over the usage of sampled songs from other artists (mostly from other genres, too) which had been the norm since the creation of hip-hop in the 1970s. The style of the rapping is different as well, current style of rapping is more similar to actual singing as artists often complement the melodic background track with singing the lyrics in a similar musical fashion and their "flow" is much less continuous and less smooth but sectioned into parts with noticeable pauses between verses.

### Analytical Part

Two methods were applied in order to reach a conclusion about the changes in the n-word usage in American rap music. Firstly, a quantitative analysis was done to discover whether there was an increase or a decrease in the n-word usage in the last 30 years. And secondly, a qualitative/connotational analysis was chosen to discover whether the connotation of the usage of the n-word has either changed from one tone to another (e.g., from positive usage to negative, or vice versa) or remained the same after the three analyzed decades.

To be able to draw conclusions about the frequency of the usage of the n-word a quantitative analysis was necessary to be done of every track appearing on the chosen albums. Every instance of the n-word was noted and added to the album total and later added to the respective decade total. When all three decades had a calculated total of the n-word instances they were compared to each other to discover the way the usage changed, whether there was an either significant or negligible increase or decrease in the usage or no change at all. The second method of analysis consisted of assigning each n-word instance a connotational value, whether it was positive, negative, or neutral. The results of this analysis were also compared.

The source for the data collection will be the lyrics of American rap songs within the 1990-2019 timeframe. For each year, an important (within the ranks of some of the most popular albums that year) album in the genre will be chosen and lyrics of all the tracks present on the album will be read through using the help of lyric transcripts found on websites that collect lyrics (e.g., Genius or AZLyrics). Out of each album only one track (usually the most popular one out of the album) will be presented in this thesis in great detail, however, each track has undergone the same detailed analysis, however, for this thesis to keep a reasonable length a decision was made to only

include one instance of detailed analysis to illustrate how the research was carried out. The results of the rest of the tracks that were not presented in their respective sections in detail have been summarized at the end of each year's/album's section and later included in their respective decade summary.

## Albums from the 1990s (1990-1999)

### 1990s Introduction

Hip-hop during the 1990s was a continuation of the so-called golden age of hip-hop that began some time during the 1980s, more precisely in the middle of that decade: “1986 represents a landmark year in hip-hop: seminal and hugely successful albums by Run DMC and the Beastie Boys were released” (Duniker and Martin). This golden age saw the introduction of many artists that gained huge popularity during the early years of the golden age and rose to an even greater prominence in the hip-hop genre during the 1990s and later helped change the sentiment about the genre from an often controversial to an accepted mainstream music genre. However, when the genre entered the mainstream, some things had to be changed from the traditional hip-hop to conform to the serious music industry: “A significant—and perhaps unwelcome—side effect of hip-hop's mainstream emergence was a change in the practice of sampling. As record companies became aware of the financial lucrativeness of hip-hop music, they demanded royalties for the sampled use of their copyrighted material” (Duniker and Martin). As was mentioned earlier in the origins of the genre chapter, the DJ utilized the records from other artists and created samples there were used during their and the MCs performances. During those early days, the genre was not commercially successful and therefore the record companies did not have to worry about losses of



their income but once the genre showed its popularity and financial potential the record companies made use of the copyright laws. The 1990s was a decade when the groups like Wu-Tang Clan came into existence. At the same time, the firmly established group N.W.A ceased to perform together and its members started their solo careers, like Dr. Dre who embraced both his MC and DJ experiences and performed as a competent rapper, releasing a critically acclaimed *The Chronic* in 1992 and later produce backing tracks for other rappers, such as The Game and “his two greatest successes came with Eminem and 50 Cent”(“Dr. Dre). While the start of the golden age is clearly defined as the start of the second half of the 1980s, its end seems to be influenced by the subjective views about the gangsta rap subgenre. Some authors claim that the golden age according to music reviewers ended “...with the mainstream emergence of gangsta rap popularized by Dr. Dre's *The Chronic* (1992)” (Duniker and Martin). While others take into account the importance of gangsta rap and the immense popularity of artists like The Notorious B.I.G and Tupac and thus push the end of the golden age further into the 1990s, more notably until 1996/1997 when the two mentioned rappers were gunned down. Whether only a marginal or a significant part of the 1990s was included in the golden age of hip-hop is, in the end, redundant as despite their inclusion in this era or not, prolific artists of the 1990s were an influential and integral part of the further development of the genre that helped form the following two decades of the genre, being both the inspiration and lessons to learn from for the artists that came after.

### **1990 – N.W.A – 100 Miles and Runnin’**

The first analyzed album of the 1990s is N.W.A’s (Niggaz Wit Attitudes) *100 Miles and Runnin’*. It contains only five tracks due to its format of an EP (extended play) record. The track

chosen for a demonstrative through analysis is the track number 4 titled “Real Niggaz”. Throughout the track the notion of realness is constantly referenced and as Neal suggests:

NWA essentially suggests that ‘real niggaz’ are the most politically authentic black subjects” and that “NWA is making the powerful claim that hip-hop, gangsta rap in this case, is the most authentic space for the construction of a politically authentic black subjectivity. (Neal 559)

It seems N.W.A uses their artistic medium as a means of voicing their views.

**Track #4 “Real Niggaz” (“100 Miles and Runnin’ – N.W.A.”)**

*Yo, what’s up niggas and niggettes?*

The tone of this usage is neutral, and it is addressing both sexes with its own respective version of the n-word. “Niggettes” is a rather unique version of the n-word that is not often found in other lyrics because in other addressing instances the n-word is used indiscriminately to address all sexes.

*So fellas man, tell these niggas what it's like in the minds of real niggas*

The first n-word in this line could be considered negative as it is not a general address, because that role is taken by the word fellas. In that case it means that the part “tell these niggas what it’s like in the minds of real niggas” shows that the first mentioned “niggas” need to be shown what it takes to be a “real nigga”. The term “real nigga” is an often-recurring positive collocation that refers to an outspoken member of the black society (Neal 559).

*Falling deep in the drums so many of styles  
Is one of the reasons a nigga ran a hundred miles*

A neutral substitute for a black person. Akin to word such as “man”.

*Only reason niggas pick up your record is cause they thought it was us*

Once again a neutral usage of the n-word, however the rest of the line is said in a taunting manner that the only reason anybody will buy someone else’s rap album is because they thought it was the N.W.A’s.

*Cause we're the generals in this fucking hip-hop army  
The niggas wit attitudes if you didn't know*

A positive usage that references the meaning behind the N.W.A abbreviation. It is supposed to be an empowering “title” and that their rebellious attitude means that they consider themselves and think they should be considered “real niggas”.

*It's the real thing, you are now real, real niggas, niggas*

Two instances of the n-word occurring immediately one after the other, but both are different. The first usage, once again, references this notion of realness among African Americans and is usually used in a positive, empowering manner, which is the case here as well. The second usage is a neutral address substituting other words such as guys.

*Cause a nigga like Ren's only 2 steps behind'cha  
Don't look back because you're shaking and all scared*

This neutral instance references a member of the N.W.A group – MC Ren. In this case the n-word is a term with an identical meaning as guy or brother.

*A nigga in black can be your scariest nightmare  
So sleep wit the lights on, forget that the mic's on*

Meaning similar to “a man in black” referencing that the members of N.W.A dressed in black clothes, usually the basketball team LA Raiders’ merchandise and tied the Raiders with the group:

It was N.W.A., though, who most firmly forged the enduring ties between rap and the Raiders. With the former hailing from South Central Los Angeles, and the Coliseum but a few miles removed, both served as a bullhorn amplifying the voice of an inner-city community that was done being quiet. (Bracelin)

Here in this context, it is used as a threat, so the connotation is negative.

*All these niggas wit the jibber jabber  
But couldn't kill a fly wit a muthafucking sledge hammer*

A mocking addressing usage referencing people who only talk but do not act. Negative.

*Black, the good, the bad, the ugly, you see  
A little streetwise nigga, you know me  
Rolling wit some real niggas playing for keeps*

Two positive usages that are similar, but the n-word could be replaced by another noun for a person in the case of streetwise. However, the second instance is, again, a “real nigga” which seems to be a frequent positive collocation in rap lyrics.

*Now how much harder can another nigga get?  
Trying to be like us, sound like us, dress like us*

A neutral instance of the n-word meaning a person.

*So nigga, nigga, nigga, nigga, nigga, nigga, please*

An exaggerated usage of the n-word. Neutral.

*Eazy-E, a nigga that's real*

Similar to the previous usage about MC Ren, this instance also references a member of the N.W.A group.

*Real niggas, straight off the streets of Compton  
Quick to get in your shit without second thought*

Once again, keeping with the theme set by the track's title, another instance referencing "real niggas". However, now it is placing them in the city of Compton in LA County in California. It is a reference to N.W.A's most popular record from 1988 *Straight Outta Compton*. It is also the place where most of the group's members come from and that contributes to the feeling of realness. Positive.

*So if you're talking shit about the niggas in black  
Bow down to the Kings in Raider hats*

Identical meaning to the previous instance that referenced "niggas in black". Black is the color of the Raiders team which the members of the group wore. The connotation here is negative as well, as this part of lyrics is also structured as a threat.

*They played out, that's what niggas were chanting  
One nigga left and they said we ain't having it*

Two neutral uses substituting for other nouns that refer to a person and/or people.

*You're on the dicks of four niggas not one*

The use here is neutral and it could be interpreted either as four men or the four members of N.W.A who appear in this track – Dr. Dre, Eazy E, DJ Yella and MC Ren.

*Cause MC Ren is one of the real niggas*

Again, another instance of n-word being used in the context of realness. Now referring to MC Ren as being one of the “real niggas”. Positive.

*Lost in a muthafucking world of madness  
Sadness, but Dre is just a nigga that glad there's  
Sucka muthafuckas like you, making wack jams*

A neutral usage that means that Dr. Dre is just a regular person.

*When I'm expressing, stand still like you're full of rigor mortis  
Cause I'm a real nigga, but I guess you figure  
You can break me, take me, but watch me pull the trigger  
Dre is just a nigga with heart, a nigga that's smart*

Dr. Dre's self-referential part of the lyrics where he refers to himself in a positive manner as “a real nigga”. The second time he calls himself the n-word is a callback to the previous part in the lyrics where he is called “just a nigga” same as here but in contrast with the previous instance this one is more positive as he is “a nigga with heart”. And Dr. Dre's next n-word instance is where he refers to himself as “a nigga that's smart” – which is a positive usage.

*A nigga that's paid to say what others are scared to play*

Dr. Dre's last usage and last instance of the n-word in the whole track indirectly references the realness the song is revolving around. That N.W.A is not afraid to talk/rap about controversial topics and that they are paid to do so – referencing that consumers are interested in controversy. Positive.

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	100 Miles and Runnin'		-	9	1
2.	Just Don't Bite It		-	5	-
3.	Sa Prize (Fuck The Police – Part 2)		-	8	4
4.	Real Niggaz		12	17	4
5.	Kamurshol		-	1	-
		Total	12	40	9

**Forms of N-word:**

- Nigga – 59x
- Niggette – 1x
- Nigger – 1x

Despite the album's short tracklist there are 59 instances of the -a form of the n-word across the five tracks with most of the usages being of neutral connotation. Positive instances are the second most used connotation, however, only marginally more than the negative uses. An interesting neutral form of the n-word – niggette, appeared in the introductory part of the "Real Niggaz" track. And one instance of the -er form of the n-word was used in a negative context.

**1991 – Ice Cube – *Death Certificate***

Ice Cube's second solo album after his departure from the N.W.A. It features "No Vaseline" which is considered to be one of the best diss tracks ever produced in the rap genre (Mangan). It was targeted at the questionable financial decisions within the rap group regarding their manager.

**Track #20 "No Vaseline" ("*Death Certificate* – Ice Cube.")**

*Real Niggas? Them niggas Dre and Yella used to wear lipstick and lace*

Ice Cube references N.W.A's 1990 song "Real Niggaz" but mocks the two N.W.A members Dr. Dre and DJ Yella for their fashion choices and therefore this usage of the term "real niggas" is not positive as it was in N.W.A's lyrics but instead negative as it aims to discredit the two members. The second n-word is neutral.

*One big house and not another nigga in sight*

Another reference to N.W.A's departure from being "real". The members of the group moved into a house that was in a predominantly white area. Negative.

*Dropped four niggas now I'm making all the dough*

Ice Cube's neutral declaration that after he left N.W.A to focus on his solo career he is now in charge of his finances.

*The Niggas With Attitudes? Who ya foolin'?*  
*Y'all niggas just phony*

Two negative uses. The first instance mocks the group's name and that due to their actions they departed from the name. The second one is an address to a group of people – N.W.A members.

*House nigga gotta run and hide*

A negative mocking and insulting reference to the black people who used to work as servants in houses of white people. Targeted at the remaining members of the N.W.A group who lived in one house with their manager Jerry Heller, who was white.



*It ain't my fault, one nigga got smart*

Ice Cube makes a positive remark about himself that he was the only one that was smart enough to terminate the contract he was under in N.W.A and that tied him and his finances to the manager.

*Now I think you a snitch  
Throw a house nigga in a ditch*

Once again, an insult targeted at the members of the N.W.A and them living among the white populace.

*Heard you both got the same bank account  
Dumb nigga, what you thinking bout?!*

A certainly negative instance due to the use of the “dumb” adjective which once again references the financial agreement between N.W.A and their manager that both parties have a shared bank account.

*'Cause you can't be the Nigga 4 Life crew  
With a white jew telling you what to do*

A negative dismissive instance that says that N.W.A's claim to be “Niggas 4 Life” is discredited by having a Jewish manager. In Ice Cube's opinion these two situations are mutually exclusive, and this part of the lyrics might even be considered antisemitic and therefore undoubtedly negative

		12.	The Birth		
		13.	I Wanna Kill Sam		
		14.	Horny Lil' Devil		
		15.	Black Korea		
		16.	True to the Game		
		17.	Color Blind		
		18.	Doing Dumb Shit		
		19.	Us		
		20.	No Vaseline		
		21.	How to Survive in South Central		
				<b>Total</b>	

<b>Track</b>					
1.	The Funeral				
2.	The Wrong Nigga to Fuck Wit				
3.	My Summer Vacation				
4.	Steady Mobbin'				
5.	Robin Lench				
6.	Givin' Up the Nappy Dug Out				
7.	Look Who's Burnin'				
8.	A Bird in the Hand				
9.	Man's Best Friend				
10.	Alive On Arrival				
11.	Death				

**Forms of N-word:**

- Nigga – 78x
- Nigger – 1x
- Negro – 2x

This album by Ice Cube features mostly neutral usages of the n-word but it also has a large difference between negative and positive usages with only a single positive use of the n-word versus 28 negative ones. In the album not only the -a form of the n-word was used but the -er form, as well as “negro” and those usages were all negative.

### 1992 – Dr. Dre – *The Chronic*

Dr. Dre’s debut solo album after his departure from N.W.A. The album featured Snoop Dogg, who later also became one of the most prolific artists in the rap genre. The track “Nuthin’ But A ‘G’ Thang” frequently ranks among the best songs from Dr. Dre and MTV even labelled it “Dre’s best song ever” (Markman). In terms of the n-word usage, “Nuthin’ But A ‘G’ Thang” has one of the lowest counts out of all the rest of the album’s tracks.

#### Track #5 “Nuthin’ But A ‘G’ Thang” (*The Chronic* – Dr. Dre.)

*Two loced out niggas going crazy*

A neutral usage that refers to the two artists appearing on the track – Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg. The phrasal verb “loced up” appears to be “derived from the Spanish word “loco” whose English translation is crazy. Another possible meaning could be that it is a verb form of the slang word “loc” which “became synonymous (but not exclusive) with Crip culture” (spadeloc). Another source supporting this is Harford County’s Sheriff’s Office which describes that “LOC commonly used by members of the Crips stands for ‘Love of Crip’” (Gahler). This way it could mean that the two artists are showing their allegiance to one of the two main LA gangs – the Crips.

*Droppin' the funky shit that's makin' the sucker niggas mumble*

Negative usage that criticizes other artists' subpar quality of their music.

*Like my nigga D.O.C., no one can do it better*

The n-word in this instance is used in a positive manner because it is used here in the same sense the word “friend” would be used. Dr. Dre is referring to and complimenting his friend and colleague D.O.C.

Track		Connotation		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	The Chronic (Intro)	1	11	2
2.	Fuck wit Dre Day	1	5	4
3.	Let Me Ride	1	7	-
4.	The Day The Niggaz Took Over	1	16	-
5.	Nuthin' But a “G” Thang	1	1	1
6.	Deeez Nuuuts	1	9	-
7.	Lil' Ghetto Boy	-	2	1
8.	A Nigga Witta Gun	1	22	6
9.	Rat-Tat-Tat-Tat	-	23	2
10.	The \$20 Sack Pyramid	-	2	-
11.	Lyrical Gangbang	-	11	4
12.	High Powered	5	2	2
13.	The Doctor's Office	-	-	-
14.	Stranded on Death Row	1	3	2
15.	The Roach (Outro)	-	14	1
16.	Bitches Ain't Shit	3	2	-
Total		16	130	25

#### Forms of N-word:

- Nigga – 170x
- Niggette – 1x

An album with a high frequency of n-word usages, the vast majority of them were the -a forms of the word, with only one instance of a neutral usage of “niggette” which is the same word Dr. Dre has previously used on the 1991 N.W.A album *100 Miles and Runnin’*.

### **1993 – Wu-Tang Clan – *Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)***

The debut album of Wu-Tang Clan that would later become the most famous East Coast rap group in the whole rap scene (Adaso). The group succeeded both as a group effort and some group members also managed to succeed in their solo musical endeavors – such as RZA, GZA, Ol' Dirty Bastard, Method Man, Raekwon or Ghostface Killah.

*Makin’ niggas go Bo! Bo! like I'm Super Cat*

A neutral substitute for a plural noun describing a group of people.

*Meth is the legend, niggas is sleepy hollow.*

Another neutral usage that is targeted at a group of people. An interesting feature is the singular form of the verb “be” despite “niggas” being a plural form of the n-word.

*I dealt for dolo, Bogart comin’ on through  
Niggas is like, “Oh my God, not you!”*

A neutral use of the n-word that has the same meaning as people (although most likely African Americans). And same as the previous instance, the plural of the n-word is not reflected in the form of the verb “be” as it is in the singular form.

*Like déjà vu, I'm rubber, niggas is like glue  
Whatever you say rubs off me sticks to you*

A neutral use that could be substituted by a different noun as it is not an essential part of the “glue” phrase, which is setting up a pun and the rhyme in the second line with the part “sticks to you”.

*Niggas from Virginia, Atlanta, our boys in Ohio  
Comin' through with the crazy Y-O Y-O*

From this point on in the lyrics RZA is mentioning affiliated groups and artists from all over the United States, so it can be assumed that this has a positive connotation as they consider these artists as friends and allies.

*Yo, niggas from The Source*

The Source is “the magazine of hip-hop music, culture and politics” (The Source), Wu-Tang Clan presumably had good relations with the editors of the magazine and wanted to give them a positive exposure in their song.

*True, true, my nigga Crown, what's goin' down, boy?*

The pairing of the n-word with the possessive pronoun “my” is a term that describes a person close to the one who utters the term. In this sense it is the same as saying “my good friend” therefore a positive connotation in this instance of the n-word use.

*Niggas from Detroit, fuckin' California squadron*

The same positive usage as the one before, with the Virginia based allies, whereas here they are mentioning the ones from Detroit.

*Niggas from D.C., down in Maryland*

Once again, positive mention of Wu-Tang Clan's Washington D.C. based friends.

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative

1.	Bring Da Ruckus		1	3	2
2.	Shame On A Nigga		-	6	5
3.	Clan in Da Front		-	6	1
4.	Wu-Tang: 7th Chamber		-	15	-
5.	Can It Be All So Simple		-	8	-
6.	Da Mystery of Chessboxin'		-	8	3
7.	Wu-Tang Clan Ain't Nuthing ta F' Wit		5	4	-
8.	C.R.E.A.M.		1	3	-
9.	Method Man		-	2	-
10.	Protect Ya Neck		-	4	2
11.	Tearz		-	-	-
12.	Wu-Tang: 7th Chamber—Part II		-	10	1
13.	Conclusion		-	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>14</b>

**Forms of N-word:**

- Nigga – 90x

Wu-Tang Clan's debut album's instances of the n-word are only the -a forms and they are mostly neutral with only few exceptions of positive and negative uses, out of which the latter are more prevalent.

**1994 – The Notorious B.I.G. – *Ready to Die***

A debut album by a New York artist also known as Biggie Smalls who, at the time, was rivalled only by another rapper – Tupac Shakur and the similarities of their popularity and fame is also projected in their untimely demise as they were both murdered by a drive-by shooting. Retrospectively, an ironic name for his debut album considering his death at a young age circumstances, however, Billboard magazine put Biggie Smalls 18 years later on number one spot in their top 10 rappers of all time chart: "... his (...) album *Life After Death* bowed just six days

after his passing in March 1997, he'd already earned his title as the greatest rapper of all time" (Billboard Staff).

**Track #6 "Ready to Die" ("Ready to Die – The Notorious B.I.G.")**

*Nigga, you ain't got to explain shit  
I've been robbin' motherfuckers since the slave ships*

Neutral address of the other character appearing on the track. Both characters are played by the rapper Biggie Smalls himself and he is leading a dialogue with his other self and in most instances of address both characters use the n-word.

*That's my word, nigga even try to bogard  
Have his mother singin', "It's so hard"*

Another neutral usage, a substitute for a singular person.

*Because the nigga play pussy  
That's the nigga that's getting' screwed*

The first n-word use of this part is a warning for those who act like cowards, however, the word itself is not used in a negative sense but rather as a neutral general labelling. "Guy" could be used instead and would retain the same meaning. The second usage in this part is identical to the first one, therefore, also neutral.

*I'm slammin' niggas like Shaquille, shit is real*

A usage referencing the former NBA basketball player Shaquille O'Neal. It has no specific connotation. Neutral.

*So for the bread and butter, I leave niggas in the gutter*

This instance sounds like a threat. The part "leave niggas in the gutter" means to kill and therefore one of the characters says he is not afraid to kill for "bread and butter". The



characters in the song reference their victims with various curse words, such as “motherfuckers” and “cocksuckers” and occasionally call them the n-word as well, so it is to be assumed that that usage is negative.

*Big up! Big up! It's a stick up! Stick up!  
And I'm shootin' niggas quick if ya hiccup*

A general neutral referring to people/their victims.

*Where the cash at? Where the stash at?  
Nigga, pass that*

Neutral address of the other character in the song story, same meaning as the informal address “man”.

*And my nigga Biggie got a itchy one grip  
One in the chamber, thirty-two in the clip  
Motherfuckers better strip, (Yeah, nigga, peel!)*

First use in this part is a positive one, it is the pairing of the possessive pronoun “my” with the n-word which signals a positive relationship between the two discourse participants. Equal meaning as “my friend”. The second instance is a neutral second person address.

*Man, niggas come through, I'm takin' high school rings too*

Neutral, once again a general labelling, substitute for people.

Track		Connotation		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Intro	-	14	6
2.	Things Done Changed	1	5	-
3.	Gimme the Loot	1	9	1
4.	Machine Gun Funk	1	4	2
5.	Warning	3	11	1
6.	Ready to Die	-	4	-
7.	One More Chance	-	1	1
8.	Fuck Me	-	-	-

9.	The What		-	9	3
10.	Juicy		-	10	-
11.	Everyday Struggle		-	-	-
12.	Me & My Bitch		-	-	3
13.	Big Poppa		-	5	1
14.	Respect		1	3	-
15.	Friend of Mine		3	-	-
16.	Unbelievable		-	1	-
17.	Suicidal Thoughts		1	11	1
		<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>19</b>

### Forms of N-word:

- Nigga – 116x
- Nigger – 1x

Biggie Smalls used the n-word in every track, except two on his 1994 album and most of those n-words were used in a neutral context with the negative uses being more frequently used than the positive ones. There was one instance of the -er form of the n-word that was used in a negative context as a racist insult by a character of the introductory skit.

### 1995 – Mobb Deep – *The Infamous*

Second album of a Queensbridge, New York based rap duo consisting of Prodigy and Havoc. In the 2009 book *How to Rap* by Paul A. Edwards the duo was labelled “... one of the most critically acclaimed hard-core East Coast hip-hop groups...” (Edwards 323). And they are even recognized and mentioned by giants of the genre, such as Biggie Smalls, who indirectly referenced them in his song “Niggas” with a line saying: “To all my Queensbridge niggas” (The Notorious B.I.G.). The song was released posthumously from Biggie’s unreleased lyrics.

**Track #15 “Shook Ones” (Part II) (“The Infamous – Mobb Deep.”)**

*For real niggas who ain’t got no feelings*

A popular and often reoccurring expression in rap lyrics describing a positive quality of a (usually) black person, and thus a positive use of the n-word.

*Word up, say it to them niggas, check this out it’s a murder*

A neutral usage and addressing a specific group of people appearing in the song’s lyrics.

*And when the things get for real, my warm heart turns cold  
Another nigga deceased, another story gets told*

The n-word itself is used neutrally to label a black person.

*So I can get my mind off these yellow-backed niggas*

An expression of criticism when the n-word got paired with “yellow-backed”. Merriam-Webster dictionary describes yellowback as “a cheap and usually sensational novel” (“Yellowback”) and Prodigy modified the meaning to apply to people and targeted those people he does not like, and thinks are pretentious.

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	The Start of Your Ending (41st Side)		-	6	1
2.	The Infamous Prelude		1	10	5
3.	Survival of the Fittest		-	3	-
4.	Eye for a Eye (Your Beef Is Mines)		1	3	1
5.	Just Step Prelude		2	-	-
6.	Give Up the Goods (Just Step)		-	6	2
7.	Temperature's Rising		-	1	2

8.	Up North Trip	-	7	3
9.	Trife Life	1	7	1
10.	Q.U. – Hectic	-	5	1
11.	Right Back at You	1	11	-
12.	The Grave Prelude	-	-	-
13.	Cradle to the Grave	-	4	-
14.	Drink Away the Pain (Situations)	1	1	2
15.	Shook Ones (Part II)	1	2	1
16.	Party Over	1	1	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>21</b>

### Forms of N-word:

- Nigga – 97x

This album featured 97 instances of the -a form of the n-word with most of those instances being neutral ones, the second most frequently used connotation was negative and positive instances were the least used with only nine instances.

### 1996 – 2Pac – *All Eyez on Me*

Tupac Shakur is a name that is nearly synonymous with West Coast rap and the era of 90s hip-hop in general. During his musical career he managed to build a strong following and reputation due to accessible and familiar themes used in his lyrics. Many other rappers during the 90s era of rap reveled in luxurious lifestyle and liked to present it in their song lyrics and music videos, such as The Notorious B.I.G. and Jay-Z who sing: “50-inch screen, money-green leather sofa; Got two rides, a limousine with a chauffeur...” (The Notorious B.I.G.) and “Chilly with enough bail money to free a big Willie; High stakes, I got more at stake than Philly” (Jay-Z), respectively. Compared to them, some of Tupac’s songs, like “Brenda’s Got a Baby” and “Changes” dealt with socioeconomic

problems plaguing black people and communities – essentially rapping about real life instead of lifestyle. Those songs stood out from the rest. Following his tragic death in 1997, Tupac’s mother Afeni Shakur founded the Tupac Amaru Shakur Foundation (Lee) to honor his name and legacy and give opportunities for the youth to express themselves through art. It also served as a way to protect and keep poor children from turning to crime. *All Eyez On Me* is considered to be Tupac’s best and most successful album he released during his life (not counting compilation albums and posthumous releases) and the *Far Out* magazine called this album Tupac’s “magnum opus” (Whatley).

### **Track #1 “Ambitionz az a Ridah” (“*All Eyez On Me* – 2Pac.”)**

*Now, you know how we do it, like a G  
What really go on in the mind of a nigga*

A neutral usage of the n-word used in place of a word for a human being. Tupac may have used “man” or “person” but instead chose the n-word to strengthen the meaning and possibly include a racial undertone.

*Stay on your grind, nigga*

A neutral address of someone Tupac included in the song’s lyrics. He is giving them an advice to keep working towards their goals and ambitions, based on his own experience and “ambitions as a ridah”.

*No guts, no glory, my nigga, bitch got the game distorted*

Throughout the album, Tupac frequently addresses his friends and associates with the positive form of the n-word paired with the possessive pronoun “my” to show his relationship towards them in the

lyrics. The use of the pronoun modifies the meaning of the n-word towards a more positive connotation.

*But thug niggas be on point and game tight (Yeah)*  
*Me, Syke and Bogart strapped up the same night*

Another frequently used expression by Tupac that has a positive connotation, however, this usage is not explicitly limited to people close to him, i.e., friends, associates, and family but rather people he has respect for. Its meaning is very close to that of “real nigga” which is also used in positive manner.

*These niggas is jealous*  
*‘Cause deep in the hearts they wanna be me*

An opposite usage to the one with the “my” pronoun. The pronoun “these” indicates a negative association, Tupac uses it to refer to people who are jealous of his life. Note the verb “be” once again used in singular form when referring to a plural noun – “niggas”.

*So open fire, I see you kill me, witness my steel*  
*(That’s all you niggas got?)*

Tupac uses the expression to taunt and challenge his enemies, the n-word here is used negatively and as if it were a curse word, and it could be substituted for one and the meaning would stay identical.

*Won't get a chance to do me like they did my nigga Tys  
Thuggin' for life, and if you right, then nigga die for it*

The first usage in this part is positive, once again the possessive pronoun “my” indicates a closer relationship with his late friend. The second instance of the n-word is neutral and a general labelling of a person.

*Niggas 'll feel the fire of my mother's corrupted seed*

The n-word here is used in a negative context in order to threaten. Tupac is mentioning his mother's problems with law and that he is able to turn to crime as well, if the need arises.

*Had bitch-ass niggas on my team so indeed they wet me up*

A negative instance of the n-word whose negative connotation is gained through the usage of the vulgar expression “bitch-ass” whose meaning is demeaning.

*I been getting' much mail in jail, niggas tellin' me to kill it*

*Knowin' when I get out they gon' feel it*

A general neutral usage used to label an indefinite group of people.

*Revenge on them niggas that played me*

A contextually negative meaning whose negative connotation is gained through the use of the personal pronoun “them” which suggests that Tupac is targeting a specific group of people that he had a bad encounter with.

*Now it's your nigga right beside ya, hopin' you listenin'*

An identical positive usage to that of “my nigga”, however this time it is used to tell another person that Tupac is their friend and will support them.

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merely month's before his new album, *Future Development* was about to drop” (DEL tha funkee homosapien). Were it not for issues and differences with the label the third album *Future Development* may have helped to popularize the artist further.

### **Track #11 “Games Begin” (“*Future Development* – Del The Funky Homosapien.”)**

*You throw on a tape and hear a nigga kick his flows*

The n-word in this part is a neutral substitute for a rapper. Del is describing an example of a relaxed day when a group of friends plays a tape from a rap musician.

*‘Cause when he got beef with a nigga he thinks y’all’ll get him*

Neutral usage of the n-word. “Beef with a nigga” describes a conflict between a man and other person/others.

*A little nigga tryin' to take command*

Neutral instance of the n-word use referring to a (African American) boy as Del states in the next verse that he is “thinkin’ he the man”.

*I kick it with my real niggas come spring break*

This positive usage combines both previously analyzed expressions that were deemed positive – the possessive pronoun “my” and the expression “real nigga”. Del uses both at the same time to show respect to his friends about whom he thinks they are “real”.

*That's the down period, rest and relaxation  
At the nigga Plus' house, let's go to Nations*

Del's acquaintance A-Plus was helping him with this album and the two are presumably not only work associates but friends as well. Therefore, a positive usage of the n-word here.

*Niggas pilin' up with the gin in a cup  
Or a blunt and Olde English so niggas can get fiendish*

Both the n-words used here are neutral and relating to an indefinite group of people.

*Callin' niggas punks but we just poppin' junk*

Del describes a situation during which he and his friends call other black people (who he calls “niggas”) punks as part of a joke with no ill intention as he says that they are “just poppin’ junk”. Therefore, the n-word is a neutral label here.

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Lyric Lickin'		-	8	2
2.	Stress the World		-	1	1
3.	Why You Wanna Get Funky...		-	2	-
4.	Don't Forget the Bass		-	2	-
5.	Faulty		-	3	2

6.	X-Files		-	5	-
7.	Future Development		-	5	-
8.	Corner Story		-	1	-
9.	Love is Worth		-	-	-
10.	Del's Nightmare		-	2	2
11.	Games Begin		2	6	-
12.	Town to Town		-	5	-
13.	Checkin' Out the Rivalry		-	1	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>7</b>

**Forms of N-word:**

- Nigga – 50x

Del's 50 instances of the -a form of the n-word is a striking difference from Tupac's album a year prior. The majority of the instances were neutral uses with seven negative uses following and only two positive uses.

**1998 – Big Pun – *Capital Punishment***

A debut album by a Bronx based rapper with Puerto Rican roots Big Pun: "Pun was proud of his Puerto Rican heritage and became an icon within his community" ("Big Pun"). So far in this thesis all of the analyzed artists were African Americans, so the inclusion of Big Pun is to illustrate that despite most of the n-word users of the rap genre in 90s were African Americans there were non-African American artists that used the n-word and Big Pun and his musical partner Fat Joe featured on *Capital Punishment* are the examples of this exception as they are both Latinos.

**Track #17 "Twinz" (Deep Cover '98) ("*Capital Punishment* – Big Pun.")**

*A thug nigga just like me, one of the best—might be  
Even better, leavin' niggas kneelin' on they right knee*

A self-referential usage of the n-word Big Pun calls himself a “thug nigga” and “one of the best” which indicates that just like Tupac in his lyrics when he used the expression “thug nigga” Big Pun also uses the expression in a positive manner. The second n-word in this part is neutral and simply refers to people kneeling before Big Pun and his greatness.

*Hit ya with the MAC, smack your bitch, nigga what?*

Big Pun threatens someone that he will shoot them and beat their girlfriend and then via the usage of the inquiring “nigga what?” mocks them. Therefore, a negative usage.

*We'll make it hot, nigga, what? (x2)*

A general and neutral address of a person.

*It's rare that niggas want beef, Big Pun speak*

Fat Joe describes that people will not often get in conflict with him and Pun. He uses the n-word to generally refer to people. Neutral.

*Puerto Ricans known for slashin'  
Catchin' niggas while they sleepin', no relaxin'*

Another negative usage – a threat which Pun uses to claim that Puerto Ricans (as he is of PR descent) are known for killing their enemies (which are labelled “niggas” in this instance) while they are sleeping.



the n-word as a word from the vocabulary of African Americans, but rather as a word that is a part of the rap genre vocabulary used in the lyrics.

### **1999 – Mos Def – *Black on Both Sides***

Mos Def, or as he is known today - Yasiin Bey's debut album *Black on Both Sides* received a universally positive reception from both critics and casual listeners. Steve Huey of AllMusic rated the album with five stars: "Its ambition and execution rank it as one of the best albums of 1999" (Huey). Yasiin's usage of the n-word throughout this album stays considerably low compared to other albums from the same decade and the only track that features a higher number of usages is the track "Mr. Nigga".

#### **Track #15 "Mr. Nigga" (*Black on Both Sides* – Mos Def.)**

*Mr. Nigga, Nigga Nigga (x6)*

Mr. Nigga is the name of the song's main character, who despite his name, is a successful and rich man, yet still faces negativity and prejudice from other (presumably white) people in his economic class for being a black man and called Nigga. Yasiin later references the chorus: "White folks gotta mumble the chorus beneath they breath." Throughout the song, Mr. Nigga is also addressed by other characters by his name numerous times.

*They stay on nigga patrol on American roads  
And when you travel abroad they got world nigga law*

In the second instance, Yasiin is talking about Mr Nigga's negative experience as a black man travelling using airlines, in this particular song he references the prejudice he claims he faced while

in the Heathrow airport London and that he had to spend a considerably longer time being processed at the customs. The second use is therefore negative as it criticizes the racist process.

*O.J. found innocent by jury of his peers  
And they been fucking with that nigga for the last five years*

This use is a neutral one and “that nigga” refers to the former NFL player O. J. Simpson who was suspected of murdering his wife and one more person. O. J.’s trial was a national sensation and a prolonged process that was eventually deemed inconclusive and acquitted O.J. of the murder charges (Henderson and Fisher).

*They think that illegal’s a synonym for negro*

Yasiin uses the word “negro” instead of “nigga” to point out that some people associate the word negro and black people in general with “illegal”, essentially saying that black people are considered criminals based only on their skin color. In this case it is negative.

			<i>Connotation</i>		
Track			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Fear Not of Man		-	-	-
2.	Hip Hop		-	-	-
3.	Love		-	-	-
4.	Ms. Fat Booty		-	2	-
5.	Speed Law		-	1	-
6.	Do It Now		1	7	-
7.	Got		-	1	-
8.	UMI Says		-	-	-
9.	New World Water		-	1	-
10.	Rock N Roll		-	-	-
11.	Know That		-	2	-
12.	Climb		-	-	-
13.	Brooklyn		-	-	-
14.	Habitat		-	-	-
15.	Mr. Nigga		-	28	2
16.	Mathematics		-	4	-
17.	May-December		-	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>2</b>



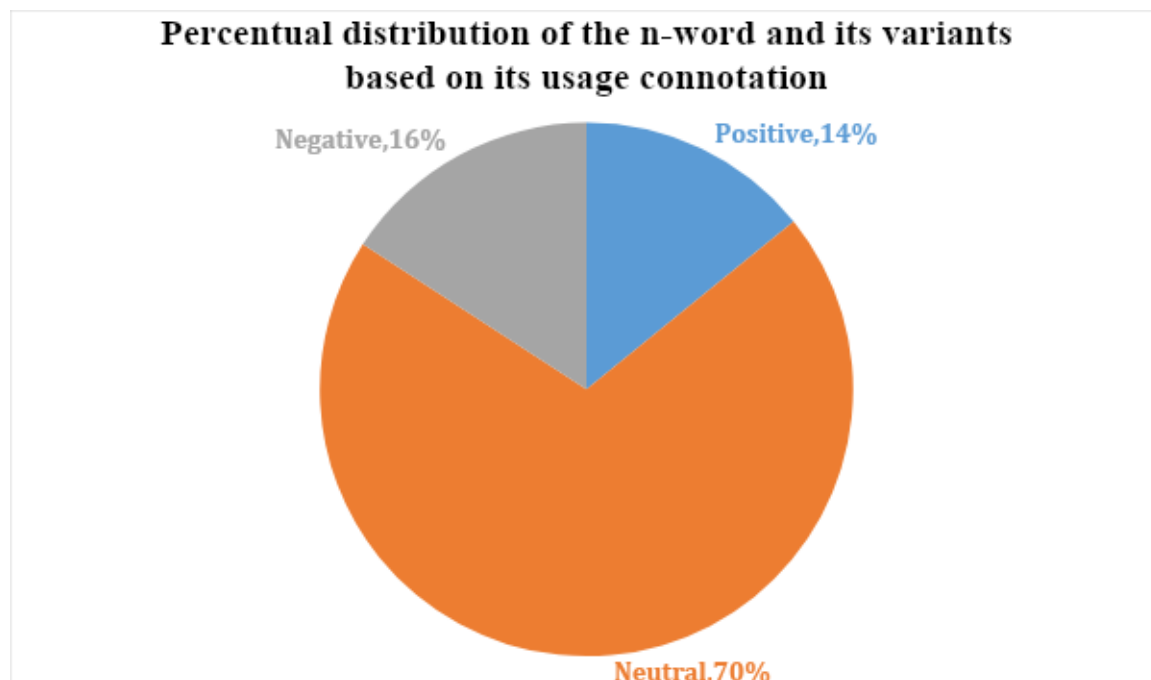
### Forms of N-word:

- Nigga – 46x
- Negro – 3x

Yasiin's album *Black on Both Sides* features 49 instances of the n-word, out of which three are the word "negro" that is, interestingly, used in all three connotations. The rest of the instances are the -a forms of the n-word and the majority is used in neutral context.

### 1990s Summary

The 1990s in rap has served as the foundation for the prominent appearance of the n-word in music/rap lyrics and thus will also serve as the basis to which the following two decades will be compared to. The dominant connotation of the n-word is neutral, with 70 percent as it is mostly used as a general address of other people, the second most used, with 16 percent, is the negative connotation which was used in connection with threats/mockery/insults, and the connotation with the least number of instances is the positive one, with 14 percent, however only marginally lower than the negative one and the positive uses were often synonyms to friendly addresses and the expression "real nigga" which carries a positive connotation in most of its usages.



## Albums from the 2000s (2000-2009)

### 2000s Introduction

With the turn of the millennium and its technological changes, the rap genre changed as well. When the early 2000s rap is compared to the early 1990s rap, gone are the all-black clothes of N.W.A and Tupac's songs that dealt with socioeconomic issues of black communities. The years 1996 and 1997 were devastating for the rap genre as in those two years two of the greatest artists of the genre were murdered – Biggie Smalls and Tupac Shakur. Without those two rappers dominating the genre it allowed the previously non-mainstream artists to break through and shape the genre according to their image. Some rappers constructed an image of violent thugs with even more violent and vulgar lyrics and gangster imagery than ever before, such as DMX and 50 Cent. Some continued the ways of flaunting luxurious goods and lifestyle and based their image completely on that, such as Soulja Boy and Lil Wayne and would be later labelled as “swag rappers” and according to Urban Dictionary swag rap is “A popular style of rap characterized by its emphasis on swag, rather than lyrical creativity. It can usually be identified by its lack of talent and inspiration, awkward pauses during the verses, and excessive bragging” (StormTrak). But the turn of the millennium also brought back many of the popular 90s rappers and rap groups.

### 2000 – Wu-Tang Clan – *The W*

Wu-Tang Clan's first album of the new millennium came three years after their last album. However, their strong debut in 1993 and a little less well-received follow up album *Wu-Tang Forever* in 1997 were hard not only to surpass but even match. John Bush from AllMusic writes: “Unfortunately, though, *The W* isn't quite the masterpiece it sounds like after the first few tracks. It

falls prey to the same inconsistency as *Forever*, resulting in half-formed tracks like "Conditioner" (Bush). It features Snoop Dogg and Nas, well-known rappers of this era.

### **Track #7 "Protect Ya Neck" (The Jump Off) ("The W – Wu-Tang Clan.")**

*Pollying deals, monopoly and bills, y'all niggas lying*

Another example of the redundant n-word usage after using the generalizing address "y'all". As usual, the removal of the n-word would not change the meaning of the expression. The n-word is used in a negative manner as it is used to address people who are lying.

*Niggas can't gel or I'm just too high to tell*

To gel is a "positive word used when people get on well with each other and therefore connect" (CS) and since Method Man says that "niggas can't gel" is most likely a criticism of their non-cooperation, therefore a negative use.

*To make my niggas from East New York flip*

Masta Killa uses the n-word to refer to his friends and peers from the Brooklyn area, located in East NY. The positive connotation of this expression is the same as the previous instances when the possessive pronoun "my" was paired with the n-word.

*Taught y'all niggas how to rap, reimburse me*

The same structure as the first n-word of this track, again with the redundant n-word after "y'all", however, here it is neutral.

*Niggas wanna pop shit, I pop clips*

A general and neutral labelling of group of people. U-God, who sings this part, most likely means that people want pop style music, but the only thing he pops are clips – gun magazines.

*Wireless nigga who sprint off the gun sound*

A neutral usage, it would be possible to substitute the n-word for “guy” and retain the meaning.

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Intro (Shaolin Finger Jab)		3	4	-
2.	Careful (Click, Click)		-	2	2
3.	Hollow Bones		-	4	1
4.	Redbull		-	1	-
5.	One Blood Under W		-	-	-
6.	Conditioner		3	9	1
7.	Protect Ya Neck (The Jump Off)		1	3	2
8.	Let My Niggas Live		24	2	1
9.	I Can't Go to Sleep		-	3	3
10.	Do You Really (Thang, Thang)		-	11	-
11.	The Monument		-	6	2
12.	Gravel Pit		2	2	-
13.	Jah World		-	2	-
14.	Clap		5	12	1
		<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>13</b>

**Forms of N-word:**

- Nigga – 111x
- Negro – 1x

Wu-Tang Clan's second appearance in the thesis and compared to their first album this one is nearly identical in the total number of n-word instances with only 11 more which could statistically

be attributed to the fact there is one more track on this album and also the neutral connotation being the most frequently used. However, this album features a higher frequency of positive uses compared to the negative uses (more than a triple the amount).

### 2001 – Foxy Brown – *Broken Silence*

The 90s hip-hop scene was saturated with male performers with only a handful of female artists having a major breakthrough among the mostly male-dominated genre (Ramirez). But Foxy Brown is one of the more popular names from the late 90s-early 2000s. Foxy's 2001 *Broken Silence* album was a success and her song "Na Na Be Like" even warranted her a nomination for "best female rap solo performance" at the 45<sup>th</sup> Grammy Awards in 2002 (Grammy).

#### Track #14 "Gangsta Boogie" ("*Broken Silence* – Foxy Brown.")

*Slow your roll niggas*  
*It's about to go down my niggas*

The first n-word of this track is a neutral address of a group of people. The second usage is a positive introduction of her peers to the song, indicated by the presence of the possessive pronoun "my" which, in most cases, positivizes the meaning of the n-word.

*Niggas*  
*Y'all can't fuck with Boog*

A simple neutral and general address.

*Nigga, it's not a game on the mic I'm insane*

Once again, a neutral address that is included for the sake of having an addressee of Foxy's rapping that the song will appear more authentic and dynamic as it will seem like an actual exchange between people.

*Niggas, uh huh, nigga read my lips*

Two neutral addresses, most likely for the same reason as the previous usage.

*Yeah y'all niggas got a problem*

Foxy also used the often-occurring generalizing expression "y'all niggas" and just like in the previous instances, the n-word is not necessary for the expression to retain the same meaning and it is most likely used in order for the artist to seem more "gangsta-like". In this case, it has a negative connotation as Foxy addresses the group of people and labels herself as the "problem" they have got – essentially threatens them.

*Hotter than dope man niggas*

Similarly to the previous instance, the n-word here is redundant and not detrimental for the meaning of the expression. Dope men are drug dealers, therefore, just the use of that expression would suffice. And the n-word is a neutral instance.

*My knuckle game vicious  
I'm shutting shit down niggas*

The n-word is used at the end of a part of the song where Foxy is threatening other women that gossip that she does not mind using her fists to "shut shit down" – stop them from gossiping. This instance is also considered as a threat and therefore negative.

*Gangsta Boogie (nigga)*

A neutral and indirect usage as the n-word is uttered.

Track			<i>Connotation</i>		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Intro		-	-	-
2.	Fallin'		-	1	-
3.	Oh Yeah		-	5	-
4.	B.K. Anthem		2	11	-
5.	The Letter		-	-	-
6.	730		1	1	-
7.	Candy		-	-	-
8.	Tables Will Turn		1	6	-
9.	Hood Scriptures		-	1	-
10.	Run Dem		-	5	1
11.	Bout My Paper		2	3	-
12.	Run Yo Shit		4	18	2
13.	Na Na Be Like		-	1	1
14.	Gangsta Boogie		1	9	2
15.	I Don't Care		-	4	2
16.	So Hot		-	19	-
17.	Saddest Day		-	6	2
18.	Broken Silence		-	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>10</b>

**Forms of N-word:**

- Nigga – 111x

Foxy Brown shows that not only can female artists succeed in the male dominated rap genre they also use the same kind of language, therefore, the frequency of the n-word instances is comparable to other featured albums in this thesis. Foxy only used the -a from of the n-word and used it in mostly neutral context, with positive and negative connotation uses being almost identical in frequency.

**2002 – Nas – *God's Son***

Released in 2002 shortly after “the unfortunate death of his mother, Ann Jones” (Birchmeier) the album features some biblical motifs as a reference to the album’s name *God's Son*, e.g., the songs “The Cross” and “Heaven”. Just as Nas was featured on Wu-Tang Clan’s album *The W* two years prior he repays the favor by mentioning Wu-Tang Clan in “Last Real Nigga Alive”, as well as Biggie and Jay-Z.

**Track #8 “Book of Rhymes” (“*God's Son* – Nas.”)**

*I'm the type of nigga that write rhymes*

A neutral usage, the n-word can be fully substituted by “person” and the meaning would remain intact.

*Some niggas will conversate with liars all day*



Similar usage to the first one in the song as it refers to people and the word “people” could be used to replace the n-word and it would not change the meaning.

*Theories of scary niggas who should lie in the morgue*

The n-word here gains a negative connotation due to the adjective “scary” which indicates that Nas refers to dangerous, criminal people and it would serve the world better if they were gone and more specifically dead, as they “should lie in the morgue”.

*Gandhi was a fool, nigga, fight to the death*

The n-word here is a general, neutral address. Nas criticizes Mahatma Gandhi’s non-violent protest methods he preached while trying to gain independence from Britain. Nas would rather “fight to the death”.

*Grow up watchin' well-dressed niggas with charms  
Beautiful ladies on their arms  
Dangerous new cars was my fantasy for Nas*

Nas reminisces about his childhood when he watched people dressed in expensive clothes and driving fast, expensive cars and that was his fantasy. The n-word here is neutral, “people”, “guys”, “men” could be used instead and the meaning would remain same.

*I can't fight you, 'cause you would sue me, niggas be groupies*

A neutral instance of the n-word, most likely referring to Nas's fans = groupies. Therefore, it would be a general labelling of the group of people that listen and like his music.

*Aw, why you laughin', Alchemist?  
Hah, you a funny nigga...  
Naw, yeah (My book of rhymes)*

A friendly exchange between Nas and the musician The Alchemist. Alchemist is laughing at Nas's old book of rhymes and Nas calls him the n-word in a friendly, banter manner, therefore it was used in a positive way.

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Get Down		-	5	1
2.	The Cross		2	4	-
3.	Made You Look		1	2	-
4.	Last Real Nigga Alive		8	6	-
5.	Zone Out		1	8	2
6.	Hey Nas		-	-	-
7.	I Can		-	-	-
8.	Book of Rhymes		1	5	1
9.	Thugz Mansion (N.Y.)		-	-	-
10.	Mastermind		7	5	-
11.	Warrior Song		-	2	-
12.	Revolutionary Warfare		-	3	-
13.	Dance		-	-	-

14.	Heaven		2	2	1
15.	Thugz Mirror (Freestyle)		-	4	1
16.	Pussy Killz		3	18	1
17.	The G.O.D.		-	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>7</b>

**Forms of N-word:**

- Nigga – 96x

Just as all the previously analyzed albums this one is dominated by the neutral uses of the n-word. Only the -a form of the n-word was used and there is a significant difference between the number of uses of negative and positive connotations, with the latter being the more frequently used one.

### 2003 – DMX – *Grand Champ*

DMX's 2003 album *Grand Champ* is aggressive, overflowing with not only profanities but also the n-word. This album features some of DMX's most popular tracks ("DMX"), namely "X Gon' Give It To Ya" and "Where the Hood At" and both feature a heavy use of vulgar language and the n-word. Most other tracks on the album follow the same pattern of violent behavior but some of them are complete opposites and have an almost gospel-like features.

#### Track #3 "Where The Hood At?" ("*Grand Champ* – DMX.")

*Ayo, y'all niggas must be out your fuckin' mind  
Thinkin' dog can't pull another motherfuckin' rabbit out the hat*

A general address of multiple people, the n-word here might be considered redundant as its removal would not change the expression's meaning and it could be just the "y'all" on its own. However, the context the word is used in is negative as DMX mocks what people thought about him not being able to record another hit album.

*Nigga, I ain't gotta check out my motherfuckin' sleeves  
You bitch-ass niggas, fuck is y'all niggas*

The first usage is a general neutral address, albeit vulgar, its meaning may be substituted with a word like "man" and retain the same meaning, whereas the other two usages are clearly used in a demeaning way as the adjective "bitch-ass" is demeaning/mocking with the intention of verbally assaulting someone.

*Y'all niggas just thinkin' I'm sittin' around doin' nothin'?  
Oh my God, y'all niggas can't be serious*

Two neutral general addresses of a group of people, the n-word has the same redundancy as the first n-word usage in the song's intro.

*Have that nigga in the cut, where the wood at?  
Oh, them niggas actin' up?! Where the wolves at? (x8)*

The hook part of the song which repeats after each verse and is considered the main melodic part of the song. It features one neutral usage of the n-word which refers to a person belonging to the same gang as DMX, as they are “in the cut”, meaning they wear the gang clothing. The second usage might be considered negative as it refers to a group of people – “them niggas” that are acting in a way that is not received positively by DMX and his associates and after that he calls for “the wolves” indicating that he might send dogs after them to hurt them.

*Man, cats don't know what it's gonna be  
Fuckin' with a nigga like me*

Neutral usage, interchangeable with “person”, “guy” and the meaning would remain same.

*D to the M to the X  
Last I heard, y'all niggas was havin' sex with the same sex  
I show no love to homo thugs*

DMX shows his aversion for homosexuality and calls homosexual people “homo thugs” and mocks them for having sexual relations with people of the same sex. The n-word in this context therefore cannot be considered anything other than a negative usage.

*I don't fuck with niggas that think they broads*

A clearly negative and transphobic usage of the n-word by DMX. He uses it in this part to mock and criticize transgender/transsexual people and that he does not want them to be in his social circles. He also seems to dismiss the actual transition and calls it that those people “think they broads”, broads meaning female gender.

*Man, I give y'all niggas the bidness for fuckin' with me  
Is you crazy?!*

A similar usage to the other instances that use “y’all” but in this part it is used with a negative connotation to threaten the group of people who DMX accuses of “fuckin’ with” him. The removal of the n-word would certainly lower the level of negativity of the expression here.

*‘Cause I know niggas is hard-headed but I ain’t got the patience  
Don’t want me havin’ no patience turn into more patients*

The n-word in this part is a general labelling that could be substituted by “people”, “guys”, etc. and retain the same neutral meaning. Also used with a singular form of the verb “be” but referring to multiple people.

*More trips to ICU ‘cause I see you  
Tryna get away with shit a real nigga wouldn’t do*

The general manner of this part is negative as it is a threat, however, the expression “real nigga” is used here as a positive example of a person. DMX says that a “real nigga” would not act in the way as the person he is addressing would.

*See them niggas? (Right where?!)  
Get ‘em boy! (Right there!)*

DMX heavily uses an aggressive dog symbolism throughout most of the tracks on the album, with having a pit bull with clipped ears on the album cover (which is generally considered an aggressive breed), him either growling and barking like an actual dog or barking the lyrics with an overly aggressive tone. In this instance of the n-word, he is talking to a dog, pointing at a group of people he presumably does not like and incentivizes the dog to attack “them niggas”. Therefore, this usage is considered to be negative as it promotes violence and animal abuse.

*Know that we gon’ roll like them niggas  
And hit every block on the job*

An instance that refers to a specific group of people but does not carry any connotation, therefore considered neutral.

*I get tapes doin' times, stomp niggas like grapes makin' wine  
Five CD's with mad rhymes*

A negative usage that DMX uses to talk about the physical harm he caused to people – to “stomp niggas”.

*Don't hit me with that positive shit, I know you lyin'  
You really wanna stop niggas from dyin'? Stop niggas from tryin'*

Two neutral instances referring to a group of people, substituting the word for a racially neutral one, like people, would not substantially change the meaning.

*No one's fuckin' with me, nigga, for real  
I am the hood, I am the streets  
You bitch-ass nigga!*

The first instance is a neutral address. The second n-word here is used as a curse word targeted at DMX's foes and the n-word gains the negative connotation thanks to the adjunct expression “bitch-ass” that was already used in this song.

*I think I'm like the only nigga, dog, that can go to the projects*

Another neutral instance that is a general labelling of a person. Here it is self-referential.

*By his fuckin' self and be good  
Yeah, nigga, ask niggas on my projects (Y.O.)*

Two neutral usages, the first is an address of a person and the second is labelling the people living in the projects.

*Dee, waah, ugh... (Y'all niggas is homeless)*

Another instance of the neutral redundant n-word after using the address “y'all”.

Track		Connotation		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Dog Intro	-	9	1
2.	My Life	-	-	-
3.	Where the Hood At?	1	21	17
4.	Dogs Out	-	8	1
5.	Get it on the Floor	-	13	3
6.	Come Prepared	-	-	1
7.	Shot Down	3	10	2
8.	Bring the Noize	-	16	6
9.	Untouchable	4	19	1
10.	Fuck Y'all	-	4	2
11.	Ruff Radio	-	2	2
12.	We're Back	1	14	5
13.	Ruff Radio 2	-	-	-
14.	Rob All Night (If I'm Gonna Rob)	2	7	1
15.	We Go Hard	2	10	2
16.	We Bout to Blow	1	6	8
17.	The Rain	-	-	-
18.	Gotta Go	-	-	-
19.	Don't Gotta Go Home	-	1	-
20.	A'Yo Kato	2	2	-
21.	Thank You	-	-	-
22.	The Prayer V	-	-	-
23.	On Top	-	2	1
24.	X Gon' Give It to Ya	1	7	-
Total		17	151	53

### Forms of N-word:

- Nigga – 221x

As mentioned in the introduction of this album's analysis it features violence reflected in the song lyrics through the frequent use of the n-word (-a form) and also frequent use of the word in a negative context. Neutral usages are dominant and there is a large difference between the frequency



of the negative and positive uses, with the former being the second most frequently used connotation on this album.

### 2004 – Snoop Dogg – *R&G (Rhythm & Gangsta)*

Snoop Dogg had connections with N.W.A in the early 90s, namely with Dr. Dre with whom he worked on Dre's album *The Chronic* and that helped him gain the needed exposure for his 1993 album *Doggystyle* which became a hit: "Doggystyle become the first debut album to enter the charts at number one" (Erlewine). After the turn of the millennia Snoop Dogg stayed relevant in the rap genre thanks to his ability to adapt to the changing hip-hop genre.

#### Track #6 "The Bidness" ("*R&G (Rhythm & Gangsta)* – Snoop Dogg.")

*Shit, not too much - ay you ain't seen that nigga Snoop?  
Man hell naw, I been callin' that nigga since Starsky & Hutch  
I ain't fin' to call that nigga no more man  
...  
Let that nigga know when I see him man*

An introductory part where Snoop Dogg's co-artists featured on his album are talking and asking about Snoop and instead of referring to him by his name after the first usage, they only call him "that nigga". That makes the usages neutral, as it would be possible to replace the n-word with a word like "guy" and the meaning would remain the same.

*Conversation flashy, y'all niggas can't match me*

A usage of the n-word that is very common in the language of hip-hop/rap and appeared frequently on most analyzed albums in this thesis. The meaning is neutral, and it is a general address targeting no specific person in particular and the n-word is a redundancy in this expression as its omission would not at all change the meaning.

*Niggas thirst for hoes, I got a thirst to ball*

...

*Don't fuck with Snoop too much 'cause he goes off when  
Niggas mouth too much, so please no flossin'*

...

*I'm from the Dogg Pound homey, I don't fuck with them cats  
I fuck with, niggas, who be bustin' them shots  
I'm talkin' Long Beach, Inglewood, Compton, Watts*

...

*Keep talkin' nigga I'll expose your knots*

The instances of the n-word in these parts of the lyrics are used in the same way – a general label for either a person or multiple people. However, the first usage is neutral and expresses that men have a “thirst for hoes” which means they lust after women and the second usage seems to be more negative as it resembles a threat saying that people should not rant about Snoop Dogg too much or he will get angry. The third instance is a positive usage as Snoop lists three places where people he associates with or as he says “fucks with” reside and therefore the n-word here means something like a friend. The last instance is another threatening use and Snoop uses the n-word to address the person he is threatening to expose their “knots” which most likely means to expose their guts.

*Help me, I'm sendin' these bitch niggas straight to God*

Snoop Dogg continues with the threats in this last verse of the song and calls people he does not like “bitch niggas” and most of the negative connotation of the n-word is gained through the usage of the word bitch as a curse word. However, even when “bitch” would be omitted Snoop is still talking about sending his foes “straight to God” which is an expression for killing somebody.

Track		Connotation		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	I Love to Give You Light	-	3	-
2.	Bang Out	-	5	3
3.	Drop It Like It's Hot	1	2	4
4.	Can I Get A Flicc Witchu	-	-	-
5.	Ups & Downs	1	2	-
6.	The Bidness	1	6	3
7.	Snoop D.O. Double G	2	4	-
8.	Let's Get Blown	-	1	-
9.	Step Yo Game Up	-	9	2
10.	Perfect	-	-	-
11.	WBallz (Interlude)	-	-	-
12.	Fresh Pair of Panties On	-	2	-
13.	Promise I	1	1	-
14.	Oh No	-	6	5
15.	Can U Control Yo Hoe	-	3	-
16.	Signs	-	5	-
17.	I'm Threw Witchu	-	1	-
18.	Pass it Pass It	1	2	1
19.	Girl Like U	-	3	-
20.	No Thang On Me	-	-	-
Total		7	55	18

**Forms of N-word:**

- Nigga – 80x

Among Snoop Dogg's 80 instances of the -a form of the n-word, the majority are used neutrally while negative uses are the second most frequently used and positive uses are a relative rarity in this album.

**2005 – 50 Cent – *The Massacre***

50 Cent and his hip-hop group *G-Unit* could probably be called the synonyms for hip-hop during the mid-2000s and he became one of the leading artists not only thanks to his lyrical

proficiency but also his notoriety and aggressive/violent gangsta image. He was shot at numerous times due to his inclination to escalate conflicts with other artists and gang members, he was also almost a victim of a drive-by shooting and shot nine times: “50 Cent doesn’t mind being known as the world’s most bullet-ridden rapper, so long as he’s known. ‘It’s cool if people laugh,’ says 50, a.k.a. Curtis Jackson, who has nine bullet wounds” (Tyrangiel).

**Track #2 “In My Hood” (“The Massacre – 50 Cent.”)**

*Y’all niggas better lay down, yeah, I mean stay down*

...

*You niggas will get laid out, your blood and your brains out*

...

*Niggas I’ll pop you, run a light then pop at Jake*

...

*You shy nigga on jux, you about to shoot your whip up*

Throughout the song, 50 Cent addresses either a single person or multiple people using the n-word numerous times. The first usage is a warning, and a threat that 50 Cent says to people that they should stay down during a shootout or they will get caught in the crossfire. The second instance is also negative and a continuation of the threat and describes further what will happen to them. The third usage is also negative and a threat, 50 Cent threatens to shoot people and run a red light. The last-mentioned instance here is another threat and 50 Cent talks to a person who was robbing people in his neighborhood and in the next line gunshots can be heard.

*Niggas will eat your ass up, cause they heart turned cold*

...

*Niggas’ll come to your place, put a gun in your face*

...

*You shit out of luck if niggas catch you slippin’*

...

*The grimey niggas where I’m from don’t wanna see you chipped up*

...

*Niggas screw they face up at me*

...

*I'm observing in my hood, 'cause niggas be dumbing*

...

*These thirsty niggas are lurking, you'll have to catch 'em and*

...

*Trust me son, niggas'll go hard for that cake*

...

*Crack money slow so you know niggas is trippin'*

These are all the instances of general references to unspecified groups of people 50 Cent used throughout the entire song. The first four instances here are meant as a threat which makes them have a negative connotation. The first one uses the phrase “eat your ass up” which can only be understood in negative manner because it is unlikely 50 Cent meant it literally. The second threat is straightforward, and 50 Cent tells his enemies that his associates will break into their place and either threaten at gunpoint or shoot them. The third threat is a warning what if people are caught off guard by 50 Cent’s allies they are in danger. The fourth threat tells that the bad people from 50 Cent’s hood are on the lookout for people who wear expensive clothes and accessories and will rob them – this verse serves as a warning. From instance number five the n-word is used in a more neutral context than the previous uses and all the usages are just neutral general references.

*In my hood niggas got love for me*

...

*And niggas just don't know how to act*

*In my hood niggas is grimey*

*I stay on point, I roll with my gat*

*In my hood niggas might buck at me (x3)*

The repeating chorus part of the song features four identical instances of the n-word use, however, their connotations differ. They are all generally referring to multiple non-specific people and do not differ from the previously mentioned instances in this regard, but as they appear immediately one after another they were separated from the rest. The first usage is positive and shows that 50 Cent is

popular in his neighborhood. The remaining three usages are negative as the second and third criticize the bad behavior and backstabbing nature of some people – “don’t know how to act” and “grimey”, respectively. Finally, the fourth instance is also negative as 50 Cent uses it to refer to people who might attack him. The chorus part’s intention is to show that the “hood” is unpredictable, and all kinds of people live there – friends and foes alike.

Track		Connotation		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Intro	-	-	-
2.	In My Hood	3	5	17
3.	This is 50	2	9	-
4.	I’m Supposed to Die Tonight	-	11	2
5.	Piggy Bank	-	4	2
6.	GATman and Robbin	-	6	1
7.	Candy Shop	-	-	-
8.	Outta Control	-	4	-
9.	Get In My Car	-	3	3
10.	Ski Mask Way	-	13	-
11.	A Baltimore Love Thing	-	-	-
12.	Ryder Music	1	3	3
13.	Disco Inferno	-	2	-
14.	Just a Lil’ Bit	-	6	1
15.	Gunz Come Out	1	41	5
16.	My Toy Soldier	1	7	5
17.	Position of Power	2	9	5
18.	Build You Up	-	-	-
19.	God Gave Me Style	-	1	-
20.	So Amazing	-	2	-
21.	I Don’t Need ‘Em	-	5	7
22.	Hate It or Love It	1	5	-
Total		11	136	51

#### Forms of N-word:

- Nigga – 19x

50 Cent uses only the -a form of the n-word and as has been the case, the neutral connotation is the dominant one with a large difference between negative and positive uses. In this album, 50 Cent has a persona of a tough, militant gangster surrounded by firearms which might be a contributing factor for the negativity to be so much higher than positive uses as he tends to use the n-word in threats.

### 2006 – The Game – *Doctor's Advocate*

The title of The Game's 2006 album *Doctor's Advocate* is a reference to Dr. Dre and The Game wanted to show his admiration for Dre and even dedicates the song of the same name to him. The album features a long list of popular and big artists not only from the rap genre, which includes Kanye West, Nas, Nate Dogg, Lil Wayne, Busta Rhymes and many others, but from other musical genres, like Fergie and will.i.am, for example.

#### Track #11 "Doctor's Advocate" ("*Doctor's Advocate* – The Game.")

G: Yo Bus, I think I got it... the answer to all my problems.

B: Fuck you talkin' about nigga? Wha-what's that?

G: Belvedere and Banana Snapple.

B: Look, get your fuckin' ass up nigga. You over here trippin' on yourself nigga. Get in the fuckin' car man, we gotta bounce man.

G: I'm a man...and most of these niggas, they don't know how to be a man. I got a son...

B: What the fuck you talkin' about nigga? Come on nigga, let's take yo' ass to the crib man, you tired nigga. And put the drink down nigga. We gotta go nigga.

G: One more shot

An introductory skit featuring a conversation between drunk Game and Busta Rhymes who is trying to get him home. The n-words here are used as a sort of neutral filler words, they do not actually represent anything and are mostly just figures of speech. The meaning is the same as the word

“man” when used informally to address someone, the word “man” is also used in this exchange between the two rappers and has the identical meaning as the n-word in this context.

*I tried to think of what the fuck, Eminem might do  
If every nigga hated him, for the Black Bitch track*

Game references a controversial early track Eminem recorded during his teenage years after a bad experience with a black woman: “Eminem made a racially influenced diss track called “Foolish Pride” which targeted black women, classifying them all as dumb and only good for using people for money” (The Game). Game uses the n-word to refer neutrally to black men.

*And niggas stopped bumpin’ Dre after Dee Barnes got slapped*

Another reference of a controversial event, this time Game references the incident between Dr. Dre and another rap artist Dee Barnes:

He picked me up by my hair and my ear and smashed my face and body into the wall,’ said Dee Barnes, the petite host of a Fox-TV rap show, describing the night that, she claims, rapper Andre Young attacked her in a Hollywood club. (Philips)

Game describes that people stopped playing Dr. Dre’s music publicly after this incident. The n-word is also used in a neutral manner, generally referring to people.

*See when the world is on your shoulder and the stress grows bigger*

*The fire in ‘em, made it difficult to talk to the nigga*

Busta says that Game had “fire” or passion in him but as he had a big responsibility “world ... on ... shoulder” the stress that comes with it only grows bigger. The n-word refers to Game, it is a neutral reference and makes for a rhyme with the word “bigger”.

*But he a hardhead Dre, that's why I'm talkin' to you*

*See, when I first met my nigga, son was layin' in the cut*



Busta Rhymes is reminiscing about the first time he met Game and uses the n-word to indicate that him and Game are friends, because he uses the n-word in connection with the possessive pronoun “my” which usually indicates a good relationship.

*You gave him something that can make or break a nigga, you should face it*

The “something” referenced here is the chance and opportunity for Game to work with Dr. Dre under his label, however it was a big responsibility that, as Busta Rhymes says, “can make or break a nigga”. He is saying that such a big opportunity can either go right and make Game successful or go wrong and “break” him, possibly making him quit the business. The n-word is used neutrally, as a synonym to “man”.

*With the potential to be a strong nigga with conviction  
The only problem was our little nigga wouldn't listen*

Busta Rhymes gives his point of view on Game’s departure from Dr. Dre’s label and talks positively about Game as a “strong nigga with conviction” but the only problem he had was that he had issues with discipline and “wouldn’t listen”, Busta calls Game a “little nigga” to indicate that he is less experienced than him and Dre, the n-word is used in a neutral manner.

*B: Aiyo, Game! Aiyo Game! Wake up, nigga!*

*G: I’m up man, I’m up*

*B: We at your crib, nigga, get the fuck out the car nigga, get up, man!*

*G: This ain’t my house... my house is... is green...*

*B: The fuck you talk- look, come on, nigga, let’s go man. Let me walk you up to the... come on...*

*B: Nigga where the keys at, nigga we need to open your door nigga!*

*G: I got love for you, Bus’, you my nigga*

*B: Nigga get in the fuckin’ bed nigga, go to sleep nigga. You tired nigga and don’t fucking drink like that no more, man. You fuckin’ look like Ned the Wino, you drunk motherfucker*

*G: Just goin’ to the studio*

*B: Go to sleep, nigga*

The song's outro is a continuation of the conversation between drunk Game and Busta Rhymes. The n-words here are also almost every time used in a neutral context, being a synonym for other, informal address, such as "man". However, there is one usage by The Game which has a positive connotation, and it is the sixth instance from the bottom where the n-word is used with the possessive pronoun "my" which usually turns the connotation into a positive one when paired with the n-word.

Track		Connotation		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Lookin' at You	-	5	5
2.	Da Shit	2	17	2
3.	It's Okay (One Blood)	-	11	3
4.	Compton	2	38	4
5.	Remedy	-	3	1
6.	Let's Ride	-	5	2
7.	Too Much	-	10	1
8.	Wouldn't Get Far	-	4	-
9.	Scream on 'Em	3	10	9
10.	One Night	5	5	2
11.	Doctor's Advocate	3	26	-
12.	Ol' English	1	6	-
13.	California Vacation	2	7	1
14.	Bang	5	7	1
15.	Around the World	-	1	-
16.	Why You Hate the Game	3	9	2
17.	I'm Chillin'	-	5	-
18.	It's Okay (One Blood) [Remix]	4	20	6
Total		30	189	39

### Forms of N-word:

- Nigga – 258x

This album also follows the trend of neutral connotation being the most frequently used one in connection with the n-word. The other two connotations were close in their frequency but the negative uses have a slightly higher frequency than the positive uses.

### 2007 – Kanye West – *Graduation*

Kanye West's third album which is the continuation of his 2005 album *Late Registration* which was a continuation of his 2004 album *The College Dropout*, with *Graduation* he both symbolically and literally ended this school-themed trilogy ("Kanye West: Album Discography"). The album had a good reception and high sales, becoming one of the bestselling rap albums of 2007: "The album outsold 50 Cent's *Curtis* in its first week by nearly 300,000 units after a much-publicized sales race between them, moving Kanye to a new level both musically and culturally" (Morel et al.).

#### Track #15 "Can't Tell Me Nothing" (Official Remix) ("*Graduation* – Kanye West.")

*If I had a billion dollars (YEAHHHHHHHHHHH)  
Yeah, I'd spend all in a day, show these niggas how to play (play)*

This part of the song features another artist – Young Jeezy. Kanye distances himself from the gangsta lifestyle and image but in his lyrics, he still liked to boast about his luxury life and enjoying spending money. Although sang by Young Jeezy, the lyrics were still written by Kanye. Here Young Jeezy says that even if he had a billion dollars, he would spend it in a day just to show others that he can afford it and that is the life they should aspire to live. The n-word here is neutral, and it refers generally to all people and the n-word might have been replaced by the word "people" and the meaning would stay the same.

*Never seen me in the kitchen nigga, I am amazing (nah)*

...

*I'm serious, nigga! Hey!*

*Why were you late?*

...

*Yeah! You know I'm serious, nigga! I got money!*

Again, it is Young Jeezy who uses the n-word, and these three instances are all general addresses without any connotation, identical in usage to a word like “man” used in informal context.

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Good Morning		-	-	-
2.	Champion		-	-	-
3.	Stronger		-	-	-
4.	I Wonder		-	-	-
5.	Good Life		-	2	-
6.	Can't Tell Me Nothing		-	1	-
7.	Barry Bonds		-	1	-
8.	Drunk and Hot Girls		-	-	-
9.	Flashing Lights		-	-	2
10.	Everything I Am		-	1	1
11.	The Glory		-	2	-
12.	Homecoming		-	2	-
13.	Big Brother		-	-	-
14.	Good Night		-	-	-
15.	Can't Tell Me Nothing (Official Remix)		-	4	-
16.	Bittersweet Poetry		1	1	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>

### Forms of N-word:

- Nigga – 18x

Kanye West and his 2007 album *Graduation* was able to prove that violence, crime and gangsta personas along with the excessive use of the n-word are not essential parts for success in the rap genre as the frequency is among the lowest out of all the analyzed albums. Despite the

sixteen songs long tracklist only 18 instances of the -a form of the n-word have been used and mostly in neutral context.

### 2008 – Ice Cube – *Raw Footage*

O’Shea Jackson alias Ice Cube was one of the pioneers of gangsta rap when his rap group N.W.A popularized (and gave this genre a certain amount of infamy) it and ever since he has remained a strong voice in this genre and that is one of the reasons for the existence of the track “Gangsta Rap Made Me Do It” from his 2008 album named *Raw Footage*. The introduction to the song is a satirical scene taking place in a school classroom and the teacher is explaining the bad influence and impact of gangsta rap on the world: “Prior to gangsta rap music, the world was a peaceful place. And then all of that changed: violence, rape, murder, arson, theft, war. These are all things that came about as a result of gangsta rap music” (Ice Cube). And while humorous and absurd this is a popular sentiment about gangsta rap that it incites violence and that the rappers themselves are rallying young people to enter the crime life. Ice Cube’s usage of the n-word compared to his previous songs stays quite consistent and in general does not make up the majority of the lyrics which helps the narrative of the song by allowing other parts of lyrics to come through. The song is structured like a back-and-forth conversation, but the listener only hears the part that Ice Cube says (or raps) and it can only be assumed what the other participating party is saying from Ice Cube’s responses.

#### Track #4 Gangsta Rap Made Me Do It (“*Raw Footage* – Ice Cube.”)

*You niggas know my pyroclastic flow*  
*You niggas know my pyroclastic flow flow*  
*You niggas know my pyroclastic flow*

*It's R-A-W, R-A-W*

This is the part immediately following the satirical introduction and it is not part of the main lyrics part of the song itself and it is an intro to the song with a steadily increasing volume of the background track mirroring the build-up to the actual song. It appears again at the end with the background track fading out to symbolize the end of the song. The addressing nature of “you niggas” makes this instance have a general addressing of more than one person which makes the meaning similar to the expression you all or y’all. That means that this instance of usage is neutral and thus devoid of any specific meaning and lacking a positive or a negative connotation.

*Nigga I'm hot as Phoenix, Arizona  
I'm Utah, I got multiple bitches  
It's a new law keep a hold of yo riches  
Dumb nigga don't spend it as soon as you get it  
And recognize I'm a captain and you a lieutenant*

The next usage of the n-word comes short after the introductory part and once again used in a way people would use any other addressing noun, such as guy(s). In the first instance of this part Ice Cube compares himself to the city of Phoenix known for its high temperatures. However, this has nothing to do with the usage of the n-word and thus cannot be considered to influence the meaning and the decision to use it here is simply a neutral expression of address. The next instance is preceded by the adjective dumb giving it a rather negative connotation which is later explained by the rest of the line which offers a financial advice. But again, the word could just as easily be replaced with any other noun and it would retain the same addressing meaning just with a lesser shock value.

*If I call you a nigga ain't nothin' to it  
Gangsta rap made me do it*

The nature of this part is rather dismissive and ironic in the context of this whole chorus part of the lyrics because Ice Cube blames every bad decision and immoral thing on gangsta rap and that he was influenced by it so much that it made him use this kind of vocabulary. This coincides with the satirical introduction which also blames gangsta rap for violent misconduct. Therefore, the usage of the n-word here is a sort of a statement and maybe even a warning that people hiding behind gangsta rap or exploiting it as an alibi for their actions will only further tarnish the reputation of an already controversial musical genre. Neutral.

*How you mothafuckas gonna tell me "don't say that"?  
You the ones that we learned it from  
I heard nigga back in 1971*

This specific instance deals with the problem of using the n-word, even as an African American himself Ice Cube explains that he was told not to say the word (possibly even by white Americans as in the second line of this part he vaguely claims that "they" are the ones that taught the African Americans the word - by, presumably, calling them niggers) The last line mentions how he first heard the n-word in 1971 which would make him around 2 years old as he was born in 1969 and it shows that African Americans tend to be exposed to this language from a very early age and the n-word has the ability to engrain itself into daily life and speech of African Americans. Considering that here it refers to a negative early experience with the n-word its connotation is surely negative.

*You finally get to hear the shit that you like  
A nigga talkin' about real life*

One of the most iconic features of (gangsta) rap is its narrative and how the song itself and its lyrics reflect the real-life situations and experiences of the musician and this is in part the reason for the genre's popularity and that is what Ice Cube highlights that fans and listeners of this genre like hearing artists rap about their life experiences. It is common to use the expression "real niggas" to refer to outspoken members of the community: "NWA essentially suggests that 'real niggaz' are the most politically authentic black subjects..." (Neal 559). The n-word here has, once again, an addressing property but contrary to the previous usages it is meant to address the artist, Ice Cube, himself. Which, connected to the instance before this one, could mean that Ice Cube accepted the n-word, to which he was exposed early on in his life, into his vocabulary and identity, as well as his artistic expression. Neutral.

*A nigga grew up on milk and cereal  
I never forgot Van Ness and Imperial*

The usage here is done in a similar manner to the previous one that has the same form of "a nigga" – it is a self-referential usage. Neutral.

*Oh yeah, and another thing  
For all y'all niggas that don't do gangsta rap  
Don't get on TV talkin' about gangsta rap  
'Cause 9 times out of 10  
You don't know the fuck you talkin' about  
Talk about that bullshit rap you do  
Stay the fuck out of mine*

The very last use of the word nigga in this song and it shares the same meaning with the very first usage – it is as well used to address more than one person. However, as opposed to the first use the connotation here is clearly negative which is gained from the context of the lyrics. The "niggas"



here are people (without any racial connotation or association) that criticize gangsta rap but in reality, they do not have any credibility due to them not possessing the knowledge to be able to objectively criticize gangsta rap and their opinions are based on their subjective feelings formed from their personal stances on the language used in lyrics or the matters the song is dealing with.

Track		Connotation		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	What Is a Pyroclastic Flow?	-	-	-
2.	I Got My Locs On	-	3	1
3.	It Takes a Nation	-	14	1
4.	Gangsta Rap Made Me Do It	-	10	3
5.	Hood Mentality	-	8	-
6.	Why Me?	-	8	1
7.	Cold Places	-	8	-
8.	Jack N the Box	-	-	-
9.	Do Ya Thang	-	4	-
10.	Thank God	1	3	-
11.	Here He Come	3	8	3
12.	Get Money, Spend Money, No Money	-	4	1
13.	Get Used To It	3	6	1
14.	Tomorrow	-	2	-
15.	Stand Tall	-	-	2
16.	Take Me Away	-	3	-
17.	Believe It or Not	-	8	1
18.	Don't Make Me Hurt Ya Feelings	-	11	7
19.	Crack Baby?	-	4	1
20.	Why We Thugs	1	4	-
Total		8	108	22

**Forms of N-word:**

- Nigga – 137x
- Negro – 1x

*Raw Footage* features mostly neutral usage of the -a form of the n-word that served as a substitute for other words that are used when addressing either one person or a group of people. The second most frequent were negative usages with about a half of the frequency than the neutral meaning and these negative usages were usually used in a threatening manner. The only two positive instances happened in the track “Here He Come” where the n-word was used to show that Ice Cube is “a nigga for the people”. One instance of the word “negro” was used neutrally.

### **2009 – Raekwon – *Only Built 4 Cuban Linx... Pt. II***

Raekwon rose to fame during the time he joined the rap group Wu-Tang Clan. *Only Built 4 Cuban Linx* was the name of his first album and this 2009 album seems to be its continuation, as it was named *Only Built 4 Cuban Linx... Pt. II*. The album features his well-known colleagues from Wu-Tang Clan, such as Ghostface Killah, RZA, Method Man, as well as other popular rappers at the time, like The Game and Busta Rhymes.

#### **Track #2 “House of Flying Daggers” (“*Only Built 4 Cuban Linx... Pt. II* – Raekwon.”)**

*Hide the safe, nigga, lock the doors*

A negative usage of the n-word that might be considered a warning or a threat that people should hide their valuables when the gangsters come.

*Résumé is straight up live, I shank niggas up for larger Es*

...

*That's why we ain't scared to dump on niggas, our guns is chunky*

*Usually we bust niggas down with bats, swell up they joints*

These three instances are all generally referring to people and they are all used in the lyrics to reinforce the negative meaning of the threats they appear in.

*Man, y'all niggas ain't shit to us, still a pistol bust*

*Split your melon like I split the Dutch*

The re-occurring expression “y'all niggas” which is a general address and where the n-word is mostly redundant as it does not provide any meaning on its own and if it were taken out the meaning would not change. Based on the context in this part it is used in a negative manner as it is likely a threat.

*When it's my time to go, for sure, your nigga goes to war*

*What you think I brought these soldiers for?*

*To send shots like forget-me-nots at any nigga*

Two instances of the n-word in this part of the song. The first one is positive as it is a similar expression to the positive “my nigga” which usually means “my friend”, only difference here is that it is used from a different perspective and Method Man says that he is someone's friend. The second use could be interpreted as a threat that he is willing to shoot anyone.

Track		Connotation		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Return of the North Star	3	10	2
2.	House of Flying Daggers	1	-	6
3.	Sonny's Missing	2	17	3
4.	Pyrex Vision	-	4	-
5.	Cold Outside	-	6	-
6.	Black Mozart	-	5	-
7.	Gihad	-	12	-
8.	New Wu	5	9	2
9.	Penitentiary	-	4	3
10.	Baggin' Crack	3	3	-
11.	Surgical Gloves	2	9	-
12.	Broken Safety	-	3	2
13.	Canal Street	2	12	3
14.	Ason Jones	1	4	-
15.	Have Mercy	1	1	-
16.	10 Bricks	3	6	3
17.	Fat Lady Sings	-	8	1
18.	Catalina	3	9	1
19.	We Will Rob You	-	4	1
20.	About Me	2	16	2
21.	Mean Streets	1	13	-
22.	Kiss the Ring	-	2	-
23.	Walk Wit Me	-	6	2
24.	The Badlands	1	13	1
25.	About Me (Original)	1	15	1
26.	Never Used To Matter	1	2	-
27.	Rockstars	-	2	-
Total		32	195	33

### Forms of N-word:

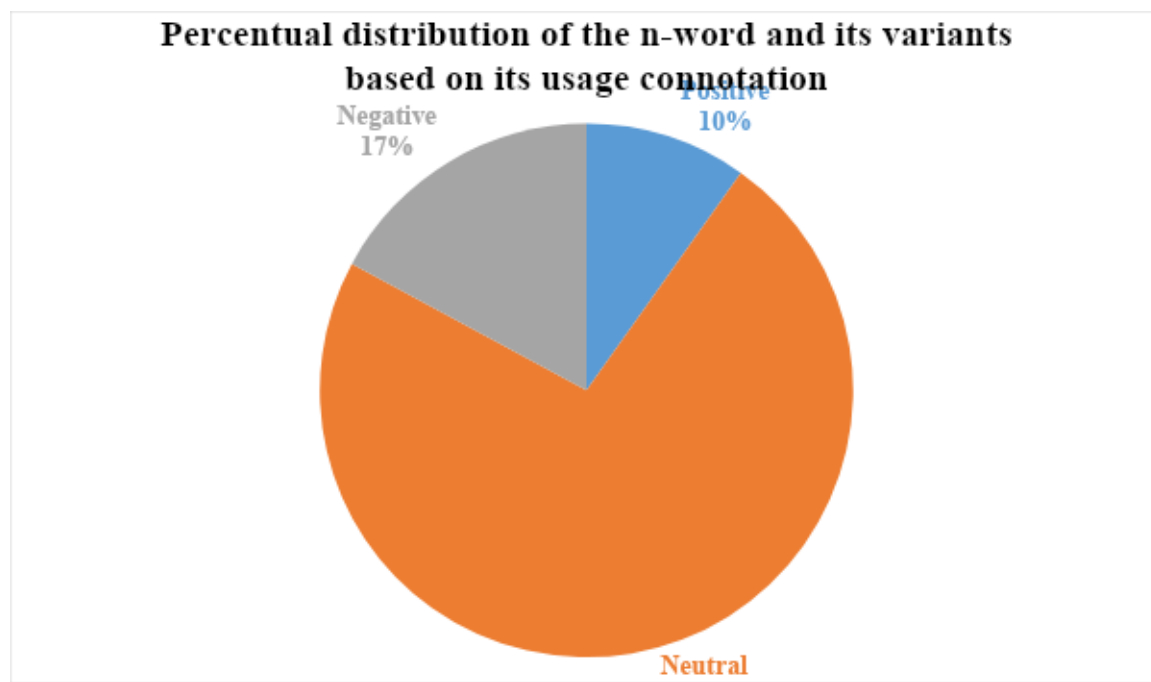
- Nigga – 260x

Raekwon's solo album seems to feature the n-word more frequently than in the albums he is featured on in Wu-Tang Clan's discography. The only used form of the n-word was the -a form and

it was mostly used in a neutral context with positive and negative uses being almost identical in frequency with the latter having only one use more.

### 2000s Summary

The second analyzed decade were the 2000s which has seen an increase of ~19 percent in total instances of the n-word used. Compared to the 1990s, both the neutral and negative connotations have seen a slight increase, 3 and 1 percent, respectively, while the number of positive uses has declined by 4 percent. The composition of the uses has remained the same with neutral usages being general and unspecified addresses of either a single person or multiple people, negative uses were threats or insults, and positive uses were friendly addresses or expression that showed the artist's positive relationship with those targeted.



## Albums from the 2010s (2010-2019)

### 2010s Introduction

The state of rap in the 2010s has mostly been described in the chapter “Modern rap” where the change from the (in the 90s and early 2000s) traditional gangster persona to a more neutral musician has been described. No longer was it necessary to be a hardened criminal raised on the streets in order to succeed in the rap genre and Kanye West and Drake were examples of this shift as McNulty-Finn claims: “artists such as Drake, a former Canadian child actor, prove that being a ‘thug’ is no longer a pre-requisite to success. In fact, in an interview with ABC, Drake confessed that he was once described as ‘the furthest thing from hood’” and:

... that he “never cheated, for the record.” Indeed, contrary to the themes of aggression and illegality that perpetuated earlier hip-hop, many of today’s biggest artists have taken a gentler approach towards romance even amidst the genre’s misogynistic reputation. (McNulty-Finn)

It seems to be a reoccurring theme during the lifetime of a music genre that the initial experiments with the new genre receive negative reception and cause controversy. A nearly identical thing happened with Elvis Presley during the early days of rock: “... it is his appearance on The Milton Berle Show on June 5, 1956, that triggers the first controversy of his career” (“Culture Shock”) and even with jazz before that as it was labelled the “devil’s music” (Hentoff). One mutual feature of those genres is that they have African roots, and it is possible that the controversy surrounding these genres was caused by the challenge these genres posed for the traditional white American values and it took years before the genre was adopted by non-black artists and eventually socially accepted. Eminem even references this in his 2002 song “Without

Me”: “Though I’m not the first king of controversy; I am the worst thing since Elvis Presley” (Eminem).

The rise in the popularity and usage of social media helped create a bridge between the fans and the artists, as the artists’ social media presence provides information, news and insight both into their personal lives and their professional artist life. Posts on Facebook or Instagram can be used to tease new singles/albums and the response of the users can be used to modify the “product” to appeal to a wider audience. Artists and their marketing teams saw the opportunity in the developing social media market during the early 2010s when Snapchat and Instagram came into existence (Akolawala) and the artists successfully integrated themselves into it and created a somewhat symbiotic relationship that helped the social media gain more users and artists could use the social media for promotion of their product, eventually creating the social media “influencer” phenomenon.

Modern rap is the latest development in the hip-hop genre and as a result of nearly three decades of controversy it is finally starting to be considered a mainstream and acceptable genre.

### **2010 – Wiz Khalifa – *Rolling Papers***

Wiz Khalifa’s third album was the first album that reached the top of multiple charts and gained both gold and platinum certifications and two multi-platinum certifications from the RIAA in 2016 (RIAA). The album featured one of Khalifa’s most popular and successful songs to date “Black and Yellow”.

**Track #15 “Taylor Gang” (“Rolling Papers – Wiz Khalifa.”)**

*Me and all my niggas rollin’ up the best smoke*

...

*All my niggas down to bang but we can try words*

...

*We poppin’ bottles gang signs, all my niggas’ gang signs*

Wiz Khalifa chose the name of his crew for the title of this song, therefore unsurprisingly, he mentions them and shows how close he is to them and calling his friends his “niggas”. The positive connotation of the n-word here is, once again, gained through the usage of the possessive pronoun “my” to indicate closer relationship to those people mentioned.

*Diamonds in my chain, niggas trying to steal my lane*

...

*Rollin’ up gang signs, niggas trippin’, bang time*

...

*Same niggas gotta get the okay ‘bout stuff*

...

*Got these niggas trippin’, and these bitches too*

Four instances of the n-word usage that is used as a plural form of a general address. The connotations are neutral.

*Only papers if you Taylor’d nigga throw it up*

The n-word here is used as a general neutral address, it could be replaced by “man” and retain the same meaning.

*Them niggas ain’t high so they ain’t close to us*

...

*Plus them niggas suckas, I got that in living color*

These two instances both feature the n-word paired with the word “them” giving the expression a specific connotation, which in this case seems to be negative as both these instances are used in order to mock and criticize certain people.



			<i>Connotation</i>		
Track			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	When I'm Gone		1	5	-
2.	On My Level		2	2	1
3.	Black and Yellow		1	3	-
4.	Roll Up		-	-	-
5.	Hopes & Dreams		-	2	-
6.	Wake Up		-	2	1
7.	The Race		1	7	1
8.	Star of the Show		2	9	-
9.	No Sleep		-	3	-
10.	Get Your Shit		-	-	-
11.	Top Floor		-	-	-
12.	Fly Solo		-	-	-
13.	Rooftops		3	3	1
14.	Cameras		1	3	-
15.	Taylor Gang		3	5	2
16.	Middle of You		-	1	-
17.	Stoned		-	-	1
		<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>7</b>

**Forms of N-word:**

- Nigga – 66x

The first analyzed album of the third decade features only the -a form of the n-word and follows the trend of neutral uses being the most frequently used connotation, however positive uses are more frequent than the negative ones.

**2011 – Lil Wayne – *Tha Carter IV***

Lil Wayne's ninth album had an impressive list of featured artists, such as Rick Ross, Bruno Mars or Drake. It was also a successful album release: "*Tha Carter IV* had 300,000 downloads in its first four days online, which broke an iTunes record" ("*Tha Carter IV* - Lil Wayne.").

**Track #9 "John" ("*Tha Carter IV* – Lil Wayne.")**

*I pay these niggas with a reality check  
Roll up and cock it and hit them niggas where it hurts (x2)*

One neutral and two negative usages. The first usage is neutral and paired with a wordplay about paying cheques, but Lil Wayne instead pays a reality check, which means he will remind "these niggas" what the current situation is. The following usage is negative and repeated twice and is essentially a threat that Lil Wayne will shoot his enemies via the use of a drive by.

*Big black nigga in a icy watch  
Drop palmolive in a nigga dope*

The first usage is neutral and refers to the rapper Rick Ross as it is sang by him. The second n-word most likely neutrally refers to crack cocaine, as dope is a word sometimes used for cocaine and the pairing of the n-word with this drug would result in crack cocaine.

*You fucking with a nigga who won't give a fuck*

This instance is a threat, Lil Wayne threatens that if someone gets into a conflict with him Lil Wayne will not hold back and retaliate with full force. Negative.

*Red beam make a bitch nigga sit down  
...  
Pussy nigga sweet, them niggas Cinnabon  
...  
Bitch ass nigga, pussy ass nigga*

These four instances of the n-word are all negative and all of them, with the exception of “them niggas Cinnabon” are meant as insults because they are paired with a curse word or a word used in a vulgar manner. “Them niggas Cinnabon” is a play on the previous part which ends with “sweet” as Cinnabon is a food chain that is known for baking sweet pastries and thus the n-word used in this context is used in a mocking manner.

*Been fucking the world, and nigga, I ain't cum yet*

...

*I see ya looking, with ya looking ass nigga*

...

*If you get in trouble, that just mean you fuckin' up (Nigga)*

Three identical usages that are a general neutral address of a person.

*Niggas gather 'round, got gifts for each and all of y'all*

An n-word used as a neutral address used in plural and generally refers to unspecified people.

Track		Connotation		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Intro (C4)	2	4	2
2.	Blunt Blowin'	-	-	9
3.	Megaman	2	10	3
4.	6 Foot 7 Foot	1	11	1
5.	Nightmares of the Bottom	1	-	1
6.	She Will	10	4	-
7.	How to Hate	2	2	-
8.	Interlude	-	7	-
9.	John	-	7	8
10.	Abortion	1	2	2
11.	So Special	-	1	-
12.	How to Love	-	-	-
13.	President Carter	-	6	1
14.	It's Good	2	8	2
15.	Outro	2	12	1
16.	I Like the View	-	3	-
17.	Mirror	-	-	-

18.	Two Shots		-	1	1
19.	Up Up and Away		-	5	4
20.	Novacane		-	-	-
21.	I Got Some Money on Me		4	9	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>35</b>

**Forms of N-word:**

- Nigga – 154x

The second 2010s album continues the trend from the previous decade rather than of the previously analyzed album from a year prior to the release of *Tha Carter IV* and while neutral uses are the dominant ones here, as well, negative uses are used more frequently than the positive ones.

**2012 – Rick Ross – *God Forgives, I Don't***

Recording company Def Jam's Rick Ross 2012 album *God Forgives, I Don't* was awarded four stars out of five by AllMusic: "...there's plenty of ambition with little overreaching, and the most striking bits of the album are striking for unexpected reasons. That makes three lavish triumphs in a row for Ross, with this one being the richest" (Jeffries). It is Ross's last RIAA Gold certified album.

**Track #10 "So Sophisticated" ("God Forgives, I Don't – Rick Ross.")**

*I just make it look easy, nigga*

The n-word here is used as a neutral address. It makes the song feel like Rick is talking to somebody, telling them the story the song is about.

*Even the black folk hate to see another nigga made it*

The n-word in this line is used neutrally to refer to a black male. Rick most likely refers to the fact that he is one of the many black people who got rich and famous thanks to the combination of drug dealing and rapping, and that the people are jealous to see another person succeed like that.

*This for my niggas in them prisons, overpopulated*

...

*The game sweet, gave all my niggas an occupation (x3)*

...

*We know you pussies, so you got my niggas masturbating*

These instances of the n-word usage are all paired with the possessive pronoun “my” which indicates one’s close and positive, friendly relationship with the people it refers to.

*Time to lay down these niggas who still be masquerading*

Rick uses the n-word negatively in his threat aimed at people who are fake and hiding their true faces – “masquerading”. He refers to these people as “these niggas”.

*I’m the hottest and these other niggas cooling, ain’t it*

...

*And if he faking, fuck him, tell them niggas “C’est la vie”*

...

*And these niggas so mad it’s my turn now*

Three neutral instances of the n-word and all are generally referring to unspecified groups of people.

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Pray for Us		-	1	-
2.	Pirates		2	13	3
3.	3 Kings		2	9	1
4.	Ashamed		1	3	-
5.	Maybach Music IV		-	6	-
6.	Sixteen		-	4	-
7.	Amsterdam		3	6	2
8.	Hold Me Back		2	42	7
9.	911		-	7	1

10.	So Sophisticated		5	5	1
11.	Presidential		1	2	1
12.	Ice Cold		1	4	-
13.	Touch'N You		1	1	1
14.	Diced Pineapples		-	1	-
15.	Ten Jesus Pieces		6	6	1
16.	Triple Beam Dreams		-	14	-
17.	Rich Forever		1	5	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>18</b>

**Forms of N-word:**

- Nigga – 172x

Rick Ross only uses the -a form of the n-word in this album and just like all the previously analyzed albums most of the uses are neutral with only a marginal difference between negative and positive uses, with the latter being the more frequently used connotation out of these two.

**2013 – A\$AP Rocky – *LONG.LIVE.A\$AP***

Rakim Mayers' 2013 album *LONG.LIVE.A\$AP* was his debut studio album, but prior to a studio release he recorded a mixtape *LIVE.LOVE.A\$AP* in 2011 that gained enough attention that RCA Records signed him a record deal. The A\$AP moniker is taken from the A\$AP Mob group where most of its members put it before their name. ("A\$AP Rocky.").

**Track #7 "Fuckin' Problems" ("LONG.LIVE.A\$AP – A\$AP Rocky.")**

*Brought her bitches, I brought my niggas*

A typical positive use of the n-word paired with the possessive pronoun "my" which indicates Rocky's close relationship to the people he is referring to.

*They say money make a nigga act niggerish*

In this instance there is a neutral use of the n-word referring to a black person and then a rather unique form of the n-word – “niggerish” which Collins Dictionary defines as: “resembling or characteristic of a Black person” (“Definition of 'Niggerish'.”). Rocky says that people claim that money makes black people act like niggers, it can be presumed that it is what some white people say, due to the adjective being formed out of the n-word ending in -er which is typically not used by black people and is considered to be much more offensive than the form with the soft ending -a. The connotation is, therefore, negative for this unique n-word form.

*‘Cause I’m the nigga, the nigga, nigga, like how you figure? (Yeah)*

...

*But least a nigga, nigga rich*

...

*If it’s comin’ from a nigga I don’t know, then I don’t trust it*

...

*But this long-dick nigga ain’t for the long talkin’, I’m beast*

...

*She eyein’ me like a nigga don’t exist*

...

*Make you think about all of the niggas you been leadin’ on*

The rest of the n-word instances in the song are general terms referring to people, either the artist who sings the part or an unspecified person/group of people. Another thing these usages have in common is their connotation as they are used in a neutral context.

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Long Live A\$AP		-	4	-
2.	Goldie		-	9	4
3.	PMW (All I Really Need)		-	9	1
4.	LVL		2	10	-

5.	Hell		1	2	1
6.	Pain		2	1	-
7.	Fuckin' Problems		1	10	1
8.	Wild for the Night		4	3	4
9.	lTrain		2	3	1
10.	Fashion Killa		8	-	-
11.	Phoenix		-	12	3
12.	Suddenly		-	4	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>15</b>

**Forms of N-word:**

- Nigga – 101x
- Nigger(ish) – 1x

There is one instance of a unique form of the n-word in this album – niggerish. This use is unique because it is not used in any other analyzed album and makes use of the -er form of the n-word, the one that is usually considered to be more offensive, and it is made into an adjective that carries a negative connotation just like the noun form of the word. This album was otherwise standard in terms of the connotation frequency – neutral uses were dominant and positive were the second most frequent connotation.

**2014 – Nicki Minaj – *The Pinkprint***

Nicki Minaj's third album seems to be a callback to her career beginnings that were more hip-hop oriented rather than dance-pop oriented, like her previous album. Nicki has remained consistently popular and relevant ever since her musical debut and she was even named the “queen of rap” (“Nicki Minaj: Is the Queen of Rap's Crown Fading?”).



**Track #18 “Shanghai” (“The Pinkprint – Nicki Minaj.”)**

*On the real, nigga, I’m a real nigga  
I run around with them real niggas (x6)*

The chorus part of the song features a wordplay on the expression “real nigga” in the first line of the chorus “On the real, nigga” and in this instance the n-word is used as a neutral address. The rest of the usages of the n-word are the positive expression “real nigga”.

*Ain’t fuckin’ wit’ you bitch niggas and that’s real rap, but I do sing*

A negative instance of the n-word, the negative connotation of the expression is gained through the use of the word “bitch” in a pejorative manner and its pairing with the n-word and it is meant to insult those Nicki targets with this address.

*When I leave niggas, they get real bitter (x3)  
...  
Just heard niggas got jokes, it’s a matter of time before one dies  
...  
Niggas know if they talk slick (x2)  
...  
So when niggas see me, they jump on my dick  
...  
But I’m choppin’ it up with some niggas from Cuba  
...  
These niggas don’t make a mix-up*

*Tell ‘em niggas go step they bricks up (x3)*

These instances of the n-word are general terms for unspecified groups of people. Their connotation is neutral as they do not refer neither positively nor negatively to situations or people.

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	All Things Go		-	1	-

2.	I Lied		-	-	-
3.	The Crying Game		-	-	-
4.	Get On Your Knees		-	-	-
5.	Feeling Myself		1	4	-
6.	Only		17	4	-
7.	Want Some More		1	7	1
8.	Four Door Aventador		-	4	-
9.	Favorite		1	-	1
10.	Buy a Heart		1	1	-
11.	Trini Dem Girls		-	-	-
12.	Anaconda		-	1	-
13.	The Night Is Still Young		-	-	-
14.	Pills N Potions		-	5	-
15.	Bed of Lies		-	1	-
16.	Grand Piano		-	-	-
17.	Big Daddy		1	13	1
18.	Shanghai		12	18	1
19.	Win Again		-	2	1
20.	Truffle Butter		-	2	1
21.	Mona Lisa		-	-	-
22.	Put You in a Room		-	5	-
23.	Wamables		2	3	3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>9</b>

### Forms of N-word:

- Nigga – 116x

The second female artist featured in this thesis and similarly to Foxy Brown, Nicki seems to use the -a form of the n-word with nearly the same frequency as other rap artists. The most frequently used connotation is neutral, however just like Foxy the second most used connotation was positive, only in Nicki's case the difference between the frequency of negative and positive uses was far greater.

### 2015 – Kendrick Lamar – *To Pimp a Butterfly*

Following the success Kendrick Lamar earned thanks to his 2012 album *Good Kid, M.A.A.D. City* the 2015 album *To Pimp a Butterfly* secured him the spot of one of the top rappers of not only the 2010s, but all the time (Billboard Staff). Showing his respect to one of the greatest rappers 2Pac, he dedicated the song “Mortal Man” to him and structured it as an interview between himself and Tupac using pieces of audio from Tupac’s interview. David Jeffries of AllMusic praises the album: “To Pimp a Butterfly is as dark, intense, complicated, and violent as Picasso’s Guernica, and should hold the same importance for its genre and the same beauty for its intended audience” (Jeffries).

#### Track #13 “The Blacker the Berry” (“*To Pimp a Butterfly* – Kendrick Lamar.”)

*Black don't crack, my nigga*

Kendrick’s friendly address to an unspecified person, the positive connotation is gained through the usage of the possessive pronoun “my” with the n-word. The line “black don’t crack” refers to the expression used to comment on the fact that people of African descent seem to have fewer wrinkles than people of different skin colors as they age – crack being the wrinkle.

*You sabotage my community, makin’ a killin’  
You made me a killer, emancipation of a real nigga (x2)*

The instance of the n-word here is another use of the expression “real nigga”, yet as opposed to most of the previous usages of this expression, which were almost universally positive, Kendrick uses it to criticize the government and all the laws and restrictions that exploited black communities. Kendrick says that these things are what made him a killer, which is “the antithesis of what it means to be ‘real’” (Kendrick Lamar). The connotation is less positive in this case, therefore considered neutral.

*So why did I weep when Trayvon Martin was in the street  
When gang-banging make me kill a nigga blacker than me?*

The whole part of the lyrics this example is from deals with the issue of racism and hatred and also hypocrisy. This part talks about the hypocrisy of a hypothetical person that (rightfully) saw an issue in the incident of shooting of the young black man Trayvon Martin (CNN Wire Staff), but on the other hand saw no problem with shooting a person of darker skin as a result of crime activity. The n-word is, however, used in a neutral manner and as a synonym for “person”.

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Wesley’s Theory		6	4	-
2.	For Free? (Interlude)		-	1	6
3.	King Kunta		-	3	-
4.	Institutionalized		1	7	-
5.	These Walls		-	-	-
6.	u		-	6	-
7.	Alright		-	19	-
8.	For Sale? (Interlude)		-	1	-
9.	Momma		-	-	-
10.	Hood Politics		4	9	-
11.	How Much a Dollar Cost		-	2	-
12.	Complexion (A Zulu Love)		-	-	2
13.	The Blacker the Berry		1	3	-
14.	You Ain’t Gotta Lie (Momma Said)		12	4	2
15.	i		5	6	2
16.	Mortal Man		2	8	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>12</b>

#### Forms of N-word:

- Nigga – 116x

Despite Kendrick criticizing white fans for singing the n-word in his songs it seems he does not make a serious effort to eliminate or limit the usage of the n-word in his 2015 album. However, next to the usually most frequent neutral uses, the second most frequently used connotation is

positive which is probably the second-best option to lower the shock value of the word after not using it at all, by using it in a positive connotation to try to evolve the word past the offensive meaning.

### 2016 – Drake – *Views*

Drake's 2016 album was a significant departure from the usual positive ratings he was used to as this album was criticized for being too melancholic and self-loathing: "...making records as self-pitying and self-serving as *Views* isn't going to do much to further Drake's career artistically" (Sendra). However, despite its average rating *Views* features one of Drake's most popular singles "Hotline Bling" that was one of the greatest hits of 2016.

#### Track #13 "Grammys" ("*Views* – Drake.")

*Most niggas with a deal*  
...  
*Same niggas from the old days*  
...  
*This nigga turnt the fuck up*

Three neutral uses of the n-word that are also used to generally refer to people, the first two instances here in this context refer to people within the music industry, Drake's predecessors, or colleagues. The third instance of the n-word is a singular form and despite the curse word, the context is neutral as "turnt the fuck up" means "getting drunk and or high and having a good time" (Synistesia).

*Knew my niggas from the basement*

Drake is talking about meeting with his friends in the basement and refers to his friends as “my niggas” which is a typical positive use of the n-word in rap music, as the positive connotation is gained through the usage of the possessive pronoun “my”.

			<i>Connotation</i>		
Track			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Keep the Family Close		1	-	-
2.	9		-	1	-
3.	U With Me?		1	3	-
4.	Feel No Ways		-	4	-
5.	Hype		-	1	-
6.	Weston Road Flows		1	2	-
7.	Redemption		-	1	-
8.	With You		-	-	-
9.	Faithful		-	1	2
10.	Still Here		4	1	-
11.	Controlla		-	-	-
12.	One Dance		-	-	-
13.	Grammys		1	3	-
14.	Child's Play		1	1	-
15.	Pop Style		3	-	-
16.	Too Good		-	-	-
17.	Summers Over Interlude		-	-	-
18.	Fire & Desire		-	1	-
19.	Views		1	3	1
20.	Hotline Bling		-	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3</b>

### Forms of N-word:

- Nigga – 38x

Drake as one of the leading modern rap artists (along with Kanye West) seems to realize that the frequent use of the n-word in song lyrics is not a necessity and while he still uses the -a form of the n-word it is nowhere near the frequency of most other artists in the genre. Interestingly, there is a smaller difference between positive and neutral uses rather than between positive and negative as has usually been the case in analyzed albums.

### 2017 – Jay Z – 4:44

Jay-Z's latest solo album before he started working on a joint music project with his wife Beyoncé *Everything is Love* under the name The Carters (Pearce). The album was named *4:44* as in 4:44 AM as Jay clarified in an interview: "I woke up, literally, at 4:44 in the morning, 4:44 AM, to write this song. So it became the title of the album..." ("4:44 – Jay-Z.").

### Track #2 "The Story of O.J." ("4:44 – Jay-Z.")

*Light nigga, dark nigga, faux nigga, real nigga*  
*Rich nigga, poor nigga, house nigga, field nigga*

*Still nigga, still nigga (x6)*

Jay-Z's repeated dense usage of the n-word in this song highlights the issue of not separating the race/skin color from the situations and accomplishments of a human being. A black person can be anything, rich or poor, having a darker or lighter skin tone, but for some people they will still be "niggas" first and foremost. The n-word instances that are neutral are the ones paired with light, dark, rich, poor and still. Then there are two uses that usually have negative connotations as they refer to the old racist distinction between two "types" of slaves in the US before the abolishment of slavery – a "house nigga" who worked as a servant in the house and was obeying their master's wishes ("House.") and being the opposite to a "field nigga" who worked the fields and plantations. Another negative instance is "faux nigga" as it is the opposite expression to "real nigga" which is used to talk about people in a positive manner.

*House nigga, don't fuck with me*  
*I'm a field nigga, with shined cutlery*

The two instances of the n-word that are repeated and their meaning remains, however, here they are used in a threatening way as a "field nigga" threatens the "house nigga" with cutlery, presumably a knife, not to provoke them or they will attack them.

*Me and my niggas takin' real chances, uh*

The n-word has a positive connotation as it is paired with the possessive pronoun "my" and used by Jay-Z to refer to him and his friends.

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Kill Jay Z		-	3	-
2.	The Story of O.J		7	36	20



3.	Smile		-	10	-
4.	Caught Their Eyes		-	8	1
5.	4:44		-	-	-
6.	Family Feud		4	4	1
7.	Bam		1	11	1
8.	Moonlight		-	2	-
9.	Marcy Me		-	-	-
10.	Legacy		-	2	-
11.	Adnis		-	2	-
12.	Blue's Freestyle/We Family		1	-	-
13.	MaNyfaCedGod		2	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>23</b>

**Forms of N-word:**

- Nigga – 115x
- Negro – 1x

“The Story of O. J.” is responsible for more than a half of the total n-word uses in the entire album and the reason is simple, as the message of the song is that black people are still treated as “niggas” instead of Americans that it does not matter what kind of job the person does or what they accomplished, the n-word is what they are considered to be. The same song is also responsible for most of the negative uses as it used the traditionally derogatory expressions as “field nigga” or “house nigga” frequently.

**2018 – Ice Cube – *Everythang's Corrupt***

Ice Cube's latest album that has released in 2018. The album is influenced by the political and social situations that have been ongoing during the time of writing the lyrics and some continue even today, the track “Good Cop Bad Cop” deals with issues regarding the police exercising excessive force, the militarization of the police force, “Chase Down The Bully” is a criticism of

white supremacy and racism and “Arrest The President” is specifically targeted at Donald Trump and his administration’s numerous transgressions during his presidency, such as the alleged involvement of Russia in the 2016 elections (Arkin, et al.).

### **Track #2 “Arrest The President” (“*Everythang’s Corrupt* – Ice Cube.”)**

*Always winnin’, nigga, get lost  
Nigga take your drugs and pass out*

These two uses of the n-word are used by Ice Cube as addresses and the first instance is neutral, whereas the second one has a more negative and aggressive tone, and it could be a warning for someone to go away and take the drugs with them as it seems Ice Cube wants nothing to do with drugs.

*Arrest the president, you got the evidence  
That nigga is Russian intelligence*

Ice Cube refers to Donald Trump as “that nigga”, the choice to use the n-word to label Trump in this way might be mockery and criticism of his racism and pandering to white supremacists. This line references the Russian influence claims surrounding Trump’s 2016 election.

*Arrest the president, you got the evidence (Nigga) (x4)  
...  
Arrest the president (Nigga), arrest the president (Nigga) (x3)*

The chorus part referencing the track’s title and calling for the arrest of Donald Trump, the n-word is used as a neutral address directed at no person in particular, but rather an exclamation of frustration.

*Niggas still rollin’ with the wheels off  
That’s right, some niggas gotta sacrifice  
Give a young nigga grey hair  
Niggas so fly, get a bird’s eye*

*Niggas love to go that fast route*

These instances of n-word use are all generally referring to either a single or multiple unspecified people in a neutral manner.

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Super OG (Intro)		-	1	-
2.	Arrest The President		-	16	2
3.	Chase Down The Bully		-	4	1
4.	Don't Bring Me No Bag		-	6	3
5.	Bad Dope		-	2	-
6.	On Them Pills		-	9	1
7.	Fire Water		-	8	2
8.	Streets Shed Tears		-	6	-
9.	Ain't Got No Haters		-	9	-
10.	Can You Dig It?		-	6	2
11.	That New Funkadelic		-	5	-
12.	One For The Money		-	3	-
13.	Still In The Kitchen		-	14	-
14.	Non Believers		2	1	1
15.	Everythang's Corrupt		-	1	2
16.	Good Cop Bad Cop		-	3	-
		Total	2	94	14

#### Forms of N-word:

- Nigga – 110x

As was already mentioned in this part's introduction, Ice Cube's 2018 album *Everythang's Corrupt* is a strongly political album which deals with serious issues and that is reflected in the frequency of negative uses of the -a form of the n-word being higher than the positive one as Ice Cube shows how displeased he is with the state of things. Neutral uses are, as usual, dominant.

## 2019 – Tyler, the Creator – Igor

Tyler's 2019 album *Igor*, or stylized as IGOR, was a success and Tyler received the award for "Best Rap Album" at the 2019 Grammy Awards ("Igor – Tyler, the Creator."). The album was praised for continuing the quality standard Tyler set with his previous release, the 2017's *Flower Boy*: "The productions are as nuanced and judiciously tricked out as they are on the previous album, adjusted to enhance all the agitation and grief, yet it's all ear candy" (Kellman).

### Track #9 "WHAT'S GOOD" ("IGOR – Tyler, the Creator.")

*I don't get anxiety, you Sam Bowie-ass niggas*

The n-word here is used in a negative manner, using the suffix -ass in conjunction with the n-word in order to form an insult or a mocking expression. It refers to the former NBA player Sam Bowie who was labelled the #1 worst draft pick by ESPN: "It's not that Bowie was an awful player; it's who was drafted right after him: Michael Jordan" (Schoenfield). So, Tyler possibly compares himself to Michael Jordan and his rivals are Sam Bowie.

*Red nose, red nose, all you niggas is clowns (x2)*

Another negative usage that is structured as an address with the pronoun which serves as an even more narrow and stronger pointing out of those who Tyler labels as "clowns". It is also supposed to mock or insult.

*Niggas turning it up, well, shit, I'm tearing it down (x2)*

...

*Had them niggas and the cops looking jigsaw*

...

*Don't touch, don't go, niggas might get buck*

...

*Niggas talkin' reckless, I never heard 'em (I see the light)*

These usages are all identical in the sense that they are used in a neutral context, referring to unspecified people without any further connotational aspects.

*Lukewarm-ass niggas always wanna talk*

Another instance of a negative usage that follows the same formula as the first instance of the n-word in the song, there is the plural form of the n-word paired with a word that has the suffix -ass added to it which gives the expression the negative connotation that dictates that the expression is used to mock or insult.

*Yeah, new suit, new boots, same nigga, like what?*

...

*'Bout to go buck wild, nigga, Steve Irwin (I see the light)*

...

*Nigga not knowing that I'm one of one*

A collection of neutral instances, very similar in usage to the previous collection of the neutral plural forms of the n-word used earlier in the song. The only difference in these usages is that they are used in singular form, but they also refer to unspecified people.

*Buck, don't touch, though, my niggas might get buck, don't touch, though (x2)*

The usual usage of the n-word in conjunction with the possessive pronoun “my” indicates a positive relationship as was mentioned in previously analyzed lyrics.

*And they some Helen Keller-ass niggas*

And another instance of the structure of a negative usage of the n-word identical to the prior two instances where the suffix -ass was used to convey the negative meaning.

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	IGOR'S THEME		-	-	-
2.	EARFQUAKE		-	-	-
3.	I THINK		-	-	-

4.	EXACTLY WHAT YOU RUN FROM YOU END UP CHASING		-	-	-
5.	RUNNING OUT OF TIME		-	-	1
6.	NEW MAGIC WAND		-	1	-
7.	A BOY IS A GUN*		-	2	2
8.	PUPPET		-	-	-
9.	WHAT'S GOOD		2	8	5
10.	GONE, GONE / THANK YOU		-	1	-
11.	I DON'T LOVE YOU ANYMORE		-	-	-
12.	ARE WE STILL FRIENDS?		-	1	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>

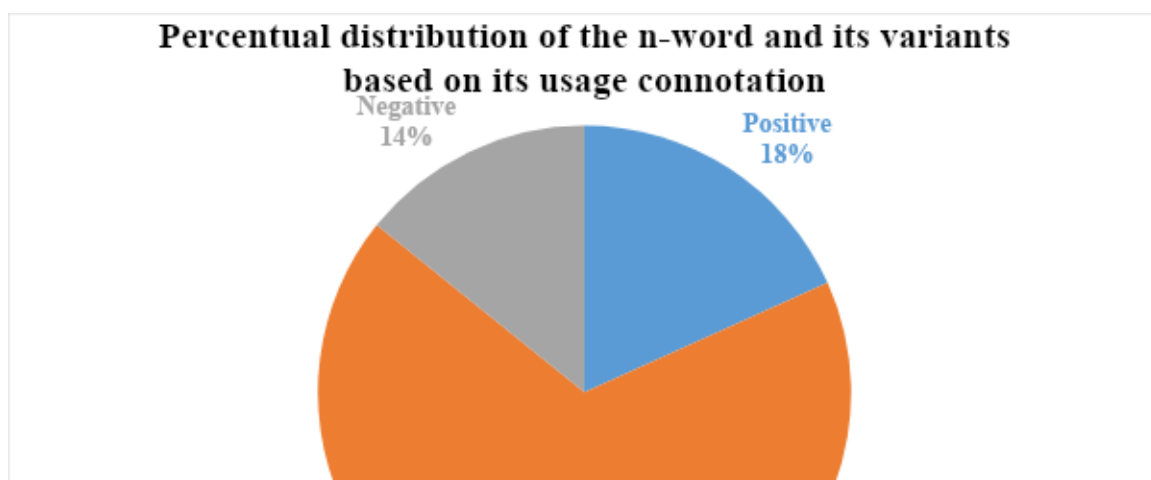
### Forms of N-word:

- Nigga – 23x

The last analyzed album of the decade and simultaneously of this entire thesis and it indicates that the use of the n-word has slightly decreased with only 23 instances of the -a form of the n-word appearing in this album. However, compared to most of the 2010s albums this one features more negative uses than positive ones and a much smaller difference between negative and neutral uses.

### 2010s Summary

The total number of uses has decreased, it has decreased when compared to the previous (2000s) decade, as well as to the 1990s. The neutral connotation has once again been the most prominently used one, following the trend set by the previous two decades, however, there was a slight deviation from the trend as for the first time, there were more positive instances than the negative ones.



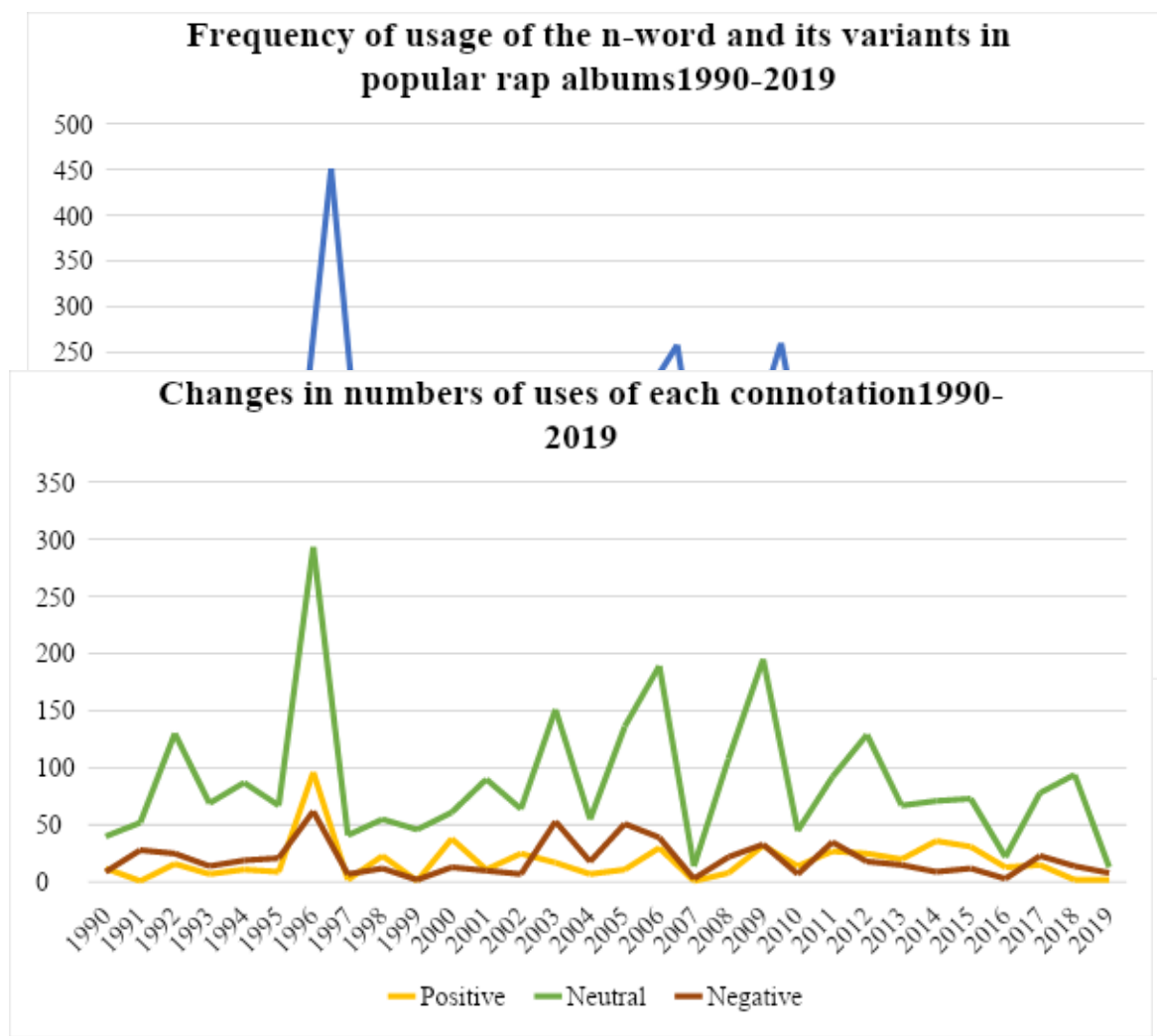
*Pie chart no. 3: total*

number of the n-word instances: 1013

## Comparison of the Results

This first graph shows the changes in the frequency of usage of the n-word from the time span of nearly three decades, from 1990 to 2019. As the trendline, which represents the overall average usage, suggests, the frequency of the n-word use has decreased slightly over the three decades.

Graph no. 1: frequency of the total number of usages



The  
1990s  
were

generally within the 50 and 200 uses throughout the decade with only the extreme spike occurring in 1996 which is the year of Tupac's *All Eyez On Me* album, the extreme difference between this album and the rest of the albums is mostly caused by the album's extensive track list of 28 tracks. Toward the end of the 1990s, the usage was the lowest of the decade. The immediate start of the following decade saw a rise in the frequency of usages and the entire decade had a rather unstable line as the frequency of the n-word use fluctuated mid-decade, the 2000s, however, had a higher frequency than the previous decade. The last analyzed decade had the lowest total number of usages and is the reason why the trendline is slightly decreased. There are two albums with the frequency below 50 instances and the last time two albums were below this threshold was near the end of the 1990s. The 2010s were also the most stable decade as there are no extreme discrepancies between the albums as in the previous decades.

Graph number two is a visualization of the changes in the frequency of usage of the n-word for each of the three connotations that were considered during the analyses, once again the graph covers the time span from 1990 to 2019. The line for neutral use is nearly identical as the total usage from the previous graph and that is caused by the neutral connotations being the most frequently used connotation of the n-word. The high neutrality is caused by the high usage of the n-word (mostly the -a form of the word) used as an address of other people, either singular or plural, it is used as a word without any connotation, and it is not meant to either represent the positive relationship of the speaker to the addressee or the opposite it is not meant to be received negatively. In the analyzed material neutral addresses were used by the artists as synonyms to other informal addresses, such as "man", "guys", etc. Sometimes it had a racial undertone when it was clear that the person addressed as "nigga" was an African American person, but there were cases



where the context was either unknown or the word was used nonexclusively for African Americans. The number of neutral usages decreased in the 2019 album *IGOR* when compared to previous years being only marginally ahead of the negative connotation, yet the neutral connotation was still the most frequently used connotation.

## Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from the results of the analyses indicates that not only is the n-word usage in popular American rap albums in decline but also seems to be less negative and more positive than in the 1990s and 2000s. This shift may have been caused by the fact that as the genre continues to evolve it further strays away from the golden age of hip-hop where violence, gangs and criminal personas were prominent features. What was once a major theme had been slowly fading away during the 2000s and during the 2010s the classic gangsta rap was almost replaced by the modern iterations of rap. The rap genre is now considered to be among the most popular in the world and based on a global survey it ranked #5 in popularity (Richter) and it makes sense for the genre to appeal to wider audiences by reducing the number of n-word uses to make it more politically correct and racially neutral as the n-word still carries a certain amount of racial meaning even if used in a completely neutral context.

This thesis could serve as a basis for further research on the matter and could include more albums for each year to gather more data to be able to more accurately reflect the development of the trend of n-word usage in American rap music. While this thesis dealt with only the most popular albums, the further elaboration on this matter could possibly explore the question of the n-word usage frequency/connotation in rap albums in general, considering both the popular artists and lesser-known artists.

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## Resumé (in Czech)

Tato bakalářská diplomová práce si dala za cíl zkoumat vývoj užití tzv. n-slov, tedy slov jako „nigga“, „nigger“, „negro“ a jejich deriváty v populární americké hip-hopové hudbě v letech 1990-2019. Výzkum byl rozdělen na dvě části, kde první část byla zaměřena na celkový počet použití, aby bylo možné na základě těchto dat vypracovat závěr ohledně toho, zdali se frekvence užívání těchto slov v průběhu tří desetiletí zvýšila, snížila nebo zůstala stejná. Druhá část se zabývala citovým zabarvením/konotací každé instance těchto slov, přičemž tato zabarvení se sestávala z pozitivního, negativního či neutrálního (tj. nezabarveného) použití a měla za cíl ilustrovat, jakým směrem se vývoj jazyka užívaného v tomto hudebním žánru ubírá.

Celkem bylo zpracováno 30 alb z časového rozmezí 1990-2019. Z těchto alb bylo analyzováno 533 skladeb, přičemž z každého alba byla rozepsána a rozebrána do detailu jedna píseň jakožto ukázka postupu rozboru prováděného u všech skladeb. Pro potřeby této práce byla vybrána alba od nejpopulárnějších umělců pro každé ze zkoumaných let.

K důkladné analýze byly použity texty písní, které byly přepsány do textové podoby a publikované na webové stránce Genius, jež shromažďuje texty populárních (nejen hip-hopových) skladeb a dovoluje jak umělcům samotným, tak uživatelům navrhopat úpravy a poskytovat kontext spolu s doplňujícími informacemi. Texty byly podrobeny tzv. kvantitativní analýze, kdy byly veškeré skladby z každého alba pečlivě pročteny a každá instance kterékoliv formy zkoumaných slov byla zaznamenána a následně zahrnuta do celkového množství užití těchto slov jak v albu, tak v příslušné dekádě. Druhý typ analýzy,

které byly texty podrobeny, přidělil každé instanci n-slov citové zabarvení na základě kontextu, ve kterém bylo slovo použito, a na základě slov, se kterými se pojí.

Po dokončení rozborů všech skladeb vybraných desetiletí bylo vypracováno shrnutí příslušné dekády, kde byl popsán celkový počet použití n-slov za celou dekádu. Další součástí souhrnu byl koláčový graf, jenž graficky zobrazuje procentuální zastoupení každé ze tří konotačních kategorií. Tento graf byl dále popsán za účelem zjednodušení orientace bez nutnosti pročítání veškerých analýz. Druhá a třetí dekáda navíc měly popis obohacen porovnáním s předchozími desetiletími.

Dále bylo vypracováno srovnání všech tří desetiletí a následně závěr. Srovnání obsahuje dva grafy, přičemž první se zabývá celkovým počtem instancí zkoumaných slov a jeho křivka znázorňuje fluktuaci frekvence užívání v průběhu téměř třiceti let. V tomto grafu je také znázorněna trendová linie, která bere v potaz průměr, na jehož základě se ukáže, zda se trend počtu použití ubírá klesajícím či stoupajícím směrem (v tomto případě mírně klesajícím). Cílem druhého grafu bylo znázornit rozdíl mezi každým ze tří citových zabarvení; každá konotace má svoji křivku, na níž lze pozorovat, jak se frekvence použití každé z konotací měnila v průběhu tří desetiletí. Zároveň se zde nabízí i možnost porovnání se zbývajících dvěma zabarveními.

## Resumé (in English)

The aim of this bachelor's thesis was to analyze the evolution of the n-word usage in popular American hip-hop music between the years 1990-2019. The forms "nigga", "nigger" and "negro" were examined and other derived forms that appeared throughout the various lyrics were also included. The research was split into two parts, the first part was focused on the total number of n-word instances which would provide enough data to form a conclusion whether the frequency of the usage has increased, decreased, or remained the same. The aim of the second part of the research was to analyze the connotation of each of the n-word use. The three basic connotations were considered – positive, negative or neutral and the conclusion was supposed to illustrate what direction is the language used in this music genre taking.

There were 30 albums in total each for one year of the time range 1990-2019. Out of these thirty albums 533 tracks were analyzed thoroughly and for each album the analysis of a single song was highlighted in order to show what the analysis that every song has undergone looked like. For the purposes of this thesis, only the most popular artists and their albums were chosen.

The research was conducted via the use of the song lyrics that were transcribed into textual form and published on the Genius website. Genius collects all sorts of popular music lyrics and allows for the users or the artists themselves to provide context for the lyrics and other additional information. The lyrics have undergone a quantitative analysis during which the lyrics were thoroughly read through and each instance of any of the n-word forms was noted and included in the total number of the n-word uses both in the album and its respective decade. The second type of analysis was assigning each n-word use a connotation based on the context the word was used in or the words it collocated with.

After all the analyses were finished a summary for each of the three decades was created and these summaries offer a brief overview of each decade and there is a pie chart included which shows the percentual portion of each connotation. The summaries of the second and third decade also feature a comparison with the previous decade or two decades, respectively. The purpose of these summaries and graphs was to offer the concentrated results of all the analyses without the need of reading all of the analyses.

At the end of the thesis there are the chapters comparing all three decades and the conclusion. In the comparison there are two graphs included, the first graph illustrates the fluctuation of the n-word usage frequency throughout the three decades and in order to make the results of the graph more visible a trend line was created to visualize whether the trend of the n-word usage is growing or waning (in this case it is waning). The purpose of the second graph was to visualize the disparity between each of the connotation uses – each connotation has its own curve which helps to compare these three different uses more easily to each other and how the frequency of each changed throughout the years.

## Appendix A Tables

Table 1: 1990 – N.W.A. - 100 Miles and Runnin' – page 34

			<i>Connotation</i>		
Track			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	100 Miles and Runnin'		-	9	1
2.	Just Don't Bite It		-	5	-
3.	Sa Prize (Fuck The Police – Part 2)		-	8	4
4.	Real Niggaz		12	17	4
5.	Kamurshol		-	1	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>9</b>

Table 2: 1991 – Ice Cube – Death Certificate – page 37

			<i>Connotation</i>		
Track			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	The Funeral		-	2	-
2.	The Wrong Nigga to Fuck Wit		-	3	3
3.	My Summer Vacation		-	10	2
4.	Steady Mobbin'		-	4	-
5.	Robin Lench		-	2	1
6.	Givin' Up the Nappy Dug Out		-	5	-
7.	Look Who's Burnin'		-	3	-
8.	A Bird in the Hand		-	1	-
9.	Man's Best Friend		-	-	-
10.	Alive On Arrival		-	3	1
11.	Death		-	-	-
12.	The Birth		-	-	-
13.	I Wanna Kill Sam		-	3	2
14.	Horny Lil' Devil		-	-	1
15.	Black Korea		-	1	-
16.	True to the Game		-	4	5
17.	Color Blind		-	3	1
18.	Doing Dumb Shit		-	-	-
19.	Us		-	2	2
20.	No Vaseline		1	3	9
21.	How to Survive in South Central		-	3	1
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>28</b>



Table 3: 1992 – Dr. Dre – The Chronic – page 39

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	The Chronic (Intro)		1	11	2
2.	Fuck wit Dre Day		1	5	4
3.	Let Me Ride		1	7	-
4.	The Day The Niggaz Took Over		1	16	-
5.	Nuthin' But a "G" Thang		1	1	1
6.	Deeez Nuuts		1	9	-
7.	Lil' Ghetto Boy		-	2	1
8.	A Nigga Witta Gun		1	22	6
9.	Rat-Tat-Tat-Tat		-	23	2
10.	The \$20 Sack Pyramid		-	2	-
11.	Lyrical Gangbang		-	11	4
12.	High Powered		5	2	2
13.	The Doctor's Office		-	-	-
14.	Stranded on Death Row		1	3	2
15.	The Roach (Outro)		-	14	1
16.	Bitches Ain't Shit		3	2	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>25</b>

Table 4: 1993 – Wu-Tang Clan - Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)– page 42

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Bring Da Ruckus		1	3	2
2.	Shame On A Nigga		-	6	5
3.	Clan in Da Front		-	6	1
4.	Wu-Tang: 7th Chamber		-	15	-
5.	Can It Be All So Simple		-	8	-
6.	Da Mystery of Chessboxin'		-	8	3
7.	Wu-Tang Clan Ain't Nuthing ta F' Wit		5	4	-
8.	C.R.E.A.M.		1	3	-
9.	Method Man		-	2	-
10.	Protect Ya Neck		-	4	2
11.	Tearz		-	-	-
12.	Wu-Tang: 7th Chamber—Part II		-	10	1
13.	Conclusion		-	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>14</b>

Table 5: 1994 – The Notorious B.I.G. – Ready to Die – page 45

Track		Connotation		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Intro	-	14	6
2.	Things Done Changed	1	5	-
3.	Gimme the Loot	1	9	1
4.	Machine Gun Funk	1	4	2
5.	Warning	3	11	1
6.	Ready to Die	-	4	-
7.	One More Chance	-	1	1
8.	Fuck Me	-	-	-
9.	The What	-	9	3
10.	Juicy	-	10	-
11.	Everyday Struggle	-	-	-
12.	Me & My Bitch	-	-	3
13.	Big Poppa	-	5	1
14.	Respect	1	3	-
15.	Friend of Mine	3	-	-
16.	Unbelievable	-	1	-
17.	Suicidal Thoughts	1	11	1
Total		11	87	19

Table 6: 1995 – Mobb Deep – The Infamous – page 47

Track		Connotation		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	The Start of Your Ending (41st Side)	-	6	1
2.	The Infamous Prelude	1	10	5
3.	Survival of the Fittest	-	3	-
4.	Eye for a Eye (Your Beef Is Mines)	1	3	1
5.	Just Step Prelude	2	-	-
6.	Give Up the Goods (Just Step)	-	6	2
7.	Temperature's Rising	-	1	2
8.	Up North Trip	-	7	3
9.	Trife Life	1	7	1
10.	Q.U. – Hectic	-	5	1
11.	Right Back at You	1	11	-
12.	The Grave Prelude	-	-	-
13.	Cradle to the Grave	-	4	-
14.	Drink Away the Pain (Situations)	1	1	2
15.	Shook Ones (Part II)	1	2	1
16.	Party Over	1	1	2

		<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>21</b>
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Table 7: 1996 – Tupac – All Eyez on Me – page 51

Track		Connotation		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Ambitionz Az a Ridah	4	4	5
2.	All About U	-	5	1
3.	Skandalouz	2	7	2
4.	Got My Mind Made Up	-	3	-
5.	How Do U Want It	1	19	2
6.	2 Of Amerikaz Most Wanted	2	6	1
7.	No More Pain	2	23	9
8.	Heartz of Men	3	16	5
9.	Life Goes On	21	9	-
10.	Only God Can Judge Me	-	2	-
11.	Tradin War Stories	7	11	21
12.	California Love (Remix)	-	-	-
13.	I Ain't Mad At Cha	1	7	-
14.	What'z Ya Phone #	-	2	-
15.	Can't C Me	6	19	3
16.	Shorty Wanna Be a Thug	2	12	-
17.	Holla at Me	1	25	2
18.	Wonda Why They Call U Bitch	-	5	-
19.	When We Ride	9	21	1
20.	Thug Passion	3	5	-
21.	Picture Me Rollin'	2	14	4
22.	Check Out Time	1	22	-
23.	Ratha Be Ya Nigga	13	8	-
24.	All Eyez On Me	13	14	2
25.	Run Tha Streetz	3	20	1
26.	Ain't Hard 2 Find	-	14	3
27.	Heaven Ain't Hard 2 Find	-	-	-
28.	California Love	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>96</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>62</b>

Table 8: 1997 – Del The Funky Homosapien – Future Developments – page 54

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Lyric Lickin'		-	8	2
2.	Stress the World		-	1	1
3.	Why You Wanna Get Funky...		-	2	-
4.	Don't Forget the Bass		-	2	-
5.	Faulty		-	3	2
6.	X-Files		-	5	-
7.	Future Development		-	5	-
8.	Corner Story		-	1	-
9.	Love is Worth		-	-	-
10.	Del's Nightmare		-	2	2
11.	Games Begin		2	6	-
12.	Town to Town		-	5	-
13.	Checkin' Out the Rivalry		-	1	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>7</b>

Table 9: 1998 – Big Pun – Capital Punishment – page 56

Track		<i>Connotation</i>		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Intro	-	2	1
2.	Beware	-	3	2
3.	Super Lyrical	-	7	-
4.	Taster's Choice	-	-	-
5.	Still Not a Player	6	1	-
6.	Intermission	-	-	-
7.	The Dream Shatterer	-	1	1
8.	Punish Me	-	1	-
9.	Pakinamac Pt. I	1	7	4
10.	You Ain't a Killer	5	1	-
11.	Pakinamac Pt. II	1	4	1
12.	Caribbean Connection	1	3	-
13.	Glamour Life	-	1	-
14.	Capital Punishment	1	1	-
15.	Uncensored	-	-	-
16.	I'm Not A Player	-	-	-
17.	Twinz (Deep Cover '98)	2	5	2
18.	The Rain & The Sun (Interlude)	-	-	-
19.	Boomerang	-	6	-
20.	You Came Up	4	2	-
21.	Tres Leches (Triboro Trilogy)	-	3	-
22.	Charlie Rock Shout	-	-	-
23.	Fast Money	1	5	-
24.	Parental Discretion	1	2	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>12</b>

Table 10: 1999 – Mos Def - Black on Both Sides – page 59

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Fear Not of Man		-	-	-
2.	Hip Hop		-	-	-
3.	Love		-	-	-
4.	Ms. Fat Booty		-	2	-
5.	Speed Law		-	1	-
6.	Do It Now		1	7	-
7.	Got		-	1	-
8.	UMI Says		-	-	-
9.	New World Water		-	1	-
10.	Rock N Roll		-	-	-
11.	Know That		-	2	-
12.	Climb		-	-	-
13.	Brooklyn		-	-	-
14.	Habitat		-	-	-
15.	Mr. Nigga		-	28	2
16.	Mathematics		-	4	-
17.	May-December		-	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>2</b>

Table 11: 2000 – Wu-Tang Clan - The W – page 63

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Intro (Shaolin Finger Jab)		3	4	-
2.	Careful (Click, Click)		-	2	2
3.	Hollow Bones		-	4	1
4.	Redbull		-	1	-
5.	One Blood Under W		-	-	-
6.	Conditioner		3	9	1
7.	Protect Ya Neck (The Jump Off)		1	3	2
8.	Let My Niggas Live		24	2	1
9.	I Can't Go to Sleep		-	3	3
10.	Do You Really (Thang, Thang)		-	11	-
11.	The Monument		-	6	2
12.	Gravel Pit		2	2	-
13.	Jah World		-	2	-
14.	Clap		5	12	1
		<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>13</b>



Table 12: 2001 – Foxy Brown – Broken Silence – page 66

Track			<i>Connotation</i>		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Intro		-	-	-
2.	Fallin'		-	1	-
3.	Oh Yeah		-	5	-
4.	B.K. Anthem		2	11	-
5.	The Letter		-	-	-
6.	730		1	1	-
7.	Candy		-	-	-
8.	Tables Will Turn		1	6	-
9.	Hood Scriptures		-	1	-
10.	Run Dem		-	5	1
11.	Bout My Paper		2	3	-
12.	Run Yo Shit		4	18	2
13.	Na Na Be Like		-	1	1
14.	Gangsta Boogie		1	9	2
15.	I Don't Care		-	4	2
16.	So Hot		-	19	-
17.	Saddest Day		-	6	2
18.	Broken Silence		-	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>10</b>



Table 13: 2002 – Nas – God's Son – page 69

Track			<i>Connotation</i>		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Get Down		-	5	1
2.	The Cross		2	4	-
3.	Made You Look		1	2	-
4.	Last Real Nigga Alive		8	6	-
5.	Zone Out		1	8	2
6.	Hey Nas		-	-	-
7.	I Can		-	-	-
8.	Book of Rhymes		1	5	1
9.	Thugz Mansion (N.Y.)		-	-	-
10.	Mastermind		7	5	-
11.	Warrior Song		-	2	-
12.	Revolutionary Warfare		-	3	-
13.	Dance		-	-	-
14.	Heaven		2	2	1
15.	Thugz Mirror (Freestyle)		-	4	1
16.	Pussy Killz		3	18	1
17.	The G.O.D.		-	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>7</b>

Table 14: 2003 – DMX – Grand Champ – page 74

Track		Connotation		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Dog Intro	-	9	1
2.	My Life	-	-	-
3.	Where the Hood At?	1	21	17
4.	Dogs Out	-	8	1
5.	Get it on the Floor	-	13	3
6.	Come Prepared	-	-	1
7.	Shot Down	3	10	2
8.	Bring the Noize	-	16	6
9.	Untouchable	4	19	1
10.	Fuck Y'all	-	4	2
11.	Ruff Radio	-	2	2
12.	We're Back	1	14	5
13.	Ruff Radio 2	-	-	-
14.	Rob All Night (If I'm Gonna Rob)	2	7	1
15.	We Go Hard	2	10	2
16.	We Bout to Blow	1	6	8
17.	The Rain	-	-	-
18.	Gotta Go	-	-	-
19.	Don't Gotta Go Home	-	1	-
20.	A'Yo Kato	2	2	-
21.	Thank You	-	-	-
22.	The Prayer V	-	-	-
23.	On Top	-	2	1
24.	X Gon' Give It to Ya	1	7	-
Total		17	151	53

Table 15: 2004 – Snoop Dogg – R&G (Rhythm & Gangsta) – page 77

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	I Love to Give You Light		-	3	-
2.	Bang Out		-	5	3
3.	Drop It Like It's Hot		1	2	4
4.	Can I Get A Flicc Witchu		-	-	-
5.	Ups & Downs		1	2	-
6.	The Bidness		1	6	3
7.	Snoop D.O. Double G		2	4	-
8.	Let's Get Blown		-	1	-
9.	Step Yo Game Up		-	9	2
10.	Perfect		-	-	-
11.	WBallz (Interlude)		-	-	-
12.	Fresh Pair of Panties On		-	2	-
13.	Promise I		1	1	-
14.	Oh No		-	6	5
15.	Can U Control Yo Hoe		-	3	-
16.	Signs		-	5	-
17.	I'm Threw Witchu		-	1	-
18.	Pass it Pass It		1	2	1
19.	Girl Like U		-	3	-
20.	No Thang On Me		-	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>18</b>

Table 16: 2005 – 50 Cent – The Massacre – page 80

Track			<i>Connotation</i>		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Intro		-	-	-
2.	In My Hood		3	5	17
3.	This is 50		2	9	-
4.	I'm Supposed to Die Tonight		-	11	2
5.	Piggy Bank		-	4	2
6.	GATman and Robbin		-	6	1
7.	Candy Shop		-	-	-
8.	Outta Control		-	4	-
9.	Get In My Car		-	3	3
10.	Ski Mask Way		-	13	-
11.	A Baltimore Love Thing		-	-	-
12.	Ryder Music		1	3	3
13.	Disco Inferno		-	2	-
14.	Just a Lil' Bit		-	6	1
15.	Gunz Come Out		1	41	5
16.	My Toy Soldier		1	7	5
17.	Position of Power		2	9	5
18.	Build You Up		-	-	-
19.	God Gave Me Style		-	1	-
20.	So Amazing		-	2	-
21.	I Don't Need 'Em		-	5	7
22.	Hate It or Love It		1	5	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>51</b>

Table 17: 2006 – The Game – Doctor's Advocate – page 84

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Lookin' at You		-	5	5
2.	Da Shit		2	17	2
3.	It's Okay (One Blood)		-	11	3
4.	Compton		2	38	4
5.	Remedy		-	3	1
6.	Let's Ride		-	5	2
7.	Too Much		-	10	1
8.	Wouldn't Get Far		-	4	-
9.	Scream on 'Em		3	10	9
10.	One Night		5	5	2
11.	Doctor's Advocate		3	26	-
12.	Ol' English		1	6	-
13.	California Vacation		2	7	1
14.	Bang		5	7	1
15.	Around the World		-	1	-
16.	Why You Hate the Game		3	9	2
17.	I'm Chillin'		-	5	-
18.	It's Okay (One Blood) [Remix]		4	20	6
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>39</b>

Table 18: 2007 – Kanye West – Graduation – page 86

Track			<i>Connotation</i>		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Good Morning		-	-	-
2.	Champion		-	-	-
3.	Stronger		-	-	-
4.	I Wonder		-	-	-
5.	Good Life		-	2	-
6.	Can't Tell Me Nothing		-	1	-
7.	Barry Bonds		-	1	-
8.	Drunk and Hot Girls		-	-	-
9.	Flashing Lights		-	-	2
10.	Everything I Am		-	1	1
11.	The Glory		-	2	-
12.	Homecoming		-	2	-
13.	Big Brother		-	-	-
14.	Good Night		-	-	-
15.	Can't Tell Me Nothing (Official Remix)		-	4	-
16.	Bittersweet Poetry		1	1	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>

Table 19: 2008 – Ice Cube – Raw Footage – page 91

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	What Is a Pyroclastic Flow?		-	-	-
2.	I Got My Locs On		-	3	1
3.	It Takes a Nation		-	14	1
4.	Gangsta Rap Made Me Do It		-	10	3
5.	Hood Mentality		-	8	-
6.	Why Me?		-	8	1
7.	Cold Places		-	8	-
8.	Jack N the Box		-	-	-
9.	Do Ya Thang		-	4	-
10.	Thank God		1	3	-
11.	Here He Come		3	8	3
12.	Get Money, Spend Money, No Money		-	4	1
13.	Get Used To It		3	6	1
14.	Tomorrow		-	2	-
15.	Stand Tall		-	-	2
16.	Take Me Away		-	3	-
17.	Believe It or Not		-	8	1
18.	Don't Make Me Hurt Ya Feelings		-	11	7
19.	Crack Baby?		-	4	1
20.	Why We Thugs		1	4	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>22</b>

Table 20: 2009 – Raekwon - Only Built 4 Cuban Linx... Pt. II – page 94

Track		Connotation		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Return of the North Star	3	10	2
2.	House of Flying Daggers	1	-	6
3.	Sonny's Missing	2	17	3
4.	Pyrex Vision	-	4	-
5.	Cold Outside	-	6	-
6.	Black Mozart	-	5	-
7.	Gihad	-	12	-
8.	New Wu	5	9	2
9.	Penitentiary	-	4	3
10.	Baggin' Crack	3	3	-
11.	Surgical Gloves	2	9	-
12.	Broken Safety	-	3	2
13.	Canal Street	2	12	3
14.	Ason Jones	1	4	-
15.	Have Mercy	1	1	-
16.	10 Bricks	3	6	3
17.	Fat Lady Sings	-	8	1
18.	Catalina	3	9	1
19.	We Will Rob You	-	4	1
20.	About Me	2	16	2
21.	Mean Streets	1	13	-
22.	Kiss the Ring	-	2	-
23.	Walk Wit Me	-	6	2
24.	The Badlands	1	13	1
25.	About Me (Original)	1	15	1
26.	Never Used To Matter	1	2	-
27.	Rockstars	-	2	-
Total		32	195	33



Table 21: 2010 – Wiz Khalifa – Rolling Papers – page 99

			<i>Connotation</i>		
Track			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	When I'm Gone		1	5	-
2.	On My Level		2	2	1
3.	Black and Yellow		1	3	-
4.	Roll Up		-	-	-
5.	Hopes & Dreams		-	2	-
6.	Wake Up		-	2	1
7.	The Race		1	7	1
8.	Star of the Show		2	9	-
9.	No Sleep		-	3	-
10.	Get Your Shit		-	-	-
11.	Top Floor		-	-	-
12.	Fly Solo		-	-	-
13.	Rooftops		3	3	1
14.	Cameras		1	3	-
15.	Taylor Gang		3	5	2
16.	Middle of You		-	1	-
17.	Stoned		-	-	1
		<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>7</b>

Table 22: 2011 – Lil Wayne - Tha Carter IV – page 102

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Intro (C4)		2	4	2
2.	Blunt Blowin'		-	-	9
3.	Megaman		2	10	3
4.	6 Foot 7 Foot		1	11	1
5.	Nightmares of the Bottom		1	-	1
6.	She Will		10	4	-
7.	How to Hate		2	2	-
8.	Interlude		-	7	-
9.	John		-	7	8
10.	Abortion		1	2	2
11.	So Special		-	1	-
12.	How to Love		-	-	-
13.	President Carter		-	6	1
14.	It's Good		2	8	2
15.	Outro		2	12	1
16.	I Like the View		-	3	-
17.	Mirror		-	-	-
18.	Two Shots		-	1	1
19.	Up Up and Away		-	5	4
20.	Novacane		-	-	-
21.	I Got Some Money on Me		4	9	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>35</b>

Table 23: 2012 – Rick Ross - God Forgives, I Don't – page 104

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Pray for Us		-	1	-
2.	Pirates		2	13	3
3.	3 Kings		2	9	1
4.	Ashamed		1	3	-
5.	Maybach Music IV		-	6	-
6.	Sixteen		-	4	-
7.	Amsterdam		3	6	2
8.	Hold Me Back		2	42	7
9.	911		-	7	1
10.	So Sophisticated		5	5	1
11.	Presidential		1	2	1
12.	Ice Cold		1	4	-
13.	Touch'N You		1	1	1
14.	Diced Pineapples		-	1	-
15.	Ten Jesus Pieces		6	6	1
16.	Triple Beam Dreams		-	14	-
17.	Rich Forever		1	5	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>18</b>

Table 24: 2013 – A\$AP Rocky - LONG.LIVE.A\$AP – page 106

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Long Live A\$AP		-	4	-
2.	Goldie		-	9	4
3.	PMW (All I Really Need)		-	9	1
4.	LVL		2	10	-
5.	Hell		1	2	1
6.	Pain		2	1	-
7.	Fuckin' Problems		1	10	1
8.	Wild for the Night		4	3	4
9.	lTrain		2	3	1
10.	Fashion Killa		8	-	-
11.	Phoenix		-	12	3
12.	Suddenly		-	4	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>15</b>

Table 25: 2014 – Nicki Minaj - The Pinkprint – page 109

Track			<i>Connotation</i>		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	All Things Go		-	1	-
2.	I Lied		-	-	-
3.	The Crying Game		-	-	-
4.	Get On Your Knees		-	-	-
5.	Feeling Myself		1	4	-
6.	Only		17	4	-
7.	Want Some More		1	7	1
8.	Four Door Aventador		-	4	-
9.	Favorite		1	-	1
10.	Buy a Heart		1	1	-
11.	Trini Dem Girls		-	-	-
12.	Anaconda		-	1	-
13.	The Night Is Still Young		-	-	-
14.	Pills N Potions		-	5	-
15.	Bed of Lies		-	1	-
16.	Grand Piano		-	-	-
17.	Big Daddy		1	13	1
18.	Shanghai		12	18	1
19.	Win Again		-	2	1
20.	Truffle Butter		-	2	1
21.	Mona Lisa		-	-	-
22.	Put You in a Room		-	5	-
23.	Wamables		2	3	3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>9</b>

Table 26: 2015 – Kendrick Lamar - To Pimp a Butterfly – page 111

Track			<i>Connotation</i>		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Wesley's Theory		6	4	-
2.	For Free? (Interlude)		-	1	6
3.	King Kunta		-	3	-
4.	Institutionalized		1	7	-
5.	These Walls		-	-	-
6.	u		-	6	-
7.	Alright		-	19	-
8.	For Sale? (Interlude)		-	1	-
9.	Momma		-	-	-
10.	Hood Politics		4	9	-
11.	How Much a Dollar Cost		-	2	-
12.	Complexion (A Zulu Love)		-	-	2
13.	The Blacker the Berry		1	3	-
14.	You Ain't Gotta Lie (Momma Said)		12	4	2
15.	i		5	6	2
16.	Mortal Man		2	8	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>12</b>

Table 27: 2016 – Drake – Views – page 113

			<i>Connotation</i>		
Track			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Keep the Family Close		1	-	-
2.	9		-	1	-
3.	U With Me?		1	3	-
4.	Feel No Ways		-	4	-
5.	Hype		-	1	-
6.	Weston Road Flows		1	2	-
7.	Redemption		-	1	-
8.	With You		-	-	-
9.	Faithful		-	1	2
10.	Still Here		4	1	-
11.	Controlla		-	-	-
12.	One Dance		-	-	-
13.	Grammys		1	3	-
14.	Child's Play		1	1	-
15.	Pop Style		3	-	-
16.	Too Good		-	-	-
17.	Summers Over Interlude		-	-	-
18.	Fire & Desire		-	1	-
19.	Views		1	3	1
20.	Hotline Bling		-	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3</b>

Table 28: 2017 – Jay Z - 4:44 – page 115

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Kill Jay Z		-	3	-
2.	The Story of O.J		7	36	20
3.	Smile		-	10	-
4.	Caught Their Eyes		-	8	1
5.	4:44		-	-	-
6.	Family Feud		4	4	1
7.	Bam		1	11	1
8.	Moonlight		-	2	-
9.	Marcy Me		-	-	-
10.	Legacy		-	2	-
11.	Adnis		-	2	-
12.	Blue's Freestyle/We Family		1	-	-
13.	MaNyfaCedGod		2	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>23</b>

Table 29: 2018 – Ice Cube – Everythang's Corrupt – page 118

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	Super OG (Intro)		-	1	-
2.	Arrest The President		-	16	2
3.	Chase Down The Bully		-	4	1
4.	Don't Bring Me No Bag		-	6	3
5.	Bad Dope		-	2	-
6.	On Them Pills		-	9	1
7.	Fire Water		-	8	2
8.	Streets Shed Tears		-	6	-
9.	Ain't Got No Haters		-	9	-
10.	Can You Dig It?		-	6	2
11.	That New Funkadelic		-	5	-
12.	One For The Money		-	3	-
13.	Still In The Kitchen		-	14	-
14.	Non Believers		2	1	1
15.	Everythang's Corrupt		-	1	2
16.	Good Cop Bad Cop		-	3	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>14</b>

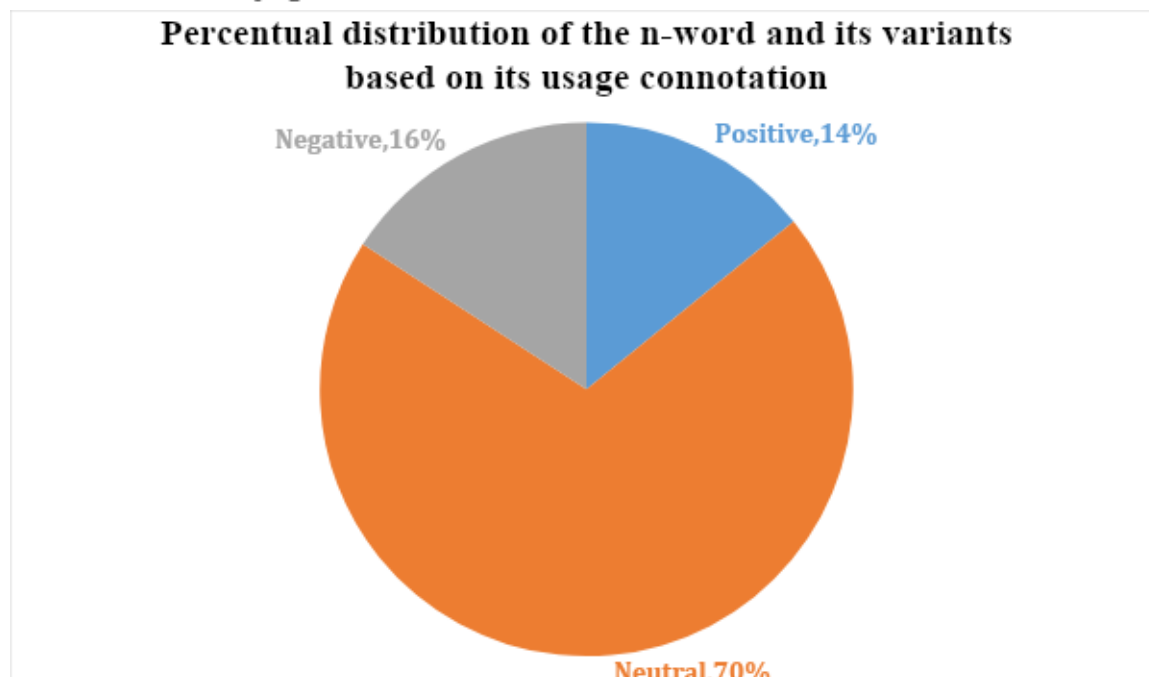
Table 30: 2019 – Tyler, the Creator – Igor – page 121

Track			Connotation		
			Positive	Neutral	Negative
1.	IGOR'S THEME		-	-	-
2.	EARFQUAKE		-	-	-
3.	I THINK		-	-	-
4.	EXACTLY WHAT YOU RUN FROM YOU END UP CHASING		-	-	-
5.	RUNNING OUT OF TIME		-	-	1
6.	NEW MAGIC WAND		-	1	-
7.	A BOY IS A GUN*		-	2	2
8.	PUPPET		-	-	-
9.	WHAT'S GOOD		2	8	5
10.	GONE, GONE / THANK YOU		-	1	-
11.	I DON'T LOVE YOU ANYMORE		-	-	-
12.	ARE WE STILL FRIENDS?		-	1	-
		Total	2	13	8

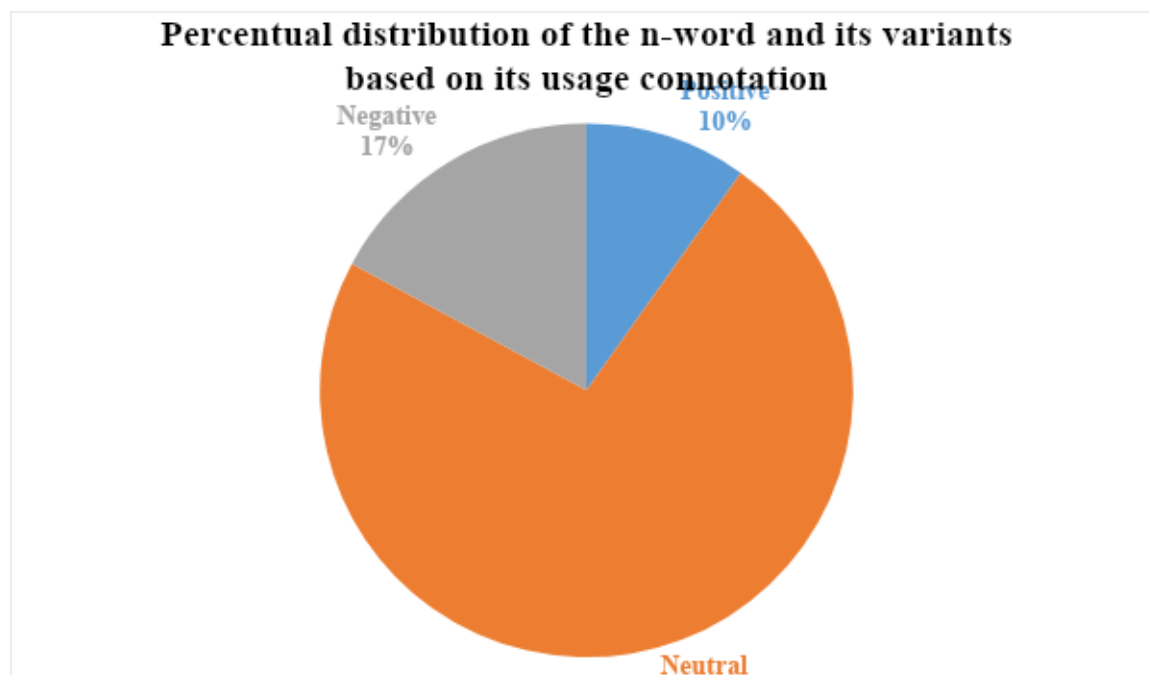


## Appendix B Graphs and Charts

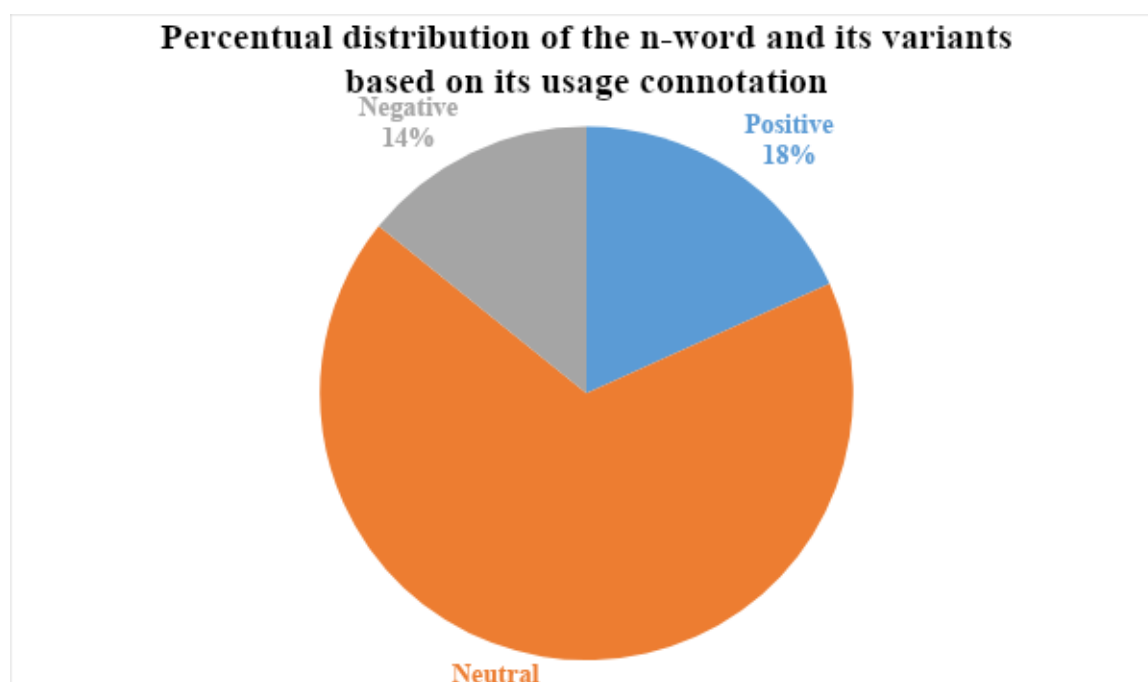
Pie chart no. 1 – page 60



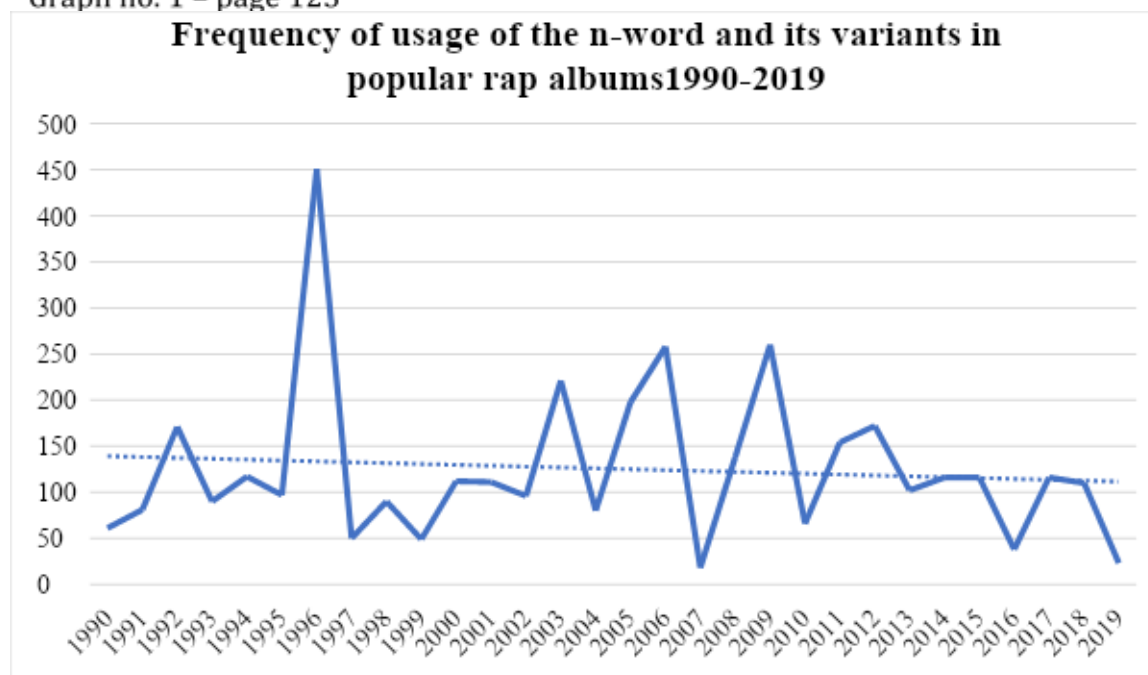
Pie chart no. 2 – page 95



Pie chart no. 3 – page 122



Graph no. 1 – page 123



Graph no. 2 – page 124

