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Power, Powerlessness and Empowerment in African-American and White Performers' Hip-Hop Rhetoric: A Contrastive Corpus-driven Critical Discourse Analysis.

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Declaration

This submission is my own work. Any quotation from, or description of, the work of others is acknowledged herein by reference to the sources, whether published or unpublished.

Abstract

The present corpus-driven critical discourse analysis study sets out to observe the rampant transformation of the hip hop genre diachronically, examining all song lyrics from the Billboard R&B/Hip Hop music chart archives from the 1960s to 2010s. It also examines the shifts in rhetoric within gender- (male and female) and race-oriented (black and white) groups. This study charts the rhetoric of US hip hop in order to reveal ideological patterns, similarities or differences between social actors, especially the artists themselves and those directly addressed or referred to by the artists (addressors and addressees, as are categorized here). The main objective of the research is to locate and examine the artists' recurring linguistic choices, identify and critically account for the full range of significant characteristics of the two features (race and gender) under scrutiny within the genre of hip hop, and also their evolution in time. The analysis affords a deeper insight into the tremendous rhetorical changes of a set of culturally- and emotionally-loaded, mostly stigmatized terms, which are representative of archetypal asymmetric relations between social actors.

Table of Contents

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List of tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

For the first time in music history, Rhythm & Blues/ hip hop has surpassed rock as the biggest music genre in the U.S. in terms of total consumption, according to the Spotify 2017 year-end report. Eight of the 10 most listened-to artists of the year came from the R&B/hip-hop genre. The music industry seems to have sensed the appeal of hip hop to the general audience, and hip hop artists are multiplying by the minute. From an outcry for the harsh reality, or a mere ostentation of wealth and power, hip hop has evolved into a classic topos of investigating the interplay of social actors. The present study approaches the genre of hip hop –a slippery term which includes genres like Rap, Gangsta Rap and R&B diachronically, by examining it from its emergence in the 60s to the present day.

Specifically, for the purposes of the present critical diachronic study of 60 years of Anglophone hip hop, a corpus was created comprising hip hop lyrics spanning 6 decades (split into 6 subcorpora, one per decade), with a total size of almost half a million tokens. Corpus linguistics tools were employed to achieve first-level quantifications, which yielded the statistically most significant lemmas (i.e. key lemmas) in hip-hop. Very high positions on the keyword list were found to be occupied by lemmas referring to race and gender. A selection of these terms underwent a detailed, concordance-based, multifaceted scrutiny using CDA's analytical apparatus. Second-level, discourse-driven categorizations (based on the automatically-extracted data) were then devised, which relate to the parameters of

gender, race, and polarity (positive/negative/neutral). The last category was motivated by the very intense presence of the phenomenon of axiology in the data. These second-level, discourse-driven categories were then further quantified, which allowed the assessment of their numerical and, in turn, ideological impact.

The transition of hip hop from a marginalized and neglected genre to an unprecedentedly fashionable hotbed of discussion and artistic expression functioned here as an impetus for examining the ideological changes of hip hop from its origins onwards. Our corpus-driven critical discourse analysis observes not only the rampant transformation of this genre diachronically but also within each group be it gender- (male and female) or race-oriented (black and white). It charts the rhetoric of US hip hop in order to reveal ideological patterns, similarities or differences between social actors, especially the artists themselves and those directly addressed or referred to by the artists (addressors and addressees, as are categorized here). My intention is to locate and examine the artists' recurring linguistic choices; more specifically, I endeavour to identify and critically account for the full range of significant characteristics of the two features (race and gender) under scrutiny within the genre of hip hop, and also their evolution in time.

Rap Music and the culture that surrounds rapping itself also known as hip-hop, is a genre of music and a lifestyle which originated in the housing projects of New York City, New York, in the 1970s but which now has global influence and expansion. While not uncontroversial and with numerous critics, rap music has emerged as one of the most popular musical forms in the world. Its longevity has been much greater than most expected when it was still a New York City street phenomenon in the 1970s (Woog, 2007).

Dyson (2004) argues that musical elements anticipating hip hop music have been identified in jazz and rhythm and blues (R&B) recordings from the 1950s, including several records by Bo Diddley, an African American blues performer. Muhammad Ali's 1963 spoken-word album *I Am the Greatest* is regarded by some writers as an early example of hip hop. The Last Poets, recognized as a "proto-rap" group, began performing in New York City in 1968 and released their debut album in 1970.

Although no single individual can claim credit for the founding of rap music or the hip hop culture, New York DJ (disc-jockey) Kool Herc is generally considered the most important figure in the early years of the genre (Haskins, 2000). As a DJ Kool Herc would sample the danceable parts of jazz and funk records, typically the parts featuring drums and a consistent rhythm. While Kool Herc was influenced by funk and jazz records, other pioneers such as Grandmaster Flash were influenced by outside sources ranging from reggae to German electronic music. As the new art form emerged many individual artists began rapping over the break dancing songs that DJs played. Haskins (2000) claims that these people began to be called MCs (which in hip-hop stands for "mic controller" or "master of ceremonies"), and this rapping was influenced by several older sources including The Last Poets, the spoken word group from Harlem who had been delivering political street-poetry since the early 1970s. Other influences were scatting in jazz and traditional black oration. African American public figures like Muhammad Ali, and his rhyming boasts and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s powerful speeches were major influences as was the musical style of rhythm and blues performers.

The first rap hit, *Rapper's Delight* by the Sugarhill Gang, which was also released in 1979, introduced a nationwide audience to this new genre. Despite the success of *Rapper's Delight*, rap music did not consistently do well commercially until Run D.M.C. released their debut album in 1983.

The earliest rap recordings in the 1980s were largely positive in tone even as they explored and exposed the gritty life conditions in the US urban ghettoes. By the 1990s this generation would be eclipsed by gangsta rap. West coast artists such as Ice-T and NWA related rugged and explicit stories of slum-life which often exaggerated gang violence and bravado (Woog, 2007). Much to the consternation of the American public outside the hip hop community, gangsta rap became and remains one of the most popular subgenres of rap music.

The implicit image of rap and violence became explicit with a number of incidents including most notably the murders of Tupac (2Pac), Shakurand The Notorious B.I.G., two of rap's biggest stars. Many observers (Fearing et al., 2018; Hernandes, 2011) debated whether gangsta rap caused or simply reflected the rising gang violence.

Rap music continues to be controversial and draws a wide range of critics both within and outside the African American community. As Woog (2007) claims, in 1990 the Miami rap group Two Live Crew was the focus of a widely-publicized obscenity trial where critics urged censorship of their music because of its misogynist lyrics while defenders including Harvard University scholar Henry Louis Gates argued before Judge Jose Gonzalez that the group had a right under the First Amendment to utter their lyrics no matter how offensive they might be to some. Judge Gonzalez ruled against Two Live Crew. Two years later, however, the

Florida Court of Appeals overruled Judge Gonzalez. Woog (2007) also accounts for the incident in 2003 in which conservative talk show host Bill O'Reilly initiated a nationwide protest campaign that was largely responsible for Pepsi ending a partnership with rapper Ludacris when O'Reilly questioned the rapper's lyrical content.

What many scholars have highlighted (Haskins, 2000; Pennycook, 2007; Woog, 2007) is that even if many Americans consider rapping and hip-hop culture detrimental to the American culture at large, their complaints are largely lost upon the long history of this culture which accepts rapping as a legitimate art form. Proponents of rap music point to its ongoing worldwide popularity and to a slowly evolving recognition of the genre by music critics.

Chapter 2: Race and gender in hip hop: A literature review

Scholars (Cutler 1999, 2007) investigating hip hop discourse employ the term *language* to account for the linguistic variety associated with hip hop and its relationship with African American Vernacular English (henceforth AAVE). On the other hand, as Cutler (2007) argues, the degree to which the linguistic features of hip hop language (henceforth HHL) overlap with those of AAVE actually renders it difficult to argue that it constitutes a language per se. What could be seen as a more appropriate designation is *language style*, particularly in view of the fact that HHL is highly variable and temporary, as Alim (2004) has pointed out. Coupland (2001) has described styles as tools for 'persona management' (p. 198) or ways in which people choose to present themselves in various situations. Eastman and Stein (1993), cited in Cutler (2007), further discuss the concept of *language display* in which members of one group employ linguistic cues (styles) from another group in order to be perceived as individuals with attributes associated with that particular community of speakers (p. 188). Whether a style is typically associated with one's own social group (in-group) or with a group one does not belong to (out-group), its deployment sends a message by indexing the conventionalized social meanings associated with it (Coupland 2001). Thus, for example, white hip hoppers may engage in a sort of 'out-group' usage of linguistic elements of HHL to index the more masculine, 'streetwise' identities commonly associated with young urban African American males (Cutler 1999, 2007).

In what follows, we offer an account of the existing scholarly work on two salient preoccupations of hip hop artists: race and gender. This will set the scene for our own data-driven analysis of the treatment of these two features in a corpus of hip hop lyrics.

2.1 Race and hip-hop

Race, in the United States, is perceived as a natural way to identify people, and societal, institutional, and governmental agents seem to share a widespread recognition of racial categories. Omi and Winant (1994), cited in Cutler (2008), argue that the Black-White racial polarity is a system of representation that still plays a substantial role in shaping social structures and individual experiences in the US. For many scholars, (Cutler 2008; Low 2011; Somers and Willet 2009), hip-hop culture, and Black culture more broadly, offer more attractive models for identity-formation than the surrounding White mainstream culture. For Gilroy (1997), hip-hop is the Blackest culture to date and it is important to determine the significance and/or usefulness of hip-hop for the Black community and the Black racial identity. To theorize race issues more constructively, Clay (2003) argues that of particular importance in this dialogue are the ways that artists use meanings in relation to the construction of identity and community.

Several accounts of the production of Black culture conclude that there is an ongoing identity struggle within the Black community (Hess, 2005; Laybourn, 2017; Pennycook, 2007; Rodriquez, 2006). This struggle focuses on identifying who is "authentic" and who is a "sellout". McLeod (1999) claims that who is to be

7

considered authentic or a sellout out-group member is not only a matter of hip-hop music products per se, i.e. songs style, but more substantially a matter of adhering to one's racial identification and sociocultural location. The tension between 'races', as Riley (2005) argues, stems from the hip-hop artists that are counterparts of a culture that has a network of sacred spaces, collectivities and ideologies. The discussions in hip hop texts of parties, rap shows, gangs or other close-knit collectivities function in some situations as quasi-families. Defending one's 'family', and by extension 'race purity', is the endeavor of hip hopers, which results into aggressive rhetoric. The resonance of authenticity to race issues in hip hop has been examined by scholars extensively (Clay, 2003; Hess, 2005; Riley, 2005). Riley (2005) points out that authenticity and 'keeping it real' means rejecting broader social patterns of behavior when these are recognized as technocratic, that is, when they oppose the project of living in an honest and autonomous manner. Hip hop authenticity rejects mainstream morals and social rules when these are seen as necessarily inconsistent with the honest 'realness' of the tragic cultural world in which it is situated. Low (2007) claims that hip-hop culture and rap music are hotbeds of linguistic innovation whose distinct and ever-evolving lexicon, syntax, and phonology shape the idiom of contemporary youth culture, and (pop) culture in general, and lead to a questioning of the established norms. Laybourn (2017) studies the manner in which rap music is positioned within the stereotypical imagery of blacks and colourism; when rap lyrics adhere to and reflect stereotypical notions of blackness they are intensely criticized. However, what is left unexplored is the actual usage of rhetorical patterns, which might otherwise be perceived as racist, that are employed by hip-hop artists in an attempt to question the asymmetrical power relations.

Race/racism manifests itself rhetorically in explicit ways in hip hop. The *n*-word (*nigga*) is ever-present in hip-hop performers' songs. The discussions around the use of such a derogatory and historically-loaded term are still on-going and not conclusive, as the term is undergoing constant changes in usage and meaning that have not been fully addressed by scholars. The numerous instances of white people singing black performers' songs have given rise to a heated discussion regarding the 'privilege', claimed by white people, to utter the word *nigga*. The music styles employing the term range from underground, to overground, to worldwide because of the realness, the pain and the 'soulness' it associates with. Lavin, cited in Williams (2017) refers to NWA (Niggas With Attitude), a rap group from the US who made excessive use of this word. However, their intention was not to flood the world with the *n*-word; they simply wished to present the real situation in their neighborhoods and to speak of the hardships that the AA population was experiencing. They represented an entire race and an entire class, which was colorblind, and *nigga* became a nationally recognized term of endearment amongst the black community.

Interestingly, it is not only the person who sings or reproduces this term besides the performer him/herself that triggers debate, it is also the appropriation of such linguistic repertoire by white performers that raised voices of harsh criticism. Gosling, cited in Williams (2017), states that white rapper Honey G described herself as a victim of discrimination as she hit back at critics accusing her of "cultural appropriation". The singer has divided opinions about her music, with some claiming that her choice of genre is offensive. She was accused of being racist not only for her general 'blaccent', a term used to describe a performer whose overall music production is similar to the voice and songs of AA Blacks, but also for using the word

nigga in her songs. Although racism is apparently rooted in contemporary popular songs, it is essential, as Monk-Turner and Sylverthooth (2008) argue, to carefully analyze the content of rap lyrics so as to fully understand the music content. In order to explore the possibly harmful effects of rap lyrics on the social fabric, it is critical to go back to the source, the lyrics, and carefully listen to what they actually have to say.

2.2 Gender and hip-hop

Despite the multifarious forms and shapes of rap music throughout its lifespan, troubled gender relations are an issue that has never left the spotlight (Weitzer and Kubrin 2009). Several existing studies have aimed to reveal patterns in the singers' discourse that reproduce stereotypical gendered ideas and images of specific social entities. Kreyer (2015) claims that the way in which male and female pop artists refer to themselves or to the opposite sex might contribute to the consolidation of unfavourable roles for women. Apart from the song lyrics per se, the music industry agents and media artists' reception appears to be unbalanced. Berkers and Eeckelaer (2014), for instance, show how *The Guardian* and *The Independent* depict the rock-n-roll lifestyles of Amy Winehouse and Pete Doherty in a gender-biased manner. While the female artist is presented as a victim, the male figure is idolized for leading a life immersed in drug abuse, alcohol consumption and sex. The tendency of having double standards for male and female agents is also detectable in hip-hop. According to Kitwana (1994: 43), male rap artists glorify violence in three main contexts: as a symbol of macho power, as a cure-all for disputes between blacks, and as a necessary means of self-protection. Individual male honour often depends on the ability of the male speaker to quickly do away with his presumed (black) enemies without concern or regret. The fact is that in gangsta rap, African American men "are defined and

assume the identity of losers, victims that enthusiastically achieve their role as statistics, killers void of spiritual centers, rapists and fighters only against black life and possibilities" (Kitwana 1994: 55). This subgenre has a paradox at its center: the most potent displays of black masculinity are only possible through the graphic portrayal of black males' physical and spiritual demise. However, it is the black female and black womanhood that are the most condemned, attacked, and damaged by this music. Chaney and Brown (2016) focus on the cultural, political, and racial interventions which have shaped and continue to shape representations and dialogue of Black mothers in hip hop and rap music genres over time. They conclude that patriarchy has strongly influenced those genres and that black women as mothers have repeatedly been depicted as dysfunctional and pathological.

Yet, prominent female figures of this genre have produced songs revolving around the acknowledgement of racism, sexism, classism and the demand for black female respectability. According to Rose (1994), black women rappers' songs must be viewed "as part of a dialogic process with male rappers" (147). In her view, it is important to analyze the way in which black female rappers work both within and against the dominant sexual and racial narratives of the genre. Rose (1994), cited in Rebollo-Gil and Moras (2012), visualizes black women rappers as active participants in a "dialogue" with their male counterparts. For her, male artists' misogynistic lines find contestation in women's "caustic," "witty," and "aggressive" raps criticizing men for their mistreatment of women in love relationships. In these raps, women challenge men's depictions of them as "gold-diggers" or "hoes", and in Rose's mind address the fears and concerns that black female consumers may have.

Williams (2017) conducted a study to speculate the agents' struggle to be empowered and establish an anti-hegemonic speech against the asymmetry between black male and female rappers in the music industry. He concludes that female rappers created a rather successful public voice for themselves in spite of disparaging representations and limited media ownership. The most prominent issue, as Hunter (2011) argues, is how women should actually be represented in rap and how they should represent themselves. Concerning the actual content of their songs, "women's lyrics are often still viewed by men and women themselves as not valid…women's versions of reality are somehow suspect" (Smith, 1995: 126). Thus, label executives, artists, producers, and listeners favour men's versions of reality. They give more credence and validity to men's portrayals of black womanhood than to those which black women generate on themselves.

While female rappers who were commercially successful enough to reach the Billboard charts became more common in the early 1990s (Salt-n-Pepa, Queen Latifah, and MC Lyte, for instance), their presence continues to dwindle as commercial rap has become increasingly homogenous (Emerson, 2002; Forman, 1994; Pough, 2004). Knowledge of the music industry suggests that female rappers do not receive an equal or even comparable amount of financial support to that which male rappers receive (Smith, 1995). Consequently, not only are an individual female artist's chances for financial success reduced, but one artist's lack of success seriously reduces the chances of other female rappers striking a record deal and having their work released. Thus, the speech of female artists is actively muted before their voice even enters a record company. Those black female voices who actually join the record industry face greater obstacles. Their artistic persona—the way in which they choose to present and promote themselves—is fraught with contradictions. Smith (1995)

writes, "a girl rapper has to be soft but hard; sweet but serious; sexy but respectable; strong but kind of weak; smart but not too loud about it … a hip hop girl, like a regular girl, has got to mix her own ingredients carefully" (127).

In rap, women's voices are actively silenced through sex and/or rape. Rebollo-Gil and Moras (2012) claim that the violence of the sexual act in men's lyrics focuses on making the black female body silent, on reducing women's selfhood to the physical, and then fracturing and severing parts of that physicality until what remains is self-less, senseless, fuck-able and mute. Williams (1993) writes: 'We hear about cunts being fucked until backbones are cracked, asses being busted, dicks rammed down throats, and semen splattered across faces. Black women are cunts, bitches, and all-purpose hoes […] Occasionally, we do hear women's voices and those voices are sometimes oppositional. But the response to opposition typically returns to the central refrain: 'Shut up bitch. Suck my dick.' (122). Pough (2004: 94) writes: 'Hip Hop gendered as feminine has no agency. She is something men rappers love, something they do. She does not act; she is acted upon'. Black male rappers try to either keep women quiet or get them to shut up. The rest of the lyrics is spent trying to get them into bed or in some cases even condoning or bragging about sexual assault/rape which ultimately has the same silencing effect. Kitwana (2004: 53) argues: 'As inanimate objects women have no opinions. In fact, a thinking woman who questions incites the physical violence of her male peers'.

Scholars claim that while women rappers have become virtually invisible, women video dancers have become more and more common (Morgan 2002; Sharpley-Whiting 2007). Video dancers, often called video "hoes", refer to an American imaginary where women of colour are realized as sex objects (Sharpley-Whiting

13

2007). As video dancers, women of colour are represented as commodified bodies instead of active voices. The ultimate purpose of their revealing clothes is to enhance the heteronormative masculinity of the male rappers in the video (McFarland 2003; Perry 2003).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Theoretical introduction on the methodological approach

The ideological study of six decades of hip-hop rhetoric involves large amounts of data of the genre of song lyrics. It thus necessitates the application of a research methodology which combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches to discourse analysis. Here, we combine the affordances of corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis in a complementary and synergistic fashion. As claimed by Goutsos & Hatzidaki (2017), combining the assets of corpus linguistics and discourse analysis may lead to a higher degree of objectivity, facilitated by, on the one hand, the computational and quantitative methods of processing written text/corpora, and, on the other, the greater interpretative power of CDA, which rests on its focus on the detailed linguistic/rhetorical and argumentation structure of whole texts.

The combination and synergy of the two methodological approaches eliminate the criticism that has been levelled at each method individually. It is the complementary relationship between corpus linguistics (CL) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) that compensates for the more mechanistic processing of statistics in CL, and the researcher bias along with the reliance on small text excerpts in CDA.

3.1.1 The conceptualization of the notion of (C)DA

Blommaert (2005:2) defines discourse as "language in action" because it forms objects, and produces particular versions of events. Discourse is effective and influential in society since it sometimes causes changes and shapes events and

behaviours. Discourse is also a way of interpreting the world, giving it meaning, and allowing some events rather than others to manifest themselves. Foucault (1977) argues that individuals are involved in the practical realization of power relations, which constitute discourse, regimes of knowledge, and subjectivities. Discourse can, therefore, be defined by the power enacted and reproduced through the activities participants engage in. Since discursive practices systematically form individual and collective consciousness and contribute to the creation and reproduction of asymmetrical power relations among social groups (women-men, mainstream group-minorities, etc.), they can be understood as manifestations of ideologies. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) claim that discursive practices contribute to the creation and reproduction of unequal power relations between social groups – for example, between social classes, women and men, ethnic minorities and the majority. These effects are understood as ideological effects.

Maingueneau & O'regan (2006) distinguishes two types of discourse analysis; the discourse analysis as such, and the critical one, the first describing the structures of texts and talk, whilst the other, which is more comprehensive, requires connecting discourse and social structures. In other words, the first type represents the traditional structural linguistics, whilst the second makes a shift toward critical linguistics. Along the same lines, Fairclough (1992) claims that discourse analysis is divided into two types, namely critical and non-critical. The former approach differs from the latter in its direction towards interpreting and analyzing events as social practices rather than merely describing them.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the analytical approach adopted here, is an interdisciplinary approach which studies both the linguistic features, i.e. the micro level, and the social, cultural, and political contexts, i.e. the macro level (Van Dijk,

1993). What resonates with Maingueneau & O'regan's (2006) statement is Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) claim that discourse cannot be understood without taking context on board, and that text cannot be completely understood without taking into consideration its use in a particular situation and its relations with other discourses. Chilton and Schäffner (2002) view discourse as a communicative event that incorporates particular ideologies, politics, and beliefs. The spirit of multidisciplinarity and diversity in CDA (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Van Dijk, 2001) is apparent in the wide range of the topics that CDA analysts have so far explored, and the multitude of analytical tools they have employed.

What distinguishes CDA from other discourse analysis approaches is its ability not only to interpret and describe discourse in context, but also to explain how and why discourses function as such. This is why CDA analysts pay special attention to the historical, social, political and cultural contexts within which power-expressing texts occur. Wodak (2002) argues that CDA constitutes an interdisciplinary approach because of the complexity of the majority of problems in our societies. CDA offers not only a description of the communicative event but also an interpretation and explanation of how and why it occurs, so it needs to be viewed as both a theory and a method (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). For Luke (2002), CDA combines both the linguistic and the social and cultural analyses of texts. He also maintains that a linguistic analysis of the texts, no matter how comprehensive, is not enough to do CDA, but "requires the overlay of a social theoretic discourse for explaining and explicating the social contexts, concomitants, contingencies and consequences of any given text or discourse" (p. 101).

The term *critical* in CDA points to a way of uncovering opaque power relations such as inequality and racism, and what causes them (Van Dijk, 1995). CDA is critical, as

Wodak (1997) argues, because it investigates and clarifies the relationship between language and society. CDA research focuses on analyzing opaque as well as transparent relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. For CDA, language is not powerful on its own – it gains power by the use people make of it and by the people who have access to language means (Wodak, 2004). Such analysis is critical in the sense that it revolves around social, cultural, and political problems (Pasha, 2011). Moreover, for Fairclough (2001), CDA is critical because it is a practical tool which helps produce interpretations and explanations for those who wish to understand the forms of power, and/or resist power. CDA is critical because it analyzes social wrongs such as unequal access to power, and prejudice (Fairclough, 2009). Furthermore, it is critical because it scrutinizes the dominant groups in a specific society, observes the mechanisms which have made these groups dominant, and then criticizes their behaviours and unveils the agenda implicit in the communicative situations (Riasati & Rahimi, 2011). However, Martin (2004) approaches the critical aspect of CDA from a different viewpoint; he argues that CDA concentrates on the negative aspects in the texts, and recommends that CDA analysts look at the positive or potentially transformative uses of discourse. Kendall (2007: 3) refines this point by stating that *critical* means "not taking things for granted […] 'Critical', thus, does not imply the common sense meaning of 'being negative' – 'rather skeptical'."

As noted by Baker (2008), CDA provides a general framework for problem-oriented social research. Every 'text' (e.g., an interview, focus group discussion, TV debate, press report, or visual symbol) is conceived of as a semiotic entity, embedded in an immediate, text-internal cotext as well as an intertextual and sociopolitical context. Thus, CDA takes into account the intertextual and interdiscursive relationships

18

between utterances, texts, genres and discourses, as well as extra-linguistic social/sociological variables, the history and 'archaeology' of an organization, the institutional frames of a specific context of situation and the processes of text production, reception and consumption (Wodak, 2001). Van Dijk (2008) emphasizes that "the 'core' of CDA remains the systematic and explicit analysis of the various structures and strategies of different levels of text and talk." In essence CDA must draw on specific approaches or concepts of anthropology, history, rhetoric, stylistics, conversation analysis, literary studies, cultural studies, semantics, pragmatics, philosophy and sociolinguistics when approaching or investigating the intricate social phenomena expressed by language.

However, CDA comes with criticism that stems from the selection process of texts and their representativeness (Koller and Mautner, 2004; Stubbs, 1997). A common criticism levelled at CDA is that in certain cases the reason why certain texts are singled out for analysis in the first place is that they are not typical, but rather unusual instances which have aroused the analyst's attention (Koller and Mautner, 2004: 218). Baker (2012) notes that some CDA practitioners could be accused of selecting texts which they either incorrectly believe to be representative or select them in order to 'prove a point'. In other words, researchers may 'cherry-pick' data which prove a preconceived point (Koller & Mautner, 2004: 225). Widdowson (1998: 148) argues that the biases of the analyst mean that "[y]our analysis will be the record of whatever partial interpretation suits your own agenda." Therefore, texts presenting a more complex or even contradictory picture might be overlooked. CDA studies have also been criticized for analyzing a small number of texts, or short texts and text fragments (Stubbs, 1997).

3.1.2 The conceptualization of the notion of CL

Hunston (2002: 2) defines a *corpus* on the basis of both its substance and its purpose as "a collection of naturally occurring examples of language, consisting of anything from a few sentences to a set of written texts or tape recordings, which have been collected for linguistic study". For McEnery and Wilson (2001: 1), corpus linguistics is "the study of language based on examples of 'real life' language use" which have been systematically collected and sampled, and so the research results can be generalizable. The fact that, for the purposes of corpus analysis, linguistic data are not haphazardly selected or "cherry-picked", but rationally sampled and processed (quantified) is the most significant merit of utilizing corpora. In the same vein, corpus analysis offers the advantage of total accountability, namely the fact that corpus data, i.e. data collected in a principled manner, are not used as a source of selectively drawing examples verifying a preconceived hypothesis about a linguistic phenomenon, but rather as a source whose total set of examples of this phenomenon are studied so as to test whether the hypothesis is verified or not (Goutsos and Fragaki 2015). Total accountability thus increases the objectivity of a linguistic investigation.

Within the corpus linguistics community the question has arisen whether this research approach is a linguistic theory, and thus an independent branch of linguistics, or simply constitutes a research methodology. Baker (2006) and McEnery and Wilson (2001: 1) perceive corpus linguistics as a methodology emanating from a set of theoretical principles of language analysis. Similarly, Leech (1992) deems it only a methodological basis for investigating language. McEnery et al. (2006: 7) argue that corpus linguistics cannot be considered as an independent branch: "corpus linguistics is indeed a methodology rather than an independent branch of linguistics in the same

sense as phonetics, syntax, semantics or pragmatics". Haider (2017) sees corpus linguistics as a methodology which, when employed to analyze language data, may lead to constructing solid theories. McEnery et al. (2006) note that corpus linguistics utilizes corpora to study language use and has a theoretical status, but still a theoretical status is not a theory per se.

Tognini-Bonelli (2001) makes a crucial distinction between two types of corpus research, namely *corpus-based* and *corpus-driven*. In the former case, namely corpus-based analysis, the corpus serves an inventory of language data, whereby the practitioners of the approach analyze examples drawn from the corpus to investigate their preconceived research questions and test their theories, i.e. in an essentially inductive manner. In corpus-driven research, the corpus is approached without prior assumptions about linguistic phenomena and constitutes the only source of information and hypothesis building; that is, it is used in a purely deductive manner. This allows researchers to trace phenomena and patterns that may have so far escaped attention, thus rendering the corpus a source of entirely new facts about language form and function, leading to fresh research hypotheses. A researcher practicing the corpus-driven method keeps an open mind and is prepared for unexpected results which may enrich or even challenge the existing canon.

Baker (2008) maintains that the fact that, in corpus linguistics, textual data may be approached free from any preconceived or existing notions regarding their linguistic or semantic/pragmatic content offers the researcher a higher degree of objectivity. This process is facilitated by a series of corpus processing tools and methods, the *concordancer* being the most exemplary and indispensable (McEnery and Hardie 2012: 35). Baker (2008, 2012) also analyzes the quantitative notion of *keyness*, which is also central to CL and is calculated by means of statistical algorithms producing the

so-called *keyword lists*, namely inventories of statistically-significant terms which are salient to the corpus under scrutiny in terms of mode, text-type, register, topic, authorship, ideological message, etc. Keyness is defined as the statistically higher frequency of particular words, lemmas or word-clusters in the corpus under scutiny in comparison with another corpus, acting as a *reference corpus*. The retrieval and analysis of keywords in corpora, in combination with concordance analysis, are especially suited for the study of linguistically-encoded social phenomena (Bondi and Scott 2010).

Collocation analysis is also a vital corpus research technique for the study of both language form and communicative and ideological function. Because the collocates of a node contribute to its meaning they can provide 'a semantic analysis of a word' (Sinclair, 1991), but can also offer indications of how they 'convey messages implicitly' (Hunston, 2002). Thus, of high relevance to CL are the concepts of *semantic preference*, and *semantic prosody*, as they can be perceived as the semantic extension of collocation (Baker, 2008). Louw (1993: 157) defined semantic prosody as a "consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates". Semantic prosodies were seen as "reflections of either pejorative or ameliorative [semantic] changes [over a period of time]" (p. 169) that were based on frequent forms that "can bifurcate into 'good' and 'bad'" (p. 171). Louw (1993) also pointed out the diachronic nature of semantic prosodies, remarking that semantic prosodies were "the product of a long period of refinements through historical change" (p. 164). Baker (2008) insists on the analysis of emerging significant lexis on the basis of the examination of their concordances. A concordance presents the analyst with instances of a word or cluster in its immediate cotext resulting to a more 'qualitative', cotext-based analysis of a corpus.

The basic criticism levelled at CL is encapsulated in its tendency to disregard context (Mautner, 2007). Mautner (2007) argues that large-scale data are not suited for making direct, text-by-text links between the linguistic evidence and the contextual framework it is embedded in. The aforementioned criticism though, emanates from limited conceptions of CL, and would apply to CL studies that are confined to the automatic analysis of corpora without offerning interpretations which go beyond the statistical or the structural. The examination of extended concordances allows the analyst to sufficiently recreate the context, which provides the material for qualitative interpretations.

3.1.3 CDA and CL: interaction and synergy

Integrating corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis can help produce more sophisticated analyses by combining the respective merits and offsetting the drawbacks of the two methodologies. Baker (2012) argues that CL and concordance analysis can be complemented by CDA analytical techniques, and the theoretical notions and categories of CDA can inform the quantitative CL analysis. Moreover, Baker (2012) pushes the envelope by claiming that CL needs to be complemented by the close analysis of selected texts taking advantages CDA's theoretical and methodological affordances. CDA, respectively, can be aided by more objective, digitally-driven quantitative CL techniques. It is argued by O'Halloran and Coffin (2004) that this quantification can reveal the extent to which we can generalize the findings and conclusions preventing over- or under-interpretation from occurring. Nartey and Mwinlaaru (2019) advocate the synergy of CL and CDA as it facilitates the analysis of large quantities of data so as to verify the power and nature of wide-

spread ideologies relating to macro-issues such as race and identity, gender and sexuality.

As is noted by Baker (2008), CL procedures facilitate the quantification of discourse phenomena already recognized in CDA by establishing their frequencies in the corpus. Thus, Baker (2012) proposes that 'qualitative' findings be quantified, and that 'quantitative' findings be interpreted by utilizing existing theories, a process which will lead to their adaptation, or the formulation of new ones. Central CDA notions can be employed so as to group collocates and key words on the basis of their semantic preference or semantic/ discourse prosody. These are the notions of topos and topic, specific metaphors widely employed in discourse, as well as the referential (or nomination) and predication strategies. The grouping of discoursal phenomena employed to convey a specific message can be complemented by concordance analysis, and then can be refined by employing the notions of topos and topic (Wodak and van Dijk, 2000).

As expected, the combination and synergy of CL and CDA needs time and practice to mature, given that they represent two powerful approaches which have evolved independently, use vastly different tools, have historically served distinct research purposes, and are governed by different mentalities vis-à-vis the analysis of language. Nartey and Mwinlaaru (2019) maintain that the issue of doing justice to the two research traditions when combined remains a challenge in several studies as most of them do not effectively demonstrate a balance.

For the purposes of the study of hip-hop rhetoric we adopt Goutsos and Hatzidaki's (2017) proposed version of CL and CDA synergy, which is based on the complementary application of conventional corpus-driven quantification and what

they term "discourse-driven quantification". This entails, in the first instance, applying a CL-inspired, automated quantification of corpus data (e.g. using tools such as wordlists and keyword lists), then implementing *discourse-driven quantification*, which consists in identifying and exhaustively enumerating the occurrences of discourse phenomena in a corpus, which have been manually identified and inventoried according to categories postulated by (critical) discourse analysis models such as Systemic Functional Grammar, argumentation theory etc., or have been established by the researcher himself or herself on the basis of the data under scrutiny. In this manner, as Goutsos and Hatzidaki (2017: 460) argue,

numerical trends can be diagnosed which relate to discourse phenomena, namely to phenomena characterized by a higher degree of analytical delicacy, which can then be subjected to qualitative analysis, so as to account for their wider contextual (ideological etc.) implications (as would be done with automatically extracted data in a discourse analysis context).

3.2 Building an Anglophone hip-hop corpus

For the purposes of the present diachronic study of 60 years of Anglophone hip hop rhetoric an exhaustive collection of data was essential. This inevitably led to amassing large amounts of text spanning 6 decades (split into 6 subcorpora, one per decade), with a total size of almost half a million tokens. This amount of data was impossible to process without automation, i.e. without corpus linguistics tools (wordlists, keyword lists and concordances). First-level quantifications, namely keyword lists, were generated automatically by comparing our corpus to Sketch Engine's reference corpora, which yielded the statistically most significant lemmas in hip-hop.

Several very high positions on the keyword list were found to be occupied by lemmas referring to social actors which, if grouped together, appeared to collectively act as indicators, in the work of Anglophone hip-hop artists, of the abstract topoi of race and gender, namely *nigga, bitch, hoe,*[1] *mama, dad,* etc. and others (see following section). A selection[2] of these terms underwent a detailed, multifaceted scrutiny using CDA's analytical tools. Second-level, discourse-driven categorizations (based on the automatically-extracted data) were then devised, which relate to the parameters of gender, race, and polarity (positive/negative/neutral). The latter category was motivated by the very intense presence of the phenomenon of axiology in the data under scrutiny. These second-level, discourse-driven categories were then further quantified (i.e. their instantiations be tallied), which allowed the assessment of their numerical and, in turn, ideological impact.

To build a corpus hip hop lyrics which is maximally representative with respect to our research purpose, the following parameters need to be taken into account when selecting songs for inclusion:

- Applying the criterion of commercial success and popular appeal; this is satisfied by using the most credible ranking source for popular music (including hip-hop), Billboard.com.

- Applying a criterion for identifying a "definitive" version for each song. This is necessitated by the fact that song lyrics circulate on the internet in different versions; to this end, the method of crosschecking multiple sources was adopted, including those offering a fan-based crowdsourced editing system.

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[1] An idiosyncratic, hip-hop-specific spelling of *whore*.

[2] For the selection rationale, see below.

- Devising a system for duplicate elimination.

- Applying a diachronically-oriented criterion for classifying the massive number of songs into subcorpora; splitting the corpus into 6 subcorpora, one per decade, was opted for devising a song codification system reflecting the dissertation's research focus (i.e. gender and race).

- Using a methodology for understanding and interpreting the culturally opaque or race/gender-specific passages abounding in hip hop lyrics; to this end, sites were searched which accommodate user comments providing explanations of such passages as well as crowdsourced dictionaries furnishing definitions of the lexicophraseology not normally included in published dictionaries but present in the texts under scrutiny.

More specifically on each of the above:

In order to compile an adequate and unbiased sample of the US African American and white hip-hop performers' output I consulted Billboard.com. The Billboard charts tabulate the relative weekly popularity of songs and albums in the United States and elsewhere. The results are published in Billboard magazine. Billboard.com, the online extension of the Billboard charts, releases additional weekly charts. The charts may be dedicated to specific genres such as R&B, country or rock, or they may cover all genres. Moreover, charts can be ranked according to sales, streams or airplay, and for main song charts such as the Hot 100 song chart, all three pools of data are used to compile the charts. Weekly sales and streams charts are monitored on a Friday-to-Thursday cycle since July 2015, while previously it was on a Monday-to-Sunday cycle. Radio airplay song charts, however, follow the Monday to Sunday cycle (previously Wednesday to Tuesday). The charts are released each Tuesday with an

issue date the following Saturday. In the aforementioned site song archives are available since 1960, a date that is considered as marking the birth of R&B- the precursor of hip-hop. Previous research on rap music has used Billboard music charts to identify the most airplayed songs, then subjected to content analysis in order to identify themes (Hunter, 2011; Oware, 2009; Primack et al. 2008; Weitzer and Kubrin, 2009; Laybourn, 2017), yet not to the extent of the present study that covers six decades. I employed a similar methodology to identify the most popular hip hop songs from the 60s until today.

Billboard charts were used as the primary source for corpus collection for the following reasons. Firstly, they are representative of the music trends and are used by mainstream news media to report on music sales and airplay trends. Secondly, the lists appearing on Billboard are more reliable in their ranking methodology as they use a wider range of sources. Specifically, for their song rankings, other charts use radio spins (i.e. the number of times a song is played) and/or audience impressions or the number of times the song has been heard (i.e. audience size). What renders Billboard.com more reliable and well-rounded is the fact that in addition to these two measures, it also utilizes sales information.

On Billboard.com, for each decade different archive lists are available for the hip hop genre, a fact which determined the source of each subcorpus corresponding to a different decade from the 60s to the present day. For the 60s and 70s the *Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs* lists are available and thus I consulted them so as to compile the 60s and 70s subcorpora, respectively. For the 80s I used the same archive list, yet, in the 1989 report the *Hot Rap Songs* list emerges due to fact that from this specific year on hip hop song production is proliferating and there are certain minor style changes that call for a further separation and classification of songs. The advent of more

sophisticated technology in the 90s, which allowed recording the total number of the times songs were played on the radios, led to the emergence of *R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay*. The latter list along with *Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs* and *Hot Rap Songs* were consulted so as to compile the 90s subcorpus. The same lists were taken into account for the 00s subcorpus. The onset of the 10s was marked by the establishment and evolution of the internet as the predominant and most lucrative music marketplace. This led Billboard.com to introduce the *R&B/Hip-Hop Digital Song Sales* list which accounts for the most purchased songs on the online music market. Moreover, the *R&B/Hip-Hop Streaming Songs* list was initiated so as to offer a more thorough picture of the most successful songs. The inclusion and ranking criterion here is an algorithm accounting for the total number of times a song is streamed, namely reproduced on an online platform.

After amassing the songs, I carefully coded the decade lists for any song overlap occurring across lists and discarded those songs that appeared in more than one list and had already been included in a subcorpus.

After finalizing the song selection for each year of the six decades (60s to 10s up to 2018) I proceeded to allocate each song to one of the six respective subcorpora on the basis of its release date. Song lyrics were initially retrieved from Metro lyrics (www.metrolyrics.com) and AZ Lyrics (www.azlyrics.com). What renders the latter site particularly suitable for corpus research is the fact that it offers a crowdsourced editing system, i.e. the lyrics provided have usually been reviewed and corrected by different users, leading to a fairly "reliable" version of the texts, in the sense that typos and other errors have been eliminated. The original[3] punctuation and spelling

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[3] That is, as appearing on the lyrics sites.

(including spelling deviations and idiosyncracies, e.g. *nigga/niggaz* for *nigger/niggers*, *hoe* for *whore*, *tryna* fo *trying to*) were retained. An additional source for lyrics that was utilized was Genius.com as it provides both the latest releases and less popular releases from past decades. An advantage of this site is that members can contribute to the lyrics by providing corrections to misspelled or misheard words to the initial version posted by a contributor, and can also comment on the content of particular lines that appear to be opaque, an especially useful feature for understanding the meaning of often esoteric or culturally-determined formulations. Metatextual comments like "verse", "chorus" or "bridge" were removed from the text so as not to contaminate the text statistics (*clean text policy*, Sinclair 1991: 21). For instances of incomprehensible (esp. slang) words or phrases, I consulted the Urban Dictionary (www.urbandictionary.com), a crowdsourced lexicon furnishing definitions of urban vernacular words and phrases. Moreover, Rap Genius (www.rapgenius.com), a website where consumers and artists themselves provide annotations and interpretations of rap lyrics, was also utilized in cases of uncertainty about the meaning of a vernacular word or phrase.

The overall size of the corpus of hip hop lyrics used here is 581,334 words (tokens). The size of each subcorpus per decade is as follows:

Table 1. Size of subcorpora (per decade) of hip-hop lyrics

Subcorpus	Size (in tokens)
60s	37,479
70s	64,267
80s	72,327
90s	186,192
00s	112,137

10s	108,932
Total	**581,334**

As my investigation of the lyrics content was intended to take into account the combined gender and racial background of the artists, songs were codified accordingly. The categories constructed are as follows (see Table 2 for the diachronic distribution of the songs included in the corpus, according to this criterion):

Male Black (MB), Female Black (FB), Male White (MW), Female White (FW), Male & Female Black (MFB), Male & Female White (MFW), and Male Black and White (MBW).

This labelling process was expected to facilitate the critical interpretation of the data as it would help account for the deeply interwoven relationship of the artists' gender and racial backgrounds and the manner in which these features are reflected in their specific lexicogrammatical and rhetorical choices. In short, it was intended to shed light on how these two issues are treated by the individual artists of this very influential musical genre.

Chapter 4: Data analysis: Presentation of quantitative data

The first step towards critically analysing power relations in the hip hop genre was to determine the artist's/s' gender and racial background. Race and gender, and the manner these two parameters interact, appear to be determining factors in the artists' linguistic selections. As shown in Table 2 below, black male performers are statistically the most commercially successful performers that have prevailed in this music genre since its emergence. The presence of black male artists (Table 2 from 64% to 73% of the total number of artists) strikingly contrasts with that of black female artists, which is significantly lower (Table 2 ranging from 9% to 12%), but also with that of white performers of both genders, which is exceedingly low and mostly relates to the 10s. It was in the 90s that the first white artist reached the top of the Billboard charts and became commercially successful (1.5% of the total number of songs). Prior to the 90s black males appeared to claim the lion's share and represented the core of hip-hop. Thus, it could be argued that, judging solely by the statistics, black male figures constitute the hip-hop 'canon', whilst female and white voices are the minority. It is only in the 10s that female white artists managed to achieve some presence on the No1 positions in the Billboard rankings (7% of total songs in 10s subcorpus). It is obvious that, even before commencing the analysis of the textual data, colour and gender emerge as prominent elements of the genre, its industry and its marketplace.

Table 2. Five decades of hip-hop: Diachronic song distribution according to the artist's/s' gender and race

Artist's Gender	Artist's Racial Background	60s		70s		80s		90s		00s		10s (10- 18)	
		Number of songs	%	Number of songs	%	Number of songs	%	Number of songs	%	Number of songs	%	Number of songs	%
Male	Black	116	72,5	161	73	124	64	243	71	126	66	113	67
Female	Black	34	21,2	47	21	52	27	77	22	40	21	15	9
Male & Female	Black	10	6,3	13	6	17	9	18	5	23	12	17	10
Male	White	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1,5	1	0,5	6	3
Female	White	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,5	0	0	12	7
Male & Female	White	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Male	White & Black	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,5	4	3
Total		160	100	221	100	193	100	343	100	191	100	168	100

The disproportionately larger number of songs topping the charts in the 90s (343 songs) compared to the total number of songs in the 5 other decades should be attributed to the stylistic changes hip-hop underwent during this watershed decade. Hip-hop was redefining itself and, in a quest for stylistic diversity and new sounds, a substantial number of new artists emerged. This led to a quicker succession of No1 songs each month. While in other decades a song might have stayed at the top for over a month, during the 90s songs changed sometimes even on a weekly basis.

After classifying the songs on the basis of the external criteria of, firstly, chronological appearance, and, secondly, race and gender, the automatic processing of the textual data ensued in the form of keyword extraction, using Sketch Engine's enTenTen13, as reference corpora. Gender- and race- lemmas scored very high on the keyword list.

Table 3. Lemma corresponding to the race topos (in brackets, relative frequency per 100.000 tokens)

Lemma	60s	70s	80s	90s	00s	10s	*In total*

nigga (nigga, niggas, niggaz)	0	0	1 (1)	456 (245)	333 (297)	502 (461)	1292

Figure 1. The diachronic distribution of *nigga*
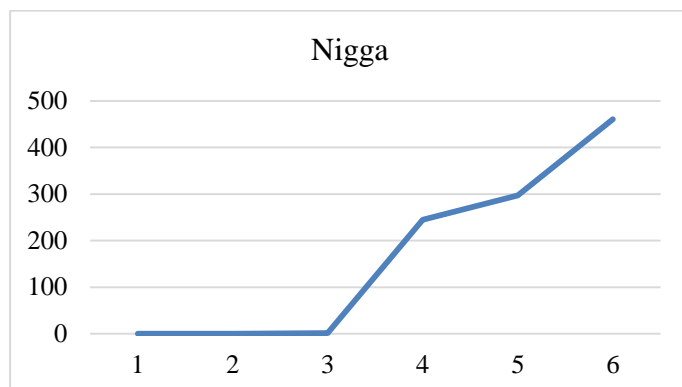
Table 3 above shows the diachronic distribution of the race-oriented lemma *nigga*. It is evident that the 90s are a turning point for the use of this term, which abounds compared to its almost total absence in the previous decades. Also, if we take into account the occurrences of *nigga* per 100.000 tokens (figures in brackets), a precipitous rise in the use of this term appears to occur in the 10s, when it is uttered more often than ever before. It will be shown that the term diachronic increase coincides (and perhaps correlates) with its gradual axiological 'rehabilitation', namely its destigmatization with respect to race.

Table 4. Lemmas corresponding to the gender topos (in brackets, relative frequency per 100.000 tokens)

Lemma	60's	70's	80's	90's	00's	10's	*In total*
baby (baby, babe)	584 (1558)	699 (1088)	764 (1056)	1359 (730)	694 (619)	576 (529)	4676
girl (girl, girls, girlz)	149 (398)	236 (367)	473 (654)	659 (354)	598 (533)	463 (425)	2578
man (man, men)	164 (438)	136 (212)	120 (166)	521 (280)	188 (168)	190 (174)	1319

boy (boy, boys, boyz)	26 (69)	62 (96)	96 (133)	236 (127)	404 (360)	143 (131)	967
bitch (bitch, bitches, bitchez)	0	0	1 (1)	122 (66)	112 (100)	557 (511)	792
woman (woman, women)	86 (229)	145 (226)	22 (30)	129 (69)	50 (45)	17 (16)	449
lady (lady, ladies)	7 (19)	90 (140)	54 (75)	104 (56)	106 (95)	22 (20)	383
hoe (ho, hos, hoe, hoes)	0	0	0	69 (37)	69 (62)	142 (130)	280
mama (mama, mamma, moma, momi, mommy)	22 (59)	3 (5)	20 (28)	38 (20)	105 (94)	65 (60)	253
dad (daddy, daddies)	7 (19)	13 (20)	3 (4)	119 (64)	23 (21)	22 (20)	187

With gender, the situation is more complex. First off, there is a greater range of gender-related terms than race-related ones. The full set of gender-related keywords is shown in Table 4. The gender-neutral term *baby* in all its forms outnumbers all other terms both by its total occurrences and relative frequency. Notably, however, from the 60s onwards, its occurrence declines, which can arguably be correlated with the rise of two sexist terms, namely *bitch* and *hoe*. Also in decline since the 90s is the use of the terms *woman* and *lady*. It is evident that the appellation of the genders becomes increasingly sexist (or, one might say, sexual) (see Figure 2) as we move to the more recent decaces.

Figure 2. The diachronic distribution of *baby, bitch* and *hoe*

Hoe

150					
100					
50					
0					
1	2	3	4	5	6
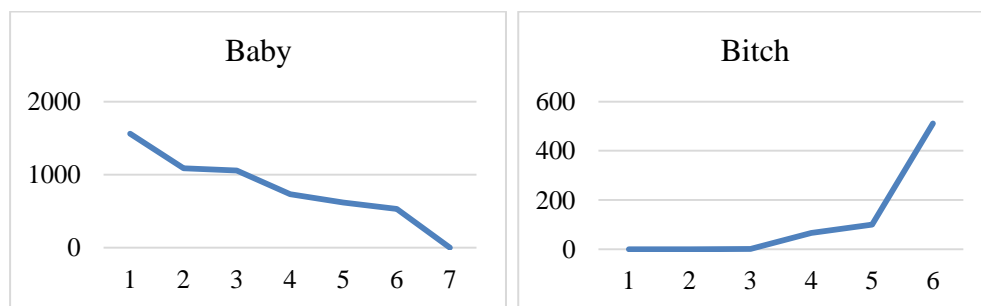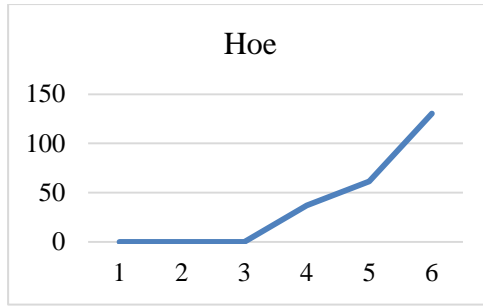
Due to time and space limitations, only a selection of the race and, especially gender terms (lemmas) will be analysed. Regarding the race topos, we will analyse the full set of *nigga* instances, the only race-related term appearing on the keyword list. As for the gender topos, after a preliminary reading of the relevant terms (as shown on Table 4), it was decided to single out *bitch, hoe, mama* and *dad* for analysis. Although the lemma *baby* topped the gendered lemmas list in terms of its frequency of occurrence, it did not seem as ideologically interesting as the other terms, as, in most instances, it functions as a vocative serving the purposes of rhyming and song versification. Moreover, 4676 is an overwhelming number of instances to analyze given the time and space limitations of this project. As regards the exclusion of *woman* and *lady*, this was again based on a preliminary reading of their concordances, which revealed that of all 6 terms referring to female social actors (*girl, woman, lady, bitch, hoe, mama*), *girl, bitch, hoe* and *mama* underwent the greatest diachronic transformations in their meaning and axiological load, as compared to *woman, girl* and *lady*. Analogously, of the 3 terms referring to male social actors, namely *man*, *boy* and *dad*, *dad* was selected for analysis, as it again showcases the most interesting and dynamic axiological/ideological characteristics as compared to *man* and *boy*.

36

Chapter 5: Data analysis: Discourse-driven categorization of data

5.1 Discourse-driven categorization procedures and principles

In order to study as comprehensively as possible the notions of race and gender (and, respectively, racism and sexism) in each decade's subcorpus, I analysed the full set of concordance lines of all lemma forms of *nigga*, *bitch*, *hoe*, *mama* and *dad*. As Goutsos and Hatzidaki (2017: 460) state, discourse-driven quantification entails exhaustively tallying the attested instances of such discourse-oriented categories in a corpus so as to identify the numerical trends which relate to the discourse phenomena under investigation. They also maintain that such phenomena, which are "characterized by a higher degree of analytical delicacy, can then be subjected to qualitative analysis, so as to account for their wider contextual (ideological etc.) implications". In the light of this methodology, a set of three steps was taken in order to analyse the selected lemmas.

The first step, already mentioned above, was to identify and record the gender and race of the artist/s uttering the term under scrutiny, and also the gender and race of the person/s to which the term is addressed (addressee gender and race). In many cases, this task was non-straightforward: in instances where lack of clarity in the wording or absence of illuminating contextual elements prevented an unambiguous identification of addresser or addressee gender and race, I consulted the Genius.com annotations, which sometimes contain clarifications concerning the person/s to whom a word refers. In cases of a complete lack of relevant annotations in Genius.com, I searched various other sources on the internet for any information that might help determine the addresser's/s' or addressee's/s' so far obscure gender and race. The

rationale behind the quest for addressee and addresser race and gender information was my intention to examine whether the combination of these two variables were, indeed, a determining factor in lemma selection and usage on the part of an artist. In fact, any nuance in the usage and contextual meaning of a certain lemma that pertains to race and/or gender becomes more meaningful if both the addresser's/s' and the addressee's/s' race or gender identity are taken into account, and indeed appear to inform in very interesting ways, the race- and gender-oriented linguistic selections made by hip hop artists. It should be noted that existing studies do not generally discuss in depth the addressee's/s' race or gender identities, although, as will be seen, this information is highly significant in ideological terms.

The second step towards the discourse-oriented categorization of the data was to examine and record the polarity of each instance of each lemma so as to determine its axiological/ideological characteristics and implications. The feature of polarity (positive/neutral/negative) was accounted for in conjunction with the addressor/addressee race and gender of each word/instance under investigation, a highly complex constellation of features indeed.

Polarity, as argued by Wilson et al. (2009), can be distinguished into *prior polarity*, i.e. the polarity of a word out of context which evokes something positive or something negative (or something neutral), *and contextual polarity*, i.e. the meaning of a word within a given phrase, which may diverge from the word's prior polarity. The context in which a word occurs may even reverse its prior polarity. The changes of polarity can occur in two ways. Wilson et al.'s (2009) example is the word *trust* which has positive prior polarity but which in the phrase *National Environment Trust* is neutral. On the other hand, polarity can be reversed in context by negation, as

happens with the word *reasonable* in the clause *There is no reason to believe that polluters are suddenly going to become reasonable*. In the previous examples, 'context' means the words occurring immediately before and after the word (or phrase) under consideration. It is assumed that whether a word has a neutral, positive or negative axiological meaning can be ascertained by investigating its context, and it is contextual polarity that is of interest in the present study. Contextual polarity is focused on, since it is precisely this type of polarity which makes sense with respect to ideology and the social and communicative implications of hip hop discourse. The emphasis is placed on how polarity is handled in context, with all its semantic and pragmatic nuances, and not out of context, in abstracto.

In view of the above, the presentation of the discourse-oriented categorization (and concomitant analysis) of the data follows a two-tier model. Firstly, every instance of every lemma is classified according to addressee and addresser gender and race; then, the polarity of every occurrence of every lemma is recorded in conjunction with the artist's/s' and addressee's/s' gender and race. The notation used is as follows:

For addresser/addressee gender and race: black male (BM), black female (BF), white male (WM), white female (WF), unspecified colour.

For contextual polarity: positive, negative, neutral.

The third step involves the in-depth, context-based, ideological analysis of each lemma under scrutiny. To this end, I juxtapose, on the one hand, standard/published/commercial and crowdsourced dictionary definitions of the meaning of each lemma (OxfordDictionaries.com and UrbanDictionary.com, respectively), with, on the other hand, its meanings as observed in the various

contexts displayed in the corpus concordances (characteristic examples are presented and discussed in detail). In many cases, concordance analysis revealed unexpected, non-standard meanings and uses, i.e. meanings and uses fully or partially removed from dictionary definitions, or extra layers of specialized genre- and culture-bound meanings and connotations. The term definitions of both online dictionaries were retrieved on October 2018.

Chapter 6: Discourse analysis of individual lemmas

6.1 Race-related terms

6.1.1 *Nigga*

Table 5. Addressee and addresser race and gender of the lemma *nigga* (*niggas*, *niggaz*) across decades

Addressee race and gender	Addresser race and gender	60s	70s	80s		90s		00s		10s	
Black male	Black male	0	0	0	0	402	88%	323	97%	394	78%
Back male	Unspecified colour	0	0	1	100%	49	11%	4	1%	96	19%
Black female	Black male	0	0	0	0	5	1%	6	2%	5	1%
White female	White M/F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	2%
total		0	0	1	100%	456	100%	333	100%	502	100%

Table 6. Polarity of the lemma *nigga* (*niggas*, *niggaz*) across decades

Addressee-addresser race and gender	Polarity	60s	70s	80s		90s		00s		10s	
BM to BM	positive	0	0	0	0	158	34%	113	33%	209	41%
BM to BM	negative	0	0	0	0	200	43%	126	37%	121	25%
BM to BM	neutral	0	0	0	0	44	10%	87	26%	64	13%
BM to Unspecified	neutral	0	0	1	100%	49	11%	3	1.5%	49	9%
BM to WM/F	negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1%	40	7%
BM to Unspecified	positive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	2%
BF to BM	negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1%
BF to BM	positive	0	0	0	0	5	2%	3	1.5%	1	0.5%
WF to WM/F	negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1.5%
total		0	0	1	100%	456	100%	333	100%	502	100%

As can be established by the category distribution shown on Table 5, in the vast majority of instances the term *nigga* is uttered by black artists to address black social actors. Only in 7 out of the total 1292 times of the occurrences of *nigga* is the word uttered by a white social actor to refer to white social actors of unspecified gender. More specifically, *nigga* is absent in the first three decades and there is a sudden surge of occurrences in the 90s which continues in the subsequent, more recent decades. In these three more recent decades it is used by black artists to address social actors of the same colour. Black male artists use *nigga* as a reference to black male actors (88% in 90s, 97% in 00s and 78% in 10s). Obviously, the term has been appropriated by the black community and in a sense black social actors emulate the whites in addressing each other. Essentially, an out-group term reflecting and perpetuating power asymmetries has become an in-group address suggesting that the asymmetry is verbally obliterated by blacks appropriating the role of the whites who used to address them as such from a position of power and in order to segregate/socially exclude them. It emerges that the term *nigga*, which has been historically part of the general language as a derogatory qualifier by the hegemonic white majority in order to belittle the minority of blacks, in the context of the hip hop culture has been embraced by black entities and has become a term of linguistic choice. The asymmetrical power relation historically reflected in the usage of the word *nigger*, in which blacks are placed at the subordinate end of a polarized binary relation, namely the stigma attached to this term, appears not to hinder black hip hop artists from routinely using it, albeit in an unexpected manner.

As regards polarity (see Table 6), the negative polarity historically attached to the term *nigga* is indeed present when it is addressed by black male artists to black male social actors. Specifically, in the 90s and 00s negative polarity cases (43% and 37% of instances respectively) prevail over positive polarity cases (34% and 33% of cases of positive polarity respectively). Still, the presence of positive polarity cases cannot be numerically disregarded in 90s and 00s, which means that a substantial number of cases of black male artists addressing black male social agents by the term *niggas* in a positive manner. In the 10s, a reversal seems to occur. Although negative polarity does not disappear (25% of instances), positive polarity emerges as a prevalent linguistic choice (45%), thus obliterating in all such cases not only the power asymmetry but also the historically negative connotations. Therefore, negativity persists but is now coupled by a new, emerging, powerful trend, namely that of suppressing the negative polarity of the word. Moreover, the instances of neutral polarity (10%, 26% and 13% for the three most recent decades respectively), although fewer than those with negative or positive polarity, should be accounted for as part of the observed tendency of the negativity of *nigga* to recede.

Notably, the concordances in which the contextual inferences constituted the lemma *nigga* as having negative polarity are decreased in the 10s, a period during which 41% of the occurrences have a positive polarity and 25% of them are negative. Though, even when the lemma *nigga* appears to have negative contextual polarity what is to be taken into consideration is that the word is employed by black agents to refer to black agents. Thus, agents sharing one of the most fundamental elements of one's identity, namely race, and sharing the same collective consciousness is a reason not to penalize and harshly criticize occurrences of negatively polarized lemmas.

The dictionary definitions for the terms *nigga* and *nigger* are as follows:

OxfordDictionaries.com definition of *nigga*/*nigger*:

Nigga NOUN (plural niggaz, plural niggas) informal, offensive. Respelling of nigger (typically representing urban African-American speech).

Nigger NOUN Offensive. A contemptuous term for a black or dark-skinned person.

UrbanDictionary.com definition of *nigga*/*nigger*:

Nigga A word that must never be used by both blacks and whites. Yet black people constantly call each other that word.

Nigger A fully grown niglet. A word that everyone else is afraid to define except in utter seriousness, for fear of being branded a racist, in total ignorance of the colloquial usage of the word, its characterization in popular culture, and the populations of people it is used most by.

All definitions make note of the historical, negative polarity of *nigga*. OxfordDictionaries.com includes it as its only sense/connotation. The Urban Dictionary, a crowdsourced dictionary, i.e. not drafted by professional lexicographers but based on contributions made by non-professional users of the web, partially capture the newly introduced senses/connotations *of nigga* and the recent/current meaning and connotation shifts of *nigga*. Probably due to historical inertia and an influence by published/commercial dictionary definitions, the term is also described by UrbanDictionary.com's users as negative. However, as already mentioned, a strong

hint is given in both its definitions about its newly introduced senses/connotations (i.e., blacks/the general population does use it, despite its negative connotations).

It will be shown by the concordance analysis below that the use of the term *nigga* has gone a drastic step further semantically and connotationally, by acquiring clearly and unambiguously positive polarity features, which, however, are not captured either by professional or non-professional definitions.

Judging by our corpus-based statistics, the 90s is the time when the majority of the instances of the usage of the word *nigga* has a negative polarity (43%). This is accompanied by a substantial, albeit not prevalent, presence of positive-polarity instances. This tendency is exemplified in song excerpts (1) to (5).

> (1) 'Droppin' the funky shit that's makin' the sucker **niggas** mumble When I'm on the mic, it's like a cookie, they all crumble Try to get close, and your ass'll get smacked' Dr. Dre- *Nuthin' but a G Thang*
> (2) 'Used to bring work outta town on Greyhound Now I'm Billboard now, **niggaz** press to hit it Play me like a chicken, thinkin' I'm pressed to get it' Junior M.A.F.I.A.- *Get Money*
> (3) 'Yo, which motherfucker stole my flow? Eeny, meeny, miny, moe Throw them type of **niggas** right out my window Blast your ass hit you with a direct blow' Busta Rhymes- *Woo Hah!! Got You All in Check*
> (4) 'We on the run now, yo, it ain't no fun now And where I go, you **niggas** can't even come now You we down in vegas, money, skies too courageous And yo, I'm on the run, but still rip stages' N.O.R.E- *Superthug*
> (5) 'Using the last few years as our evidence **Niggas** been tryin' to duplicate my mix ever since If you challenge me I guarantee When we finish I'll be the last man standing' Naughty By Nature- *Jamboree*

In these instances, *nigga* is used as a derogatory term by black 90s male entities address black male entities in order to make a self-aggrandizing statement within the highly antagonistic nature of the music industry, and verbally emphasize the artist's ongoing struggle to establish himself as a respectful and financially successful figure among his colleagues. The imitation of another artist's style is condemned and perceived as an act of stealing/appropriating that artist's intellectual property (3 and 5). The asymmetrical power relation between the commercially and stylistically superior artists and those who vainly attempt to produce hip hop music of a higher quality is further aggravated when the former attack the latter by means of a term that has been historically uttered by white-supremacy supporters. Lucrative artists position themselves in this binary relation on the pole traditionally associated with, and occupied by, white social actors who exert power on inferior black agents not to be perceived as successful. Thus, it is no longer a matter of colour; it is rather a matter of fame and profit on the basis of which social actors in (1) (2) and (4) criticize and humiliate their perceived rivals who have failed to triumph. It could be claimed that the targeted criticism does not resonate with the white-supremacy agenda in which *niggers* are attacked for their skin tone per se but diverges from it as it now represents a form of discrimination founded upon monetary and status criteria. Thus, *nigga* appears to retain its former connotational traits but has been denotationally repurposed (and enriched).

> (6) '***Niggas*** didn't know me back in '91, bet they know me now I'm the young Harlem ***nigga*** with the Goldie sound Can't no Ph.D. ***niggas*** hold me down Cudda schooled me to the game, now I know my duty' The Notorious B.I.G.- *Mo Money Mo problem*

In song excerpt (6) from the 90s, the polarity of *nigga* (also popularly known as the *n-word*) ranges from negative '*Can't no Ph.D. niggas hold me* down' to positive '*I'm the young Harlem nigga with the Goldie sound*'. A neutral polarity is also evident in '*Niggas didn't know me back in '91*'. In 44 occurrences of the *n*-word in the 90s subcorpus (10% of occurrences) the word has neutral polarity as it is employed to address entities belonging to the same race as that of the artist without carrying any further axiological load regarding their personalities or social standing. It could, then, be suggested that in the 90s *nigga* entered a phase of rehabilitation during which its negative associations gradually began to recede. In an effort to reappropriate the term, black social actors turned on its head this formerly universally negative concept utilized by the superordinate white group with reference to coloured persons. Right from the start of its appearance in hip hop music in the 90s, *nigga* gained a strong momentum which questioned the power asymmetry promoted by the white majority.

> (7) 'It's my ***nigga***, Pop, from the barbershop Told me he was in the gambling spot and heard the intricate plot Remember my ***niggas*** from the hill up in Brownsville That we rolled dice with, smoked blunts and got nice with? Yeah my ***nigga*** Fame up in Prospect Nah them my ***niggas*** love wouldn't disrespect' The Notorious B.I.G- *Warning*
>
> (8) 'We making the crowd move, but we not making no G's, and that's a no-no Check it, a one-two, a one-two dope my ***niggas*** in the Cadillac They call us, went from Player's Ball to ballers' OutKast- *Elevators*
>
> (9) 'We got your woman so pucker up Fo we fuck her up Bow down before I make a phone call Got my 25 ***niggas*** running up on y'all' Westside Connection- *Bow down*
>
> (10) 'Me and my Harlem ***niggaz*** know how to play Mack the 600, gettin crazy pay' Peter Gunz- *Déjà vu*
>
> (11) 'My ***niggas*** on the block know Mase motto One thing about Harlem World, we all got dough' Mase- *Looking at me*

In instances (7) to (11) a reversal of the historically negative polarity of the term *nigga* is evident. The possessive pronoun *my* which systematically precedes it contributes to the positive effect, as it creates an affective tone and a sentiment of caring for the person to which the term is addressed. The recurring presence of the *my nigga(s)* string suggests that in the 90s subcorpus a substantial amount of these positively-perceived occurrences of the *n*-word point to a sense relating to social actors as members of a clique. In order to determine which social actors the term *nigga* actually addresses, i.e. in order to identify the members of the specific clique, our corpus-driven analysis needs to be complemented by extralinguistic/pragmatic information, namely by biographical facts about the artists. In a period (the 90s) during which hip hop was not yet a product consumed by the general public, artists produced songs that were highly localized and exhibited the reccurring pattern of affiliation to a gang active in the artist's area. Hip hop music was perceived as an arena where the members of warring gangs demonstrated their power, and songs functioned as a type of the 'weapon' employed in the ongoing gang fights. As is evident in instances (7), (10) and (11), *niggas* are members of cliques/gangs that are localized. Harlem was the hotbed of such conflicts, as it used to be and still is an area mostly populated by blacks in which the production of cultural output was thriving since the birth of Harlem Renaissance. *Nigga*, then, could be claimed as having immensely positive connotations, namely those of a very tight bond and in-group solidarity. The members belonging to that group fight for their mates (9), their *niggas*, and are devoted to their clique.

Further, there is a number of positive polarity occurrences (excerpt 12) in which the *n*-word is addressed to a person for which the addressee has positive, even passionate

feelings, and admires to the extent that she could even commit actions violating the law (*peel a cap* "shoot someone in the head") to defend their precious relationship. *Nigga* may even acquire the attributes of an admirable and loyal figure that stands as an exemplary husband.

> (12) 'I'm the type of girl that's down for my ***nigga*** I'll lie for my ***nigga***, peel a cap for my ***nigga*** See he don't mind me flirting, or wearing tight skirts' Yo-Yo- *The Bonnie and Clyde*

One last trend emerging from a small number of instances of *nigga* in the 90s subcorpus is using the term for positive self-reference. Black male artists reappropriate the derogatory term normally addressed to them by the hegemonic end of the bipolar white-black relation in order to account for a commendable (re)gained power only achieved through hard work. As clearly illustrated in instances (13) and (15), the empowerment of the male artists is accomplished in terms of a thriving career whose compelling power renders them admirable and worth the society's respect. In song excerpt (14), the male artist presents himself as an omnipotent deified figure to pay reverence to.

> (13) 'Upside down and inside out I'm 'bout to show all you folks what it's all about Now it's time for a ***nigga*** to get on the mic And make this motherfuckin' party hype' Tag Team- *Whoop!*
> (14) 'I'm not a rebel or a renegade on a quest I'm a god ***nigga*** with a 'S' on his chest so get the Kryptonite cos I'm a rip tonight Cos I'm scarin ya, wanted by America' Ice Cube- *Amerikkka's Most Wanted*
> (15) 'I'm doin shows, people payin to see me turn it out Now I'm the spice around town It's funny how an album can change a ***nigga's*** life around' Bushwick Bill- *Ever so Clear*

In the next decade, i.e. the 00s, *nigga* is still found to be uttered by black males to address black males in the vast majority of instances. However, now the dynamics of positive, negative and neutral polarity have changed: although the proportion of positive polarity has remained almost the same as in the 90s (33% now against 34% then), negative polarity instances have declined in favour of neutral polarity instances (37% now against 43% then). In 26% of the instances, the word *nigga* is found to have neutral contextual polarity, suggesting that the word appears to enter its main phase of rehabilitation. Concordances (16) to (20) capture the tendency of the word to appear as unmarked, i.e. stripped of all axiological value, whether negative or positive. *Nigga* has now become a substitute for *man*, suggesting that it is interchangeable with terms denoting a male figure without any extra negative or positive connotation.

(16) 'Now when they wobbly, wobbly, ass bouncing everywhere The way she drop it like that, I can't help but to stare Got a ***nigga*** saying "Ohhh girl" Come a little closer, I'm trying to make you out my boo girl Don't move girl, I'm on my way to the floor baby' 504 Boys- *Wobble Wobble*

(17) 'She got a beautiful mind You can't buy that, and the site from behind when she walk on by make a ***Nigga*** wanna try that She got the prettiest smile, and she gangsta keep me' Bow Wow- *Shortie like mine*

(18) 'My girl got a girlfriend, Chevy blue like whirlwind, ***Nigga***, it's a drought on that boy, so I got that girl in' Young Dro- *Shoulder lean*

(19) 'Everybody rockin' from side to side to tha beat Snappin' they fingers, bouncin' to tha groove All by they self; that's tha new move, ***Nigga***, where I'm from, we like to go dumb' Lil Jon- *Snap Yo Fingers*

(20) 'I see you in the club, ooh, shawty Walking past ***niggas*** you look at me all naughty Then I said, "Baby, wassup?" Reach for that hand shake, got a hug' Trey Songz- *I Invented Sex*

The 10s witness, for the first time, the use of the word *nigga* as an address to white people. The percentage of *nigga* used in this sense is 7% (of the total occurrences of the *n*-word in the 10s subcorpus). From now on, hip hop becomes a hotbed of an ongoing conflict between black artists and their white counterparts, who are thought of as appropriating their legacy.

> (21) 'Could **niggas** be screamin on me? Probably are think that Jigga is a joke' Jay-Z- *Brooklyn*
>
> (22) 'These **niggas** being doing bids, these niggas be in my fridge' Junglepussy- *Bling Bling*
>
> (23) 'Ball so hard muh'fuckas wanna fine me, So I ball so hard muh'fuckas wanna fine me But first **niggas** gotta find me' Jay-Z- *Niggas in Paris*

In these examples, the term is used to disparage white people who either imitate and appropriate the black culture (number 21 and 22) or are perceived as enemies by black artists. It could be argued that black people are, so to speak, falling in the trap of using the *n*-word in the exact same manner in which white people have historically been using it, i.e. for the purposes of discrimination. Black activists have repeatedly expressed their complaints about the tendency of a certain number of white people to adopt the lifestyle, appearance or even the linguistic and artistic repertoire of the black community. The aforementioned distinct traits of the Black Culture, when being borrowed by white persons, trigger heated debates over whether social actors belonging to the superordinate group are entitled to exploit race traits sacred to the historically subordinate group. Example (22) indicates that *nigga* is also used to demean representatives of the state apparatus, e.g. the police, which is predominantly 'white-colored' and is in constant conflict with coloured persons.

An extension of this racial conflict and the struggle of black people to assert their heritage which is cultivated throughout the decades of hip hop music production are also captured in examples where *nigga* has a positive polarity. Here black artists juxtapose their own authenticity to the ostensibly fake, blind imitation of white agents in an attempt to mark and defend the boundaries of their (the black people's) legacy within which intruders are not to be treated with respect.

> (24) 'Nothing but real ***niggas*** only, bad bitches only Rich ***niggas*** only, independent bitches only Boss ***niggas*** only, thick bitches only I got my real ***niggas*** here by my side, only' Drake featured in Nicki Minaj- *Only*
>
> (25) 'So I'm just sitting in the studio just trying to get to you baby You need a real ***nigga*** shorty so come in Throw that pussy shorty, see I think you and me can make it This little verse to get you naked' ScHoolboy Q- *Studio*
>
> (26) 'Aye yo, throw your wrist-es up, all my bitches up These ***niggas*** is pussier All them dicks is up All my real ***niggas*** down to ride, throw your GSXRs up I ain't in the projects, but all my bricks is up' Drake- *No Frauds*
>
> (27) 'Up in the studio, I got all my necessities Look, if you want that real shit, you made the right selection I'm a real Decatur ***nigga*** 'til I die, yes I rep that definitely' B.o.B- *Strange Clouds*
>
> (28) 'Fake ***niggas*** hatin' 'cause I'm chosen from the concrete I had rose Shawty starin' at my necklace cause my diamonds really froze Put that dick up in her pussy bet she feel it in her toes I'm a real young ***nigga*** from the 6 throwing bows' D.R.A.M- *Broccoli*

Here, social actors seem to be distinguished on the basis of an authenticity criterion, i.e. whether they are real or fake. In example (24) the black male artist makes a distinction between, on the one hand, *niggas* that are genuine and authentic, *niggas* that exhibit a solid identity of being true to their legacy, and, on the other hand, their cultural appropriators. Despite the fact that the latter are left unmentioned in this song excerpt, the constant presence of sequences such as *real niggas, boss niggas* and *my*

niggas evidence the existence of a binary, asymmetrical relationship between white and black agents which subverts or rather completely reverses the stereotype of the powerful white agent suppressing the blacks. In concordances (25) to (28) black agents present themselves as *real niggas* who are more desirable and attractive as opposed to *pussier niggas* who acquire feminine attributes relating to weakness and impotency.

To recapitulate, it can be concluded by critically analyzing the diachronic trajectory of the lemma *nigga* in hip hop lyrics, which started off as a negative polarity term in the 90s (43% of instances), and ended up gaining a mostly positive polarity in the 10s (41% as opposed to 25% of negative polarity), that there is an ongoing process of rehabilitation of this term in the output of (especially black) hip hop artists. The term *nigga* undoubtedly represents a growing tendency to attribute to black social actors positive qualities such as respect, worthiness and an elevated social standing, thus contributing to their empowerment. The connotational evolution of *nigga* suggests that the discussion on redefining the term is open and is highly relevant to the current social debate on what a *nigga* is, who is entitled to utter this word and who is considered as not eligible to do so.

In summary, during the first decade of its appearance, i.e. 90s, the lemma is employed to criticize artists' perceived rivals who have failed to triumph. Neutral-polarity instances are employed to address entities belonging to the same race as that of the artist without carrying any further axiological load. Thus, it is suggested that in this decade *nigga* entered a phase of rehabilitation. *Nigga*, also, has positive connotations, denoting solidarity among in-groups, an admirable and loyal figure that stands as an exemplary husband or a male enjoying commercial success. In 00s *Nigga*

has become a substitute for *man*, suggesting that it is interchangeable with terms denoting a male figure without any extra negative or positive connotation. Finally, in the 10s the term is used to disparage white people who either imitate or appropriate black culture. Here, social actors seem to be distinguished on the basis of an authenticity criterion, i.e. whether they are real or fake *niggas*.

6.2 Gender-related terms

Gender (and, concomitantly, sexism) is an entity rhetorically manifested in a more complex manner in hip hop lyrics than race (and, concomitantly, racism). This concerns not only the greater number of gendered terms observed in the data, but, notably, the wide range of fine and intricate nuances in the use of such terms.

6.2.1 *Bitch*

The most frequent gender-oriented lemma in all 6 decades of hip hop lyrics is *bitch*.

Table 7. Addressee and addresser race and gender of the lemma *bitch* (*bitches*, *bitchez*) across decades

Addressee race and gender	Addresser race and gender	60s	70s	80s		90s		00s		10s	
Black male	Black female	0	0	0	0	88	72%	95	85.5%	364	65%
White female	White female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	70	12%
Black female	Black female	0	0	0	0	27	22%	2	1.5%	35	6.5%
Black female	White male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	6%

		60s	70s	80s		90s		00s		10s	
White male	White female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	6%
Back male	Unspecified colour	0	0	1	100%	0	0	3	2%	7	1.5%
Black female	Black male	0	0	0	0	1	1%	0	0	10	2%
Black male	Black male	0	0	0	0	6	5%	10	9.5%	2	0.5%
White female	Unspecified colour	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1.5%	0	0
White male	Black male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.5%
total		0	0	1	100%	122	100%	112	100%	557	100%

Table 8. Polarity of the lemma *bitch* (*bitches*, *bitchez*) across decades

Addressee-addresser race and gender	Polarity	60s	70s	80s		90s		00s		10s	
BM to BF	negative	0	0	0	0	85	69%	84	76%	343	62.5%
BM to BF	positive	0	0	0	0	3	3%	11	10%	20	3.5%
BM to BM	negative	0	0	0	0	6	5%	8	7%	2	0.5%
BF to BF	positive	0	0	0	0	12	10%	0	0	26	4.5%
BF to BF	negative	0	0	0	0	14	11%	2	1.5%	9	1.5%
BF to WM	negative	0	0	0	0	2	2%	0	0	34	6%
BF to BM	negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	1.5%
WF to WF	negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	6%
WF to WF	positive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	6%
WM to WF	negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	6%
WM to BM	negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.5%
BM to Unspecified	negative	0	0	1	100%	0	0	2	1.5%	7	1%
WF to Unspecified	negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1.5%	0	0
BM to BM	positive	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1.5%	0	0
BM to Unspecified	positive	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1%	0	0
BM to BF	neutral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.5%
total		0	0	1	100%	122	100%	112	100%	557	100%

Table 7 shows that during the first two decades (the 60s and 70s) *bitch* was totally

absent, while in the 80s it occurred only once. A sudden surge of instances of the term

55

occurred in the 90s, of which 72% concern black male artist's/s' addresses towards black female social actors. In the 00s occurrences rose to 85.5% and in the 10s they decreased to 65%. What these high percentages of instances where black men call black women *bitches* seem to reflect is the unfazed power of male over female agents to create and reproduce unequal power relations between them.

In terms of the polarity of *bitch*, Table 8 shows that it is overwhelmingly negative both in the case of black artists addressing female entities (69% in the 90s, 76% in the 00s, 62,5% in 10s), and in the newly emerging instances of white male artists addressing white female actors in the 10s (34 (6%) negative polarity against zero positive polarity instances), and cumulatively (namely, all artists, irrespective of race and gender, addressing female entities: 87% in the 90s, 87.5% in the 00s, 86% in the 10s). This distribution, which accounts for the bulk of the instances of *bitch*, reveals the profoundly misogynistic character of the term as used by male artists, black or white.

BF to BF	positive	0	0	0	0	12	10%	0	0	26	4.5%
BF to BF	negative	0	0	0	0	14	11%	2	1.5%	9	1.5%
WF to WF	negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	6%
WF to WF	positive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	6%

The situation with female artists addressing female social actors is rather more complex. In the 90s subcorpus, in the case of black female artists addressing other black females as *bitches* 12 have negative polarity (10% of the total instances), reflecting a negative disposition which may point to an archetypical female antagonism instigating frictions between female agents for the sake of a desirable male. At the same time, during the same decade, an almost equal number of black

female artists (14, i.e. 10% of the total number of instances) address other black females as *bitches* in a positive tone. In the 00s this pattern is not observable due to the very small number or complete lack of occurrences of the term as addressed by black females to black females. Then in the 10s it resurfaces, but in reverse: 26 (4,5% of the total) of the instances of black female artists addressing black female entities as *bitches* have positive polarity, whilst 9 (1,5% of the total number of occurrences) have negative polarity. This, in the first instance, indicates, on the part of black female artists, a questioning of the inherited negative prior polarity of the term and the hegemonic masculinity inextricably linked with it. It appears as a kind of retaliation against male dynasts by way of a (re-)appropriation of this deeply sexist term.

As regards white female artists addressing white female social actors, which emerges for the first time in the 10s, it is very much analogous to that of black females addressing black females in the 90s: it demonstrates a balance between negative and positive polarity (35 vs. 35 instances, respectively). Such numerical trends, witnessed since the emergence, in the 90s, of the term *bitch* as statistically significant, until the current days of hip hop music production, imply an ever-present ambivalence in feelings, stance and behaviour amongst social actors belonging to the minority group (i.e. female hip hop artists) and sharing the same racial and gender identity with their addressees, and, paradoxically, (only) partially reproducing stereotypical representations of females.

OxfordDictionaries.com definition of *bitch*.

bitch

NOUN

A female dog, wolf, fox, or otter.

Informal. A spiteful or unpleasant woman.

UrbanDictionary.com definition of *bitch*.

Bitch

Someone who is inconsiderate and insensitive. Someone who used to be kind to you, but then decided that you weren't good enough for them anymore.

The negative connotations of the term *bitch* are reflected in both the published/commercial dictionary and the crowdsourced one, indicating the deeply ingrained misogyny in the use of this term. What is not captured in any of the aforementioned definitions, however, is the positive polarity that the term *bitch* has acquired with time and in certain genres such as hip hop lyrics.

We begin our analysis of the contextual polarity of *bitch* with examples of black artists' song excerpts from the 90s which are addressed to female agents in a negative manner.

> (29) 'Growin' up in the hood Life ain't nothin' but fuckin' **bitches** and money Where I'm at, if you're soft, you're lost Nothin' but **bitches** and money' Compton's Most Wanted- *Growin' Up In The Hood*
>
> (30) 'All I want is money, fuck the fame, I'm a simple man Mr. International, player with the passport Just like Aladdin fuckin' **bitch** got you anything you asked for' 2Pac- *How Do U Want it*
>
> (31) 'Took me to court, tried to take all I got 'Nother intricate plot, the **bitch** said I raped her Damn, why she want to stick me for my paper?' Junior M.A.F.I.A.- *Get Money*

The above examples illustrate the male perception of females as manipulative and moneygrubbing. Male hip hop artists use *bitch* to refer to a female figure who has formed a sexual relationship with a male so as to financially benefit from him. The above examples, in most of which *bitch* is modified by the derogatory qualifier *fuckin'*, clearly illustrate the artists' disdain and negativity towards the women addressed. In example (30) the artist refers to his partner as a *bitch* who is after his money. The accusation is intensified by the self-referent *Aladdin*, which emphasizes the generosity of the male artist who is abused by the consumerist female. The line resonates with the stereotypical representation of females as lavish spenders exploiting their partners' largesse. In (31) *bitch* denotes an obnoxious female, who takes advantage of her obliging spouse by throwing false accusations of rape. It is not only using rape as an accusation that suggests a power asymmetry between the male-rapist and female-rapped and adds to the negative depiction of females, but also the attempt of the female to send her male partner to court not in order to defend her dignity but to strip him of all his possessions ('*tried to take all I got*'). The male artist wonders why the female addressee *sticks* him for his money (a verb to describe the act of stabbing someone in the back with a weapon), indicating no other reason for him being accused and pursued by her apart from financial gain.

> (32) 'I got a little boy to look after And if I died then my child would be a bastard I had a woman down with me But to me it seemed like she was down to get me She helped me out in this shit But to me she was just another **bitch**' Geto Boys- *Mind Playing Tricks On Me*
> (33) 'Nappy dugout, get the fuck out 'Cause women like you gets no respect **Bitch**, you better run a check So chickity-check yo self before you wreck yo self' Ice Cube- *Check Yo Self*

(34) 'I fucked up and got too attached to the **bitch's** kid Knowin that she used the baby to use me Took him out my life, mentally abusin me But as the time went by I got another slimmy And she was just like the first one screamin gimme' Bushwick Bill- *Ever So Clear*

(35) 'I hooked you up with my girl and shit you fucked her every time you see her You don't even say shit to her, you know what I'm saying And all that **bitch** do is call me all day talking about you, "why the fuck Big don't want me?"' The Notorious B.I.G.- *One More Chance*

(36) 'As I take me a drink to the middle of the street and get to mackin to this **bitch** named Sadie (Sadie?) She used to be the homeboy's lady (Oh, that **bitch**)' Hot Rod Circuit- *Gin and Juice*

In the examples above *bitch* is addressed to women who the artists, for some reason or other, have aversion for, and, in their view, deserve no respect. In example (32) it is suggested that even when a female contributes to raising a child she does not deserve gratitude for it (*she is just another bitch*), whilst the explanation for this disdain offered by the artist is vague and unsubstantiated (*But to me it seemed like she was down to get me*). In (33), *bitch* is only one of a series of terms used to address a woman with contempt (*nappy dugout* "vagina", *get the fuck out*, *no respect*). In (34) the male artist blames himself for being too trustful towards a woman who went as far as exploiting her own child (*the bitch's kid*) to profit from him, and then was taken advantage of by another, equally scheming female. A series of terms presenting himself as a victim such as *got too attached*, *used me*, *mentally abusin me*, create an antithesis with the pernicious female. The artist as a victim of a woman's insensitivity is repeated in (35), where he presents himself as the accommodating recipient of her constant complaints about her dysfunctional relationship with another man. In (36) a woman who, for some unstated reason, ended her relationship with a man (*homeboy*) is verbally transformed from a *lady* to a *bitch* for the mere reason of not choosing the

artist's male friend. Thus, it appears that virtue and morality are traits which women acquire only within a relationship in which subjugation to the powerful male is not overtly manifested.

> (37) 'I'm not the woman to sleep but I'm lost (yo that's deep) And if I don't react the way he want he might swing his little trick to another direction **bitch** ass' Boss- *Deeper*
>
> (38) 'Ain't no excuses mutha fucka for you runnin astray I give it to you when you want it ain't no other's like mine Yo *ex-**bitch*** can't fuck with this, so don't be wastin' yo time' Sole- *4, 5, 6*
>
> (39) 'Shot clear the fuck off! If ya keep, talkin' that shit cuz all **bitches** ain't hoes! And i'm-a be the one to let ya stray ass know, niggaro!' Boss- *Recipe of a Hoe*

In excerpts (37) and (38) black female artists use *bitch* with negative polarity. Here women seem to place themselves in an inferior position to that of male figures and to have accepted this position. In (37) the female artist presents herself as an insecure woman who is struggling to maintain her status as a quintessential female charmer; she thus fears that if she is not be able to satisfy her man sexually, he will leave her for another woman. This leads her to belittle the woman that her male partner is expected to abandon her for by calling her a *bitch*, a typical case of insecurity-driven female antagonism for the sake of a man. Similarly, in (38) the female artist is prepared to surrender her body unconditionally and whenever her male partner desires it, so as to secure his preference for her. The term *bitch* is addressed to another female, the male partner's ex, who is presented as a potential threat, but who allegedly cannot compete with the female addresser, again a case of female antagonism with a man as a bone of contention. This, as in the previous example, highlights female

insecurities which are misdirected towards other women (*bitches*), a fact which perpetuates power imbalances at women's own expense.

Excerpt (39), on the other hand, represents one of the few instances in which *bitch* has positive polarity. Here, *bitch*, via its juxtaposition with *hoes*, is indirectly divested of the historically negative significations given to it by the superior male figure. The female artist defends herself, in a rather roundabout way, by creating a new polarization, namely *bitches* vs *hoes*, which is mapped onto the traditional *lady* vs *bitch*, *good* vs *evil*.

Generally, in the 90s the use of *bitch* by both male and female artists perpetuates and reinforces long-standing negative female stereotypes. This continues in the 00s, when, however, as will be seen, it occurs in contexts strongly associated with a lavish lifestyle, with female agents depicted as *bitches* lusting for luxury and its various exponents such as jewelry, expensive cars, travelling, etc. Here, female powerlessness resonates with the classic melodramatic narrative of women's lack of economic independence and desire for a good life rendering them easy prey to abusive men.

(40) 'While I switch gears, broke **bitch** lookin' at the bracelet Step out, show me what you all about Flashbacks of last night of me ballin' out' Jim Jones- *We Just Balling*

(41) 'I don't know what you heard about me But a **bitch** can't get a dollar outta me No Cadillac, no perms, you can't see That I'm a motherfuckin' P.I.M.P.' 50 Cent- *P.I.M.P.*

(42) 'And then I pimp a **bitch** to Berlin **Bitch** break niggaz, after that we fuck they girlfriend My girl got a girlfriend, **Bitches** think I'm pimpin' and leanin' in salamander sandals' Young Dro- *Shoulder Lean*

(43) 'How you ain't gon' FUCK! ***Bitch*** I'm me I'm the GOD DAMN reason you in VIP CEO you don't have to see ID' Ludacris- *Stand up*

(44) 'A million here a million there Sicilian ***bitch*** with long hair with coconut derriere Like smokin' the thinnest air I open the Lamborghini Hopin' them crackers see me like look at dat bastard Weezy' Lil Wayne- *A Milli*

In (40) the woman is addressed by the male artist as a *bitch* simply for staring at his gold bracelet, a symbol of higher socio-economic status, a power imbalance statement also intensified by the use of '*broke bitch*'. Here, the woman is presented as a financially deprived person whose sole function is to provide sexual entertainment to men (*show me what you all about*). In (41) the use of *bitch* acts as a warning to those women who wish to live as parasites sucking the male artist's wealth, something he emphatically declares he will not permit (see the repetitive use of negatives: *bitch can't get*, *no Cadillac*, *no perms*, *you can't see*). The male artist's self-identification as a pimp also serves to state his emotional detachment from women (via his "professional" status) and his ability to detect female gold-diggers.

The co-occurrence of *pimp* with *bitch* in (41) and (42), especially in the title of the song in (41) suggest that male hip hop artists construct a polarizing story involving male pimps, on the one hand, and females acting as prostitutes, on the other. For pimps, life is pleasant, a pimp is well-dressed, sophisticated, partying at clubs, jet-setting. On the other side, in (43), women who exhibit a prostitute-like behaviour are portrayed as poor and foolish, whilst the only possibility of them enjoying a good life is if this is provided by their male partners (*I'm the GOD DAMN reason you in VIP*; see also the phrase *I'm me* as a statement of self-importance). The association of *bitch* with a prostitute in a context suggesting that a woman's only purpose is to satisfy a man sexually and only as a sex-worker is indeed deeply misogynistic. (43)

63

perpetuates the stereotype of the exotic woman (*Sicilian bitch with long hair with coconut derriere*) living on a wealthy man's expenses, with him reminding her that she needs to pay him gratitude for offering her a dolce vita in exchange for sex. In the above examples, the topoi of wealth and sex are heavily entwined.

Moving on to the next decade, the 10s, we witness the reproduction of the stereotypical patterns present in the 90s. Only now, the contexts of *bitch* are considerably more explicit and intensely focused on female sexuality, in most cases rendering *bitch* almost literally a referent of a dog in heat. The collocates of *bitch* serve to create demeaning depictions of sexual encounters in which females are perceived as commodities offering pleasure to the omnipotent males, with women not sharing sexual satisfaction to the same degree (or even at all). In the 10s, African-American and white male performers systematically use *bitch* to describe women as loose and immoral, as products which can be 'consumed' even without much effort at conquering them.

(45) 'boogie girl, grab her hand and fuck that **bitch***'* Jay-Z- *Niggas in Paris*
(46) 'See what's poppin' at the mall, meet a bad **bitch**. Slap her booty with my balls. You can smoke the pussy' Macklemore- *White Walls*
(47) 'T-T-Raw, you don't know who you fuckin' with Got my **bitch** fuckin' with my other **bitch***'* Tyga- *Rack City*
(48) 'I'm so high, I got three **bitches** that go bi I'm so fly, I'm gettin' head like a blow dryer' Mike WiLL- *Made-It*
(49) 'Got a **bitch** that's like she play in movies in my Jacuzzi, pussy juicy' Chris Brown- *Look at Me Now*

In excerpt (45) an African-American male performer implies that sexual intercourse with a woman can be achieved effortlessly just by grabbing her hand. It is

thus the loose morals of a woman that allow her to become what is essentially a sex object (*fuck that bitch*). In (46) to (49) women are referred to by their sexual body parts in the context of raw sex satisfying the male libido (see also the element of women as possessions – *my bitch*, also willing to participate in threesomes –*my other bitch*). In all cases, slang/profane terms are used, whilst in (48) a sexual act is described via an object (*I'm gettin' head like a blow dryer*). In (49) sexual intercourse between men and women is described evoking pornographic imagery (*Got a bitch that's like she play in movies in my Jacuzzi*), which suggests lack of emotion, whilst, similarly, in (47) and (48) the willingness of women to participate in bisexual/lesbian intercourse, also a staple of pornography, sex (47 and 48) is presented as self-evident.

Yet, the most noteworthy phenomenon in the 10s is the use of *bitch* as (near-) synonymous with "woman". In the 10s subcorpus female artists are found to systematically call themselves or other women *bitches*, which clearly suggests a tendency to appropriate this historically demeaning term.

(50) 'Tell the driver, close the curtains (I said I like it like that) Bad **bitch** make him nervous (I said I like it)' Cardi B- *I Like It*

(51) 'Pound to pound around the town I'm the illest **bitch**, you see me I'm sexy ass **bitch***'* Iggy Azalea- *My World*

(52) 'Oh you mad? That I'm his new **bitch** Yeah I'm his new **bitch** and I'm spending his new cash' Iggy Azalea- *New bitch*

(53) 'Nothing but real niggas only, bad **bitches** only Rich niggas only, independent **bitches** only Boss niggas only, thick **bitches** only' Nicki Minaj- *Only*

In the above examples, the traditional, negative associations of *bitch* acquire positive meanings: a *bad bitch* or *the illest bitch* is a woman characterized by independence,

strength and nonconformity (51). Also, the female artist's self-depiction as *sexy ass bitch* suggests commendable pride, self-confidence and sexual liberation, a stance also present in (50) and (52). In (50) the black female artist questions the traditional power relation between the superior male and the fragile female by exhibiting superiority and gutsiness, intimidating the male and enjoying it to boot (*Bad bitch make him nervous (I said I like it)*). It can be argued that this kind of appropriation of a prototypically negative term of other-address (*bitch*) for the purposes of positive self-address, also without stripping it of its connotations of "badness", is a courageous act and a sign of resourcefulness. However, an element of ambivalence is always present, as one can never be sure whether these new qualities of *bitch* are indeed construed as purely positive in female performers' lyrics; see, for instance, the element of insensitivity in (50) (*make him nervous*), or the implied endorsement, this time by a woman, of the negative image of the moneygrubbing female in (52) (*I'm his new bitch and I'm spending his new cash*). The tension between the inherited and the newly emerging connotations of *bitch*, the latter mostly favoured by female performers, are most characteristically evident in (53) (*independent bitches only Boss niggas only*).

The appropriation and repurposing of *bitch* is evident in its use to refer to women as members of a clique in the 10s subcorpus. This use is found exclusively in lyrics by female hip hop artists. Although such instances are few, they are indeed interesting and may reflect an emergent, significant trend.

(54) 'Shot 'em dead, my **bitches** went and took the charge for me' Iggy Azalea- *Hustle gang*

(55) 'Drop it drop it drop it My ***bitches*** yeah they drop it I see you on that pole work that shit I pay for college Supportin you I rain on you now drop it like it's hottest' Iggy Azalea- *Drop It*

(56) 'drop it My ***bitches*** yeah they drop it I see you on that pole work that shit I pay for college' Iggy Azalea- *Drop that shit*

(57) 'These other ***bitches*** think they hot? Not really She a broke ho, that's how you know she not with my ***bitches***' Iggy Azalea- *Murda Buziness*

It seems that the use of *bitch* in (54) to (56) has an affective tone. In-group solidarity expresses itself in the form of girls protecting the members of their group and attacking those who threaten their existence, as in (54) (*my bitches went and took the charge for me*) and (55) (*I pay for college Supportin you*). Concordance (57) makes the distinction between the in-group (*my bitches*) and out-group (*These other bitches*) even more transparent, especially in view of the negative characterization of the latter, interestingly in terms of traditional male stereotypes such as sexuality and wealth (*These other bitches think they hot? Not really She a broke ho*).

In summary, in the 90s male hip hop artists use *bitch* to refer to a female figure that has formed a sexual relationship with a male so as to economically benefit from him. Also, it is addressed to women who deserve no respect by not getting involved in a relationship with the male artist. While being employed by female artists to address female agents it denotes female insecurities which are misdirected towards other women (*bitches*). In some cases, *bitch*, via its juxtaposition with *hoes*, is indirectly divested of the historically negative significations given to it by the superior male figure. In the 00s *bitch* is addressed by male artists to powerless women lacking economic independence. The term is also employed by male agents to refer to women whose only purpose is to satisfy a man sexually only as a sex-worker. Finally, in the 10s *bitches* are those females perceived as commodities offering pleasure to the

omnipotent males. Though, negative associations of *bitch* acquire positive meanings when female artists refer to themselves as *bad bitches* or *illest bitches* to show their independence and strength. Also, female artists' self-depiction as *sexy ass bitch* suggests self-confidence and sexual liberation. Appropriation and repurposing of *bitch* is evident while being used by female artists as a reference to female members of a clique.

6.2.2 *Hoe*

Table 9. Addressee and addresser race and gender of the lemma *ho* (*hoe*, *hoes*) across decades

Addressee race and gender	Addresser race and gender	60s	70s	80s		90s		00s		10s	
Black male	Black female	0	0	0	0	67	97%	56	81%	103	72%
Back male	White female	0	0	0	0	2	3%	9	13.5%	12	10%
White female	White female	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	20	14%
White male	White female	0	0	0	0	0	0%	4	5.5%	7	4%
total		0	0	0	0	69	100%	69	100%	142	100%

Table 10. Polarity of the lemma *ho* (*hoe*, *hoes*) across decades

Addressee-addresser race and gender	Polarity	60s	70s	80s		90s		00s		10s	
BM to BF	negative	0	0	0	0	67	97%	56	81%	103	72%
BM to WF	negative	0	0	0	0	2	3%	9	13.5%	12	10%
WF to WF	negative	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	20	14%
WM to WF	negative	0	0	0	0	0	0%	4	5.5%	7	4%
total		0	0	0	0	69	100%	69	100%	142	100%

As shown in Table 9, in the 90s and 00s *hoe* is used exclusively by male artists to address black (or, in few cases, white) female agents (100% of instances). In the 10s the tendency appears (14%) for this term to be used by white female artists to refer to white female social actors.

In terms of polarity (Table 10), black male artists mostly use *hoe* to disparage black females (97% in the 90s, 81% in the 00s and 72% in the 10s), while white male artists refer to a white woman as such to a lesser extent (zero occurrences in the 90s, 4 (5.5%) in the 00s, 7 (4%) in the 10s). Generally, all occurrences of *hoe*, either by African-American or by white performers, whether male or female, have negative polarity.

The exclusively (and heavily) negative connotations of *hoe* suggest that the term is not interchangeable with *bitch*, whose contextual polarity is sometimes positive. *Hoe*, therefore, could be perceived as even more intensely misogynist and humiliating, also given its traditional denotational meaning of "prostitute". *Hoe* is inherently and, as shown by corpus data, unabatedly sexist: its instances across time (since the 90s, when it first appears as statistically significant, to the 10s) confirm its use as an especially and persistently degrading term that no social actor has attempted to appropriate and repurpose as positive. It remains a deeply stigmatized/stigmatizing term whose negative prior polarity remains negative in context in all instances across decades.

Oxford Dictionaries.com definition of *ho*/*hoe*.

Ho (also *hoe*)

NOUN (plural *hoes*, plural *hos*)

Informal. A prostitute.

Offensive. A woman.

UrbanDictionary.com definition *ho*/*hoe*.

Ho

A skank.

A woman that is too loose in the booty.

Both dictionary definitions leave no space for positive meanings of *hoe*. The published/commercial dictionary captures the tendency to use the term as an offensive characterization of a woman who is not a prostitute. In both definitions of the crowdsourced dictionary *hoe* appears as having negative prior polarity, one non-sexually related (*skank*), the second denoting a sexually (hyper)active female (no reference is made about a *hoe* being a sex professional).

Examples from the 90s subcorpus

(58) 'I'm meetin **hoes** who only want to juice a nigga They tell me that they love me and all that But really they just wait for me to fall flat' Bushwick Bill-*Ever so clear*

(59) 'I'm that nigga that keeps the **hoes'** panties wet' Dr. Dre- *Keep Their Heads Ringin'*

Examples from the 00s subcorpus

(60) 'These **hoes** goin crazy like think they need some Prozac and dick' Dem Franchise Boys- *I Think They Like Me*

(61) 'You must have heard about them **hoes** that I beat up in my home' Juvenile- *Slow Motion*

Concordances from the 10s subcorpus

(62) 'My dick hard, her pussy wet, I'ma keep the pussy wet, yep (Hi **hoe**) I came, (bye **hoe**) I went' Kendrick Lamar- *Sex with society*

(63) 'I 'ma fuck a **hoe** game, I 'ma best with my strap on' Iggy Azalea-
D.R.U.G.S

(64) 'Saucin' on them **hoes** cause that ass so dumb' Post Malone- *White
Iverson*

Since the appearance of *hoe* in the 90s in hip hop lyrics, it has not been used to denote a prostitute. It is rather used to describe a woman, a non-prostitute, sharing some of the stereotypical characteristics of a sex professional such as promiscuity and lack of emotion. In (58) the black male artist expresses his exasperation with women's single-minded and voracious appetite for sex. He complains about the reccurring pattern of women disguising their sexual agenda as love so as to seduce men. For him, women approach men hypocritically by offering them love in order to charm them and render them vulnerable, then reveal their real intentions to *juice* them, i.e. sexually exploit them (interestingly, the opposite of what *hoes* normally do). The performer sets himself the task of telling the world about the women's apparently two-faced, emotionless, sex-obsessed behaviour.

In (59) *hoe* is used in a context of self-adulation and celebration of the performer's own virility. At the same time, the very use of *hoe* indirectly condemns, given the term's association with prostitution, the women's rampant sexuality (*keeps the hoes' panties wet*). In (60), female sexuality is construed in terms of a psychological disturbance. Here, a woman's need for sexual satisfaction triggers in her uncontrollable emotions (*These hoes goin crazy*). Here the cotext of *hoe* suggests a doctor-patient relationship, which is a priori asymmetrical, in which doctor's role is enacted by the expert male (the performer himself) who can 'treat' his 'patient', namely a woman in a sexual fit, by prescribing antidepressants (*Prozac*), and by offering his *dick* in order to pacify female hysteria. This use of *hoe* echoes the

archetypal misogynistic popular belief that a woman's reproductive organs are to be blamed for female hysteria, a mental illness supposedly caused by the movement of her *hystera* ("womb" in Ancient Greek) (O'Brien, 2009); and also that women suffer from emotional instability which has its roots in sexual deprivation and has to be treated by sex.

In (61) the performer goes a step further, perpetuating misogyny and power asymmetry between the sexes by legitimizing domestic violence against *hoes*. Again, a sexually active woman is likened to a prostitute, thus further suggesting promiscuity and lack of respectability and, here, the justifiability of violence: a *hoe* deserves to be beaten. Essentially it is a dehumanizing term that reduces a woman to her sexual behaviour, and then insults/punishes her for it. The collocates of *hoe* in examples (62) to (64), which contain profanities (*hard dick, pussy*, *Saucin'*- a term for male ejaculation on a woman's face), coupled with expressions suggesting the performer's contemptuous indifference towards their female sexual partner (*Hi hoe) I came, (bye hoe) I went*; *cause that ass so dumb*), systematically paint an explicit picture of sexual encounters with women as perfunctory and humiliating. The female body is seen as a commodity, on which men, or even women, as in (63), can project their primitive libido. The whole cotext in which *hoe* appears is extremely filthy and cruel for women as they are entirely reified and dehumanized.

The aforementioned examples place emphasis on the sexuality of both men and women. The fact that men are presented as constantly aroused and women as constantly wetting their knickers bring some kind of equality in sexual terms; women have a powerful sexual drive and this is acknowledged. Therefore, women are indeed shown as sexual entities. What ruins everything in these lyrics is the use of *hoe* in order to describe a female as a sexual entity, due to its associations with prostitution

(notice, also, the systematic use of the plural form, which has a generalizing effect: all women are *hoes*). This is what makes the descriptions of female sexuality degrading, not their explicitness, which is an interesting and novel -even welcome- phenomenon. These songs actually make ample room for references to female sexuality in the context of mainstream popular art. Yet, the problem is that they construe it in a very conservative, patriarchal manner. There is, therefore, tension between old and new mentalities.

In summary, *hoe* in the 90s was used to describe a woman sharing some of the stereotypical characteristics of a sex professional such as promiscuity and lack of emotion, highlighting women's single-minded and voracious appetite for sex. In the next decade, i.e. 00s, *hoes* are women suffering from emotional instability which has its roots in sexual deprivation and has to be treated by sex. Moreover, a sexually active woman is likened to a prostitute, thus further suggesting lack of respectability and, sometimes, justifiability of violence. During the last decade, hip-hop performers systematically paint an explicit picture of sexual encounters with women as perfunctory and humiliating.

6.2.3 *Mama*

Table 11. Addressee and addresser race and gender of the lemma *mama* (*mamma*, *moma*, *momi*, *mommy*) across decades

Addressee race and gender	Addresser race and gender	60s		70s		80s		90s		00s		10s	
Black male	Black female	17	77%	3	100%	17	85%	34	89%	86	82%	56	86.5%

		5	23%	0	0%	3	15%	4	11%	16	15%	5	7.5%
Back female	Black female	5	23%	0	0%	3	15%	4	11%	16	15%	5	7.5%
White female	White female	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	6%
White male	White female	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	3%	0	0%
total		22	100%	3	100%	20	100%	38	100%	105	100%	65	100%

Table 12. Polarity of the lemma *mama* (*mamma*, *moma*, *momi*, *mommy*) across decades

Addressee-addresser race and gender	Polarity	60s		70s		80s		90s		00s		10s	
BM to BF	positive	17	77%	0	0%	17	85%	34	89%	66	63.5%	51	79.5%
BM to BF	negative	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	7	6.5%	0	0%
BM to BF	neutral	0	0%	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%	13	12.5%	5	7.5%
BF to BF	negative	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%
BF to BF	neutral	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	11%	3	2.5%	1	1%
BF to BF	positive	5	23%	0	0%	3	15%	0	0%	12	11.5%	4	6%
WF to WF	positive	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	6%
WM to WF	positive	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	2.5%	0	0%
Total		22	100%	3	100%	20	100%	38	100%	105	100%	65	100%

Mama, a term which has undergone many connotational shifts throughout hip-hop history, is one of the most race-specific terms, as shown in Table 11. Since the 60s up until the 90s exclusively black male or female artists have used the term to refer to a black female. More specifically, in the vast majority of cases the term is used by black male artists (77% in the 60s, 100% in the 70s, 85% in the 80s, 89% in the 90s, 82% in the 00s, and 86.5% in the 10s), followed by its use by black female artists again to refer to a black female social actor, albeit to a much lesser extent (23% in the 60s, zero occurrences in the 70s, 15% in the 80s, 11% in the 90s, 15% in the 00s and 7.5% in the 10s). It is only in the 00s that white performers, specifically males, use *mama* (3%), whilst in the 10s even white females start using it the term (6%).

As regards the polarity of *mama*, it is evident from Table 12 that it is predominantly positive. This certainly holds for black male performers addressing black female agents (77% in the 60s, 85% in the 80s, 89% in the 90s, 63.5% in the 00s, 79.5% in the 10s), with only in 6.5% of the occurrences in the 00s subcorpus *mama* having negative contextual polarity. Instances in which *mama* is used to address one's mother and does not carry any further axiological load are also attested (here labelled "neutral"). With black male performers, the statistics of neutral polarity is 100% in the 70s, 12.5% in the 00s and 7.5% in the 10s, while for black female artists it is 11% in the 90s, 2.5% in the 00s and 1% in the 10s. Negative contextual polarity is discernible only in 6.5% of the instances of a black man addressing a black woman in the 00s and 1% of black women artists addressing a black woman in the same decade.

It could be argued on the basis of the above statistics that *mamma* is a race-specific gendered term favoured by African-American performers, which, in terms of its axiological load, is used in a diametrically opposed manner to that of the other two gendered terms under scrutiny, namely *bitch* and *hoe*. *Mama*, with its overwhelmingly positive contextual polarity, is placed in a binary relationship with *bitch* and, even more so, *hoe* (*mamma* vs *bitch*/*hoe*), whereby women with positive characteristics are identified with motherly figures, while sexually non-committed, curious or adventurous women are associated with historically negative terms such as *bitch* or, especially, *hoe*.

OxfordDictionaries.com definition of *mama*.

noun

(old-fashioned or informal) a mother

(slang) a woman, especially an attractive one

UrbanDictionary.com definition of *mama*.

A very attractive woman

Term of endearment for a young woman.

For *mama*, the published/commercial dictionary offers the meaning of "biological mother" and of a positively construed meaning of "woman". The crowdsourced dictionary focuses exclusively on the latter. As is established by both dictionary definitions the prior polarity of the word is positive and no hint of negativity is present. Our corpus-based statistics regarding the term's contextual polarity are in congruence with its prior polarity as stated in the dictionary definitions.

(65) 'Keep your freedom for as long as you can now My clever ***mama*** told me, you better shop around (shop, shop)' The Miracles- *Shop around*
(66) 'Keep my love going Higher and higher I said keep on lifting Lift me up ***mama*** Keep on lifting me Higher and higher' Jackie Wilson- *Higher and Higher*

Examples (65) and (66) retrieved from the 60s subcorpus are indicative of the tendency to use *mama* either as a vocative for one's biological mother or as a term of endearment for the performer's female partner. The modifier *clever* in (65) intensifies the positive contextual polarity of the term *mama*, to whom the black male artist is expressing his gratitude for her care and concern about his personal life. Interestingly, the mother's advice consists in warning him not to commit himself to a woman too hastily (*Keep your freedom for as long as you can*), but to gain experiences (*first you*

76

better shop around), thus essentially placing the mother in a stereotypically antagonistic relationship with other women in the artist's life. In (66) the black male performer uses *mama* in a context of emphatic acknowledgement of his black female partner's positive presence in his life and of her help in him getting happier and improving himself (*Keep on lifting me Higher and higher*). The term *love* indicates the presence of emotion.

> (67) '***mama*** gives you money for Sunday school You trade yours for candy after church is through' Stevie Wonder- *I Wish*
>
> (68) 'I saw papa cry when he thought that I would die He says something was in his eye I knew it was a lie ***Mama*** said "Papa's smart" Papa got a whole lotta heart And papa would do his part' James Brown- *Papa Don't Take No Mess*

In instances (67) and (68), originating from the 70s subcorpus, *mama* is used to denote a biological mother with neutral to mildly positive polarity, as she is presented as a rather positive influence (*mama gives you money for Sunday school*) or as making a positive intervention (*Mama said "Papa's smart"*).

> (69) 'But the way you're looking In those fishnets, ***mama*** You could trap me' Morris Day- *Fishnet*
>
> (70) 'Do your dance, do your dance, do your dance quick ***mamma*** Come on baby tell me what's the word Word up everybody says' Cameo- *Word up*

In the 80s *mama* is almost exclusively used to describe a sexually attractive woman in a positive manner. Tellingly, this is the decade when there is a total absence of occurrences of the term *bitch*. It seems as if *mama* denoting a female love interest marks a kind of turning point between, on the one hand, the 60s and 70s with their lack of blatantly sexist or sex-oriented terms referring to women, and, on the other hand, the 90s, 00s and 10s, with their explicit, loud and unabashedly sexist/sex-related

descriptions of women and the attraction between the sexes. And, although in the decades preceding the 80s *mama* as love interest is construed positively and without intense sexual overtones, in the 80s it takes on a greater load of sexuality. For instance, in (69) a woman wearing fishnet stockings is viewed as potential erotic snare: the male performer conjures up the image of a spider-woman who will entrap him with her sexual allure. In instance (70) a woman's dance is perceived by the black male artist as a sexual signal. Generally, in the 80s *mama* is used in a lighthearted manner to describe heterosexual attachments as not an especially profound matter.

 (71) 'Every time I need him, he always got my back Never disrespectful 'cause his ***mama*** taught him to be a good man' Salt-N-Pepa- *Whatta Man*
(72) 'When I was young me and my ***mama*** had beef Seventeen years old kicked out on the streets Though back at the time, I never thought I'd see her face Ain't a woman alive that could take my ***mama's*** place' Tupac- *Dear Mama*
(73) 'So ***mami*** tell me one little thing How deep is your love for me How deep is your love for me Tell me what it's gonna be Now do you see yourself fuckin With a nigga like me' Dru Hill- *How Deep Is Your Love*

As analysis indicates, 90s is an era during which being loyal to one's origins and acknowledging the contribution of one's biological mother to one's upbringing is a predominant pattern in male and female performers' lyrics. In (71) the black female artist praises the efforts of her male partner's mother to instill positive values in him, which, in turn, reflects positively on his behaviour towards the performer herself. The artist's partner's supportiveness and respectfulness are character attributes for which his mother is explicitly honoured. In (72) the black male artist recalls the hardships that he and his mother suffered, and places emphasis on the fact that his mother is irreplaceable (*Ain't a woman alive that could take my mama's place*). The strong emotional bond between rappers and their families, especially their mothers, must be

seen in the light of the frequent absence of the paternal figure in the African American family. The dysfunctional black family is a recurring topic in the 90s hip hop music (Chaney and Brown, 2016). Mothers and motherhood were elevated to sacred values by African Americans, they were considered as the family pillars, the guarantors of the survival of the suffering black family. This emotionally-loaded stance towards the mother is perhaps reflected in (73), where sexual attraction (*Now do you see yourself fuckin With a nigga like me*) goes hand in hand with profound sentiment, expressed as an appeal for reciprocation (*So mami tell me one little thing How deep is your love for me*).

(74) '*Mama*, gimme that funk, that sweet, that nasty, that gushi stuff Yeah, save the narrative, you savin' it for marriage' Jay-Z- *I Just Wanna Love U*

(75) 'Make a move Call me *mama*, spoil you like a baby Thinking about you, dreaming about you Got me going crazy wife' Ciara- *Promise*

(76) 'As soon I came out the womb my *mama* knew a star was born Now I'm on the golf course trippin' wit' The Osbournes' Shop Boyz- *Party Like A Rockstar*

Instances (74) to (76), extracted from the 00s subcorpus, demonstrate the opposite tendency of that of the 90s. That is, while the vast majority of 90s instances of *mama* made reference to one's biological mother and only the minority to a woman as the object of sexual interest and emotional affection, the 00s instances represent the exact opposite tendency. In (74) the black male artist referring to his partner as *mama* represents the distinction between *bitches a*nd *mamas*, the latter being the respectable and 'proper' women that one could marry. In (75) the black female artist appropriates the term, usually uttered by black male performers, for the purposes of self-reference, as a means of expressing her desire to be the male addressee's wife. A complex power relationship is at issue here, whereby the black female artist claims, by the use of

imperatives, the role of a dominant and protective mother figure looking after her baby (*Make a move Call me mama, spoil you like a baby*), at the same time promising to be caring and giving. Self-identification as a mother helps a woman prime herself as serious partner to be involved in a serious relationship (*wife*). Excerpt (76) is one of the few instances in the 00s where *mama* signifies one's biological mother. It describes a stereotypical mother's desire for, and prediction of, her child's success, like a mother owl.

(77) 'Honey got a sexy all steamin' She givin' hotness a new meanin' Perfection ***mama*** you gleaming […] Girl we could form a team I could be the king you could be the queen'' Black Eyed Peas- *Just Can't Get Enough*

(78) 'I'm beyond all that fuck shit, hey Hey lil' ***mama*** would you like to be my sunshine?' D.R.A.M- *Broccoli*

(79) 'Do anything for my ***Mama***, I love you One day I'll pay you back for the sacrifice That ya managed to muscle' Iggy Azalea- *Work*

(80) 'They call me Cardi Bardi, banging body Spicy ***mami***, hot tamale Hotter than a Somali, fur coat, Ferrari' Cardi B- *I Like It*

In the 10s, black male artists have the lion's share in the use of *mama* to address a black woman (79.5% of all instances in the 10s subcorpus). The term is made to signify a liberated lover cum perfect wife (77), a recipient of tender feelings beyond sex (78), etc. Actually, (78) is one of the few instances in all subcorpora where a male artist reveals a gentler and more sentimental streak, and does not appear eager to create a power imbalance in favour of himself. In (80) the black female artist appropriates *mami*, typically part of the black male performers' gendered term repertoire, to refer to herself as an alluring female possessing power emanating from luxury goods (*fur*, *Ferrari*) associated with affluence. This self-identification reverses the power relationship in which the male is traditionally presented as the omnipotent agent. Finally, in the 10s there is a surge of uses of *mama* by white female artists

addressing a white female agent (12% of the total instances). This phenomenon is basically due to the presence in the 10s subcorpus of the lyrics by Iggy Azalea, a white female rapper whose style roughly resembles that of the 90s black male rappers'. As mentioned in the analysis of the 90s instances of *mama*, black rappers frequently recounted the hardships of their families and the black mothers' efforts to support family members and protect them from harm, and to keep family ties strong. Along these lines, in (79) the white female rapper acknowledges her mother's struggle to support her and promises to pay her back.

In summary, the 60s is the decade during which *mama* is used either as a vocative for one's biological mother or as a term of endearment for the performer's female partner. In the 70s, *mama* is used to denote a biological mother with neutral to mildly positive polarity. In the 80s *mama* is used in a lighthearted manner to describe heterosexual attachments as not an especially profound matter. The 90s is an era during which *mama* is employed to acknowledge the contribution of one's biological mother to one's upbringing. In the 00s artists refer to their partners as *mamas* which are respectable and 'proper' women that one could marry. In the 10s the term is made to signify a liberated lover cum perfect wife and a recipient of tender feelings beyond sex. In the same decade, black female artists appropriate *mami* to refer to themselves as alluring females possessing power, while white female rappers acknowledge the struggle of mothers to support their offspring.

Overall, the lemma *mama* in its various forms represents, in hip hop lyrics, the positively construed figures of a resilient, self-sacrificing and supportive mother, or an attractive/sexy and occasionally powerful woman. The adored, transcendental mother figure, with all its oedipal overtones, is a recurring theme in black male rappers' discourse, harking back to (and perpetuating) the common theme, in African

81

American music, of the tormented black family suffering from the absence of the
father figure.

6.2.4 *Dad*

Table 13. Addressee and addresser race and gender of the lemma *dad* (*daddy*, *daddies*) across decades

Addressee race and gender	Addresser race and gender	60s		70s		80s		90s		00s		10s	
Black male	Black male	1	14.5%	6	46%	2	66.5%	66	55.5%	16	69.5%	14	60%
Black female	Black male	6	85.5%	7	54%	1	33.5%	23	19.5%	6	26%	0	0%
White female	White male	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	4.5%	4	18%
White male	White male	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	30	25%	0	0%	5	22%
total		7	100%	13	100%	3	100%	119	100%	23	100%	22	100%

Table 14. Polarity of the lemma *dad* (*daddy*, *daddies*) across decades

Addressee-addresser race and gender	Polarity	60s		70s		80s		90s		00s		10s	
BM to BM	positive	0	0%	6	46%	2	66.5%	55	46%	13	57%	11	50%
BM to BM	negative	1	14.5%	0	0%	0	0%	4	4%	2	8.5%	0	0%
BM to BM	neutral	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	7	6%	1	4.5%	3	10%
BF to BM	negative	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	8.5%	0	0%
BF to BM	neutral	0	0%	1	8%	1	33.5%	0	0%	4	17%	0	0%
BF to BM	positive	6	85.5%	6	46%	0	0%	23	19%	0	0%	0	0%
WM to WM	positive	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	30	25%	0	0%	5	22%
WF to WM	negative	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	15%
WF to WM	positive	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	4.5%	1	3%

Total		7	100%	13	100%	3	100%	119	100%	23	100%	22	100%

The addressee and addresser race and gender findings for *dad* (Table 13) exhibit similar properties with those of *mama* in that it is exclusively used by black artists in the first three decades of hip-hop. Specifically, black female artists prevail in the 60s (85.5%) and 70s (54%) (14.5% and 46%, respectively, for black male performers). In the 80s and 90s the trend is reversed with black male artists most frequently using *dad* (66.5% and 55.5% respectively), this persisting in all subsequent decades (69.5% in the 00s and 60% in the 10s). The 00s is the decade when the first *dad* is uttered by a white social actor (white female to white male 4.5%), reaching its peak in the 10s with the white-male to white-male configuration amounting to 22%. Judging by the findings of *mama*, which is used to address a social actor of the opposite sex to that of the addresser (men addressing women), one would expect a prevalence of black female artists using the term *dad* to address black male social actors. Interestingly, it is mostly used by black male artists to refer to black male addressees, i.e. we have a same-sex addresser-addressee situation. What is happening here is that *dad* is actually to a great extent self-referential, more so than *mama* by female rappers, perhaps in an effort to appropriate, for the purposes of self-identification, the qualities of a powerful figure, the father.

As regards the polarity of *dad*, as shown in Table 14, it is to a great extent positive. Specifically, in the 60s it is exclusively positive when black male artists address back male social actors (85.5%), and negative in the one instance of a black male performer addressing a black male agent (14.5%). In the 70s black male artists use *dad* with only positive polarity (46%), while black female performers also use it mostly positively (46%), and, to a much lesser extent, neutrally (8%). In the 80s *dad* is used exclusively to refer positively to one's biological father (66.5% by black male

artists to black social actors, 33% by black female artists to black male social actors). In the 90s polarity is more varied. Black male to black male instances are 46% positive, 4% negative and 6% neutral; black female to male instances are exclusively positive (19%); and white male to white male instances, a newly introduced but dynamic configuration, are exclusively positive (25%). The 00s are also rather complex. Black male to black male instances are in their vast majority positive (57%), whilst 8.5% are negative and 4.5% neutral; black female to black male instances are mostly negative (8.5%) or neutral (17%), whilst none are positive; and the newly emerging trend of white female artists addressing white male social actors is exclusively positive (4.5% represented by one instance).

The 10s are marked by the total absence of instances of *dad* produced by black female artists, and by the male black artists' overwhelmingly positive use of this term either for self-reference (as men or fathers) or for positive portrayals of their own biological father. The exact same pattern (using *dad* for positive self-reference or to address one's biological father) is observed with white male artists positively addressing white social actors (22%). Finally, contrary to the total absence of instances by black female artists in this last decade, the trend of white female artists addressing white male social actors as *daddies* increases; the vast majority of these instances (15%) have negative polarity, pointing to the fact that expressing gratitude to one's male partner as a provider of material comforts is no longer fashionable or praiseworthy. Paradoxically, there is one instance where the same white female artist positively addresses a generous biologically unrelated white male as *daddy*.

OxfordDictionaries.com definition of *dad*/*daddy*.

(Noun) a father
child's word for father

UrbanDictionary.com definition of *dad/daddy*.

A name used for a significant other, fuckbuddy, and/or hot guy.
During sex, a girl may scream out "Daddy!" when he's beating the pussy up.
It's a huge turn on for some and it's mostly used by those who like it rough or just for those kinky little shits.

In the published/commercial dictionary definition *dad* has the prototypical sense of one's biological father, also including the diminutive (*daddy*) used by a child to address his or her father. On the other hand, this sense does not appear in the crowdsourced dictionary definition. Here, *dad/daddy* is defined in positive terms as a sexual partner.

> (81) 'I'd rather be dead, six feet in my grave Than to live as a lonely bad ***daddy***, each and every day She came home this morning, I asked her where had she been? She said don't ask me no question, because I'll be leaving again' Johnny Taylor- *Part Time Love*
>
> (82) 'This is my last time, not asking any more If you don't do right, I'm gonna march outa that door And if you don't believe me, just try it love ***daddy*** And you'll lose a good thing' Barbara lynn- *You'll Lose A Good Thing*

Instances (81) and (82) from the 60s subcorpus refer to artists sharing a home with their partners, thus indicating that the term *dad* is used in the context of a serious heterosexual relationship. In (81) the term is used by a black male artist to refer to himself as an insecure and apprehensive man (*a lonely bad daddy* – see also the evocation of death as a sign of despair: *I'd rather be dead, six feet in my grave*) whose female partner behaves erratically and refuses to commit. Here, the traditional power dynamic is reversed: A woman threatens her smitten male partner she will abandon him if he becomes too possessive (*She said don't ask me no question, because I'll be leaving again*). In (82) the black female artist again threatens to abandon her partner,

this time, however, because he is the one showing signs of lack of commitment (*If you don't do right, I'm gonna march outa that door*). The term *love* modifying *daddy* indicates the existence of deep feelings in this problematic relationship. Here, gender power relations are rather blurred, given that the woman's threat can be construed as a sign of both despair and empowerment. Both cases have a melodramatic tone.

> (83) 'You rock me gently Make me feel like a cloud in the sky Whisper softly; Let my heart take wing and fly Sexy baby, good loving **daddy** Let me be your rocking chair' Gwen McCrae- *Rockin' Chair*
>
> (84) 'Play on it, play on it As you say **daddy daddy daddy** Ooh, Lord All right now Baby, easy now Now, come on, lovely lady All right' Staple Singers- *I'll Take You There*

Instances of *dad* in the 70s subcorpus clearly illustrate the influence of Rhythm and Blues on early hip-hop, with feelings of tenderness infusing the artists' lyrics. *Dad* is used to address to the caring male partner in the context of a loving relationship. In (83) the black female artist articulates her fondness for her male partner by calling him *sexy baby* and *good loving daddy*, a combination of characteristic elements of the ideal partner. Feelings of family life are invoked via images of childhood (*You rock me gently*) and homely comfort (*Let me be your rocking chair*), and romanticism via the fantastical imagery of flight and levitation (*Make me feel like a cloud in the sky*; *Let my heart take wing and fly*). In (84) the black male artist echoes thrice the vocative *daddy*, used by his female partner, to refer back to himself, and addresses his partner as *lovely lady*. In general, linguistic expressions of tender love seem to help iron out any power asymmetries potentially implied by the use of *dad*: Here, the father is a positive, and not despotic, figure.

> (85) 'What did your **daddy** tell you about lies He said one white one turns into a black one So, it's gettin' ready to blow' Stevie Wonder- *Skeletons*

86

(86) 'Thanks for my child You brought me so much joy, This bundle of love Thanks for my child And though you **daddy** ran away free The love I have for you baby Is the love I have in me' Cheryl Pepsii Riley- *Thanks for My Child*

In the 80s *dad* is mostly used to refer to one's biological father. In (85) the black male artist refers to the addressee's *daddy* as someone giving good advice (i.e. that even innocent lies might backfire: *He said one white one turns into a black one*). In (86) the black female artist tells her child's father that he abandoned them, but, at the same time, reassures the child that this will not affect her love for their offspring. The use of *daddy*, the endearing child's version of the word, suggests that the artist still harbours feelings for her former lover.

(87) 'I shed tears with my baby sister Over the years we was poorer than the other little kids And even though we had different **daddies**, the same drama with them' Tupac- *Dear Mama*

(88) 'It's a full-time job to be a good **dad** You got so much more stuff than I have I gotta study just to keep with the changin times' Will Smith- *Just The Two Of Us*

The 90s are characterized by the tendency to expose the hardships of the black community and family. Excerpt (87) reflects the pervasiveness of the black family's problematic structure: the artist is pointing out that despite the fact that the actors mentioned in the song had two different fathers, both behaved equally dismally. This instance, which represents the recurring theme of the inadequate father, is in direct opposition with the positive portrayals of black motherhood in songs from the same decade (See 5.2.2.3 *mama*). it emerges as a robust finding that the criticism directed towards fatherhood results into a reoccurring scapegoating of the male fatherly figure, as fathers are considered to be in most cases the agents causing troubles to the family. Mother reverence and father despise result into a subverted power relation between

black female and male agents in which the latter are placed in the superiority pole of this binary relation –not by putting effort on being imposed as the powerful matriarchal figures in the house but by other agents placing them in this position-. Excerpt (88) contains an aphorism about the difficulties of fatherhood (*It's a full-time job to be a good dad*), with the use of *good* implying the existence of good and bad fathers, again indirectly invoking the traditionally problematic nature of the father figure in African American culture. A self-reminder (*I gotta study just to keep with the changin times*) acts as a kind of promise that the black artist will struggle to differentiate himself from the stereotype of the incompetent or absent father by acquiring knowledge on this difficult task. This stance suggests an awareness, by the new generation of black fathers, that the power imbalances caused by the patriarchal society need to be redressed.

> (89) 'When he invites me over I come every time Oh my sugar **daddy** Takes me for a ride Whatever way we're going' Mariah Carey- *Loverboy*
> (90) 'Come a little closer let **daddy** put it on ya Need you to know, what happens here stays here Well I'm, ready and willing' Usher- *Love in this Club*

The 00s introduce the explicit use of *dad* in the context of a sexual relationship. In (89) the white female is presented as willing to follow her *sugar daddy* unconditionally (*When he invites me over I come every time*; *Whatever way we're going*). The white woman appears to have relinquished her power to an older and wealthier man, suggesting an Electra complex situation. In (90) *daddy* is used self-referentially to identify the black male artist as a man making sexual advances to a woman, perhaps improper, as he is reassuring her that nobody else will know (*Need you to know, what happens here stays here*; also, later on in the song: *Ain't nobody watching, don't worry, they can't see us*). *Daddy* here may suggest a big age

difference or the fact that the female addressee is underage; at any rate, it appears to be used for persuasion (perhaps coercion?) purposes in what appears to be a power asymmetry situation.

> (91) 'Because I smoke marijuana whenever Mary wanna I think her name's Stephanie, but call her Steph Shawty so right I don't know what's left Who your **daddy**? Then I hit it faster' Boby V- *Mirror*
>
> (92) 'He got a house that's too big Sits on a hill in the valley Said he trying to move on with life but he still wanna be a good **daddy** So I sit in the ride' Iggy Azalea- *New Bitch*
>
> (93) 'I'm sick of you being rich and you still mad, let's talk about it Both of us **dads** from the Midwest, we can talk about it Or we could get gully I'll size up your body and put some white chalk around it' Machine Gun Kelly- *RAP DEVIL*
>
> (94) 'Stan, Stan, son, listen, man, Your **dad** isn't mad But how you gonna name yourself after a damn gun And have a man-bun?' Eminem- *KILLSHOT*

In the 10s, old meanings and connotations of *dad* continue to appear, while new interesting meanings and nuances emerge. Examples (91) and (92) realize meanings of *dad* which have been encountered in previous decades (a *daddy* as a lover), however they are now much more sexually explicit. In (91) the black male artist echoes the female actors' address to him (*daddy*) during lovemaking. The invocation of this power-expressing term seems to act as an incantation boosting his sexual self-confidence, resulting in him expressing greater sexual intensity (*Then I hit it faster*). In (92) the white female artist refers to her male lover as wealthy and living a lavish life but being half-hearted about it or perhaps about their liaison (*Said he trying to move on with life*), but essentially not wanting to let her go or to stop spoiling her (*but he still wanna be a good daddy*). Despite his obvious vacillation, she decides to stay (*So I sit in the ride*), namely to conform and continue enjoying this lifestyle.

In examples (93) and (94) *dad* is used by the white male artists for self-reference. Here, sexual innuendo is either absent or backgrounded. What is brought to the fore in the form of verbal duelling is the ongoing rivalry between two white male rappers, Machine Gun Kelly and Eminem (also expressed in their interviews), and the presence in both songs of the power-expressing term *dad* highlights this antagonistic stance. Verbal hostilities are initiated by Machine Gun Kelly, who terms himself and Eminem *dads* (*Both of us dads*), not in the sense of "biological father" or of "lover", but of hip-hop music father and patron. This act by Machine Gun Kelly of placing both artists on the same par even though he is not of the same caliber as Eminem in terms of recognition and commercial success could be seen as a rhetorical means of asserting himself and attempting to obliterate any power asymmetry between them. He then gets more aggressive: he conjures up the image of Eminem as a corpse in a crime scene (*I'll size up your body and put some white chalk around it*). This rhetorical struggle for recognition and self-establishment as the ruling rapper on the music scene triggers Eminem's scathing response (94), a practice commonly known as a *diss track*, namely a musical retort containing insults meant to scorn or personally harm another singer or person. Eminem restores the power asymmetry and rhetorically asserts his superiority by calling Machine Gun Kelly his son and himself Kelly's *dad.* He also satirizes Kelly's name by sarcastically mocking his *bun* , namely the hairstyle where the hair is brought together into a round shape at the back of the head (*But how you gonna name yourself after a damn gun And have a man-bun*). The creative compound *man-bun* is meant to cast doubt on Kelly's manhood and associate him with female rappers such as Iggy Azalea, who is often ridiculed by male rappers and is known to have this hairstyle as a trademark.

Yet, the most intriguing finding from the corpus scrutiny is that during the last years of hip-hop the range of addressers of the lemma *dad* has been extended in order to accommodate the classification of any male agent possessing power as such. The selected examples and analysis of *dad* indicate that it is an enormously versatile term as regards its referents, polarity and connotations, definitely more so than *mama*. Connotations could be split into those referring to a biological father (incompetent, absent, shying responsibility, despotic, doting, eager to compensate for the traditional faults of AA fathers), or to a lover (tender, insecure, oppressive and patriarchal, virile, indifferent/unstable), or, simply, to a man (powerful, aspiring – wannabe powerful). All this is evidence of the fact that, as a whole, the father in hip hop is a much more complex and multifaceted figure than its female counterpart. This is itself a sign of the patriarchal structure as a *dad*, with all his faults, is a richer and much less stereotypical/one-dimensional figure than a *mama*.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In view of the outcome of the present research, it is especially illuminating to quote a notorious tweet by Kanye West, a US AA male singer, which is considered by many critics as thought-provoking:

"Perhaps the words BITCH and NIGGA are now neither positive or [sic] negative. They are just potent and it depends on how the [sic] are used and by whom?"

This meta-comment by West could be interpreted thus: the words themselves can, indeed, be "potent". However, they cannot be determined as positive or negative out of context. Their axiological content (and, consequently, impact) is dependent upon the words surrounding them. As West suggests, the denotational and connotational characteristics of these words have gradually altered and/or expanded, and while they remain "potent", their precise meanings and nuances are very much dependent on their surroundings and on the identity of their users ("by whom"). The terms addressed to social actors in hip hop lyrics do express strong attitudes, but whether these attitudes are positive or negative is indeterminable out of context.

This dissertation focused on the meanings and evaluative load of terms relating to two major concerns in hip hop poetry, namely race and gender. These concerns emerged as of primary importance in the statistical lists of our corpus. Interestingly, this binary focus is reflected in Kanye West's chosen examples: *bitch* and *nigga*.

As regards race, the critical analysis of the diachronic trajectory of the lemma *nigga* in hip hop lyrics showed that what started off as a negative polarity term in the 90s, ended up demonstrating a mostly positive polarity in the 10s, suggesting that there is an ongoing process of rehabilitation of this term in the output of (especially black) hip hop artists. The attested uses of the term *nigga* undoubtedly reflect a growing tendency to attribute to black social actors positive and socially sanctioned traits such as respect, worthiness and an elevated social standing, thus contributing to their empowerment. *Nigga* is no longer a monolithic term referring to the underdog or to a Jim-Crow-like agent embodying the pathologies of black lives. On the contrary, it has become a term describing a laudable and successful person. The connotational evolution of *nigga* suggests that the discussion of redefining the term is open and highly relevant to the current social debate on what a *nigga* actually is, who is entitled to utter this word, and who is considered as not eligible to do so, all issues of great import in the communities concerned.

As regards gender, Jackson's (2006, 115) proposition that the scripting of the black female body in hip hop as a powerful agent is derivative at best as it is merely emblematic of a master narrative is only partially correct. As indicated by the findings of the present study, the attested uses of gender-related terms, despite the fact that they indeed perpetuate regressive sexism in many cases, also leave vital space for some pioneering, pro-women voices to be articulated. The cotexts of *hoe* and, only partially, *bitch* are indeed demeaning and represent heavily objectified depictions of female agents of both racial backgrounds. *Hoe*, whose prototypical referent is a prostitute, i.e. a very specific socially marginal target group and one of the most powerful negative stereotypes for a woman, has now transcended its previous usage

barriers and is routinely used in hip hop lyrics to refer disparagingly to a woman involved in sexual encounters without being a prostitute.

At the same time, however, the term *bitch*, in many of its more recent cotexts, is also positively construed as an emancipated, sexually liberated female. Therefore, sexism does continue to manifest itself as a deeply ingrained belief in both black and white male artists, yet there are signs of a diachronic movement towards more fluid meanings and connotations of even the most sexist terms, a fact which certainly reflects social changes in the genre itself (cf. the more recent appearance of powerful female rappers), and in society at large. It should be noted that a by-product of the attested growing explicitness in descriptions of sexual encounters in hip hop lyrics can be said to objectify women, but, at the same time give voice to the otherwise silent and obscured female sexuality. The findings of this study suggest that the commendable acts of female artists to offer a counter-narrative by re-appropriating the terms and the effort to become a forceful presence in hip hop industry -and by extension in society- occupies more than just a space that simply aligns with the master narrative, as Jackson (2006) proposes; in many cases, they run against it.

Of the full set of the terms analyzed in this study, those that exhibited the most tectonic and unexpected shifts were *nigga*, *bitch* and *dad*. The corpus evidence demonstrates emphatically that these terms have acquired an extended range of meanings and connotations, both negative and, more recently, positive, and thus serve as highly versatile rhetorical means to express a multitude of often unanticipated qualities and values of their referent social actors. The findings of this study suggest that apart from the clear-cut, black-and-white divisions of previous eras, there is now

a grey area within which a nigga is a respected peer, a bitch is a sexually and socially emancipated woman, and a dad is an authoritative but also compassionate man.

Overall, the present corpus analysis of the gender- and race-related lemmas under scrutiny most definitely suggests that such terms, several of which used to be exclusively negatively construed, have gone a drastic step further semantically and connotationally, by acquiring clearly and unambiguously positive polarity features. The juxtaposition of the dictionary definitions of the terms under scrutiny with their uses as found in concordances revealed that these changes are not captured either by officially published or, in several cases, by crowdsourced dictionaries. One of the objective problems with, especially, institutional/published dictionaries is that successive editions are generally slower to appear than developments in actual language use.

On the other hand, crowdsourced dictionaries would be expected to account for the most up-to-date or popular meanings, as definitions can be easily modified by members of the platform (this phenomenon manifested itself very powerfully during the writeup of this study, as definitions in urbandictionary.com kept appearing, disappearing, or moving upwards and downwards on the list of entry senses!). In reality, in many (but certainly not all) cases the crowdsourced dictionary failed to reflect the semantic and, especially, axiological changes and fluctuations of the terms examined, and appeared to perpetuate the, often, static senses and labellings (e.g. as "offensive") of published dictionaries, thus somehow unwittingly perpetuating the gender or racial stereotypes that actual current uses attempt to refute.

The impetus for this study was provided by the immense, global appeal of the music genre of hip hop, and also its provocative and controversial nature. A corpus of

half a million words of lyrics spanning the whole time of existence of this genre were amassed and critically analysed, with a focus on two of its most salient concerns, race and gender. Both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies were applied. The analysis brought to the fore and, hopefully, provided deeper insight into the tremendous rhetorical changes of a set of culturally- and emotionally-loaded, mostly stigmatized terms, which are representative of archetypal asymmetric relations between the male and the female, the black and the white, the white male and the black female, the victimizer and the victimized, the majority and the minority, the good and the evil.

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