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**Riazanov I.H.**

*Student,*

*Institute of Philology,*

*Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University*

## **STYLISTIC PURPOSE OF TOPONYMS IN KENDRICK LAMAR'S GOOD KID, M.A.A.D CITY**

Kendrick Lamar is a critically acclaimed rapper and songwriter, whose debut studio album *good kid, m.A.A.d city* may be described as a narrative consisting of linked audio tracks (songs) [5]. Being a conceptual album with a plot and a story delivered to the listeners through album songs [5], *good kid, m.A.A.d city* also carries a name of a *short film by Kendrick Lamar*: the sign telling it can be seen on both original and deluxe edition covers of the album [3].

Lyrics are of a great importance within a story told in the album as it unfolds through them. Events always take place somewhere if we talk about physical world, and in his lyrics Lamar frequently provides names of locations, therefore *good kid, m.A.A.d city* contains a plenty of toponyms, some examples of which are analyzed in the article with an aim of finding out the stylistic purpose of their usage.

According to Collins dictionary a toponym is a name of a place, a geographical name [1]. The album plot is set in Compton, a city with a rather high crime rate and gang activity [7]. The city's role in the rise of *gangsta rap's* popularity is significant as one of the revolutionizing albums of the 80's rap music *Straight Outta Compton* by N.W.A., made Compton famous in the world of hip-hop and was included into the list of 500 Greatest Albums of All Time by Rolling Stone magazine [8].

Knowing these facts, we acquire a certain background of the city and learn that it is closely related to the development of hip-hop music. Furthermore, understanding that Compton has its own violent gang image outside Lamar's art, we may come to the conclusion that the place where the events of the album *good kid, m.A.A.d city* happen stylistically defines the nature of these events and possibly even influences the listeners' perception of the narrative.

The first song in *good kid, m.A.A.d city* is called *Sherane a.k.a Master Splinter's Daughter* and it gives us such toponyms as: *El Segundo and Central, Atlanta, Compton, Paramount, Rosecrans, Alameda* [1; 2] – each of them, except *Atlanta*, is located in Los Angeles County.

«*I met her at this house party on El Segundo and Central/She had the credentials of strippers in Atlanta*» [2, 1].

Here Lamar describes the setting and tells a listener where the action takes place: El Segundo Blvd. & Central Ave. in Compton, California; *Atlanta* in the line is used along the word *strippers* which is a reference to Atlanta's image of a city with an active night life. We don't necessarily understand that Lamar describes the girl's physical appearance, but in the context we get that her *credentials* = qualities (physical ones = appearance) are close to those of strippers from Atlanta's night clubs.

Later we may hear a part of a dialogue between two characters of *good kid, m.A.A.d city* K-Dot (Lamar's former stage name; the character is based on Kendrick Lamar himself) and Sherane:

«*"Cool, where you stay?"/She said: "Down the street from Dominguez High"/Okay, I know that's borderline Compton or Paramount"/Well, is it Compton?" – "No," she replied*» [2, 1].

*Dominguez High* – Manuel Dominguez High School, a public high school in Compton. From these lines we learn that Sherane lives not far from the school, which is situated near the borderline between Compton and *Paramount* – a neighboring city. K-Dot asks Sherane «*Well, is it Compton?*» because crossing the borderline may be dangerous for him as *Paramount* is a different city and therefore its territory is controlled by a different gang.

Later in the same track Lamar raps:

«*So now I'm down Rosecrans in a Caravan/Passin' Alameda, my gas meter in need of a pump*» [1; 2].

Here two Compton streets are mentioned: *Rosecrans* and *Alameda*, which helps to create the setting of the action – Lamar provides listeners with actual location. In addition Lamar pays homage to Rosecrans: it was called L.A. hip-hop's main street by Los Angeles Times [6].

The city of Compton is also mentioned in *Backseat Freestyle*:

«C-O-M-P-T-O-N, I win, then ball at your defeat/C-O-M-P-T-O-N, my city, mobbin' in the street» [2; 3].

Actually here Compton is spelled letter by letter which brings a phonetic stylistic effect of emphasizing the word. In addition we see that another phonetic stylistic device, anaphora, is implemented. From these lines we understand that in K-Dot's perspective Compton is *his city* = he is local and feels home; and that K-Dot is *mobbin' in the street* implying that he is involved in a criminal activity.

In *The Art of Peer Pressure* Kendrick Lamar uses such lines:

«*Janky stash box when the federales'll roll up/Basketball shorts with the Gonzales Park odor*» [2; 4].

*Gonzales Park odor* – this particular phrase is of great interest as its meaning may change depending on the context; it could be a metaphor implying that *Gonzales Park* has some sort of a special odor, but taking into consideration the fact that previous line contains the phrase *janky stash box* which is a slang term for a container used to store marijuana [9], the metaphor changes its meaning and we can assume that the author refers to marijuana smoking and the *Gonzales Park odor* = smell of marijuana smoke.

Another peculiar usage of a geographical name may be found in the song *m.A.A.d city*:

«*That was back when I was nine, Joey packed the nine/Pakistan on every porch is fine, we adapt to crime*» [2; 8].

Here the name of the country – *Pakistan* refers to the strain of marijuana. In this case *Pakistan* is a euphemism for a drug and its usage in the line brings certain deviation to the utterance.

In Kendrick Lamar's lyrics in *good kid, m.A.A.d city* we may encounter numerous toponyms, some of which give an opportunity to easily define the geography of the events that occur in Lamar's narration. All of the used toponyms are not accidental and serve a stylistic purpose: each of them defines the character and sets the tone of actions. Locations

mentioned by Lamar in his lyrics play a significant role in the alum's narrative and shape the plot. Some of the toponyms intensify the stylistic effect of the utterance through the euphemism usage, metaphor or anaphoric repetition.

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