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INTRODUCTION

No direct scholarly work has been done on the new up and coming lesbian artist in the reggaeton genre: Young Miko. A heavily masculinized and heteronormative genre that has predominantly male performers, loves Young Miko. With her unique beats and spanglish lyrics, she is a star quickly on the rise. Young Miko is one of the few female artists in reggaeton, and arguably the first lesbian artist to achieve mainstream success in the genre. Her unique position along with the complex background reggaeton has with race and gender make it a very interesting intersection of study. I begin by giving a background of the genre of reggaeton, followed by some context about the reggaeton trap artists Young Miko. Next I will be going through similar literature that has been done, including that of the study of reggaeton lyrics, latine representation in media, and Muñoz's work on disidentification politics. This will lead me straight into my analysis of one of Young Miko's music videos.

REGGAETON

Reggaeton is a unique genre that blends many styles: dance halls in Jamaica, reggae from Panama, underground from Puerto Rico, and US hip-hop, characterized by primarily Spanish

lyrics (Zelazko, A.) In its more contemporary years, it began incorporating other genres, including “R&B, vallenato, bachata, merengue, pop, and electronic dance music, among others.” The debates around reggaeton’s exact origins are yet to be resolved; it owes its unique styles to “multiple streams of migrations including (but not limited to) West Indians to Panama, Dominicans to Puerto Rico, and West Indians, Dominicans, and Puerto Ricans to the United States” (Rivera-Rideau, P. R.) Some scholars believe that reggaeton found its roots in the 1980s when Jamaican workers traveled to Panama to build the Panama Canal, and reggae was adopted into the Spanish-speaking culture. This complex sound has “resisted definition and mutated across artists, borders, and subgenres” (Butler, B., Galocha, A., Shapiro, L., & Velarde, L.)

These movements exposed different people to different types of music. They allowed for a cultural exchange of genres and ideas about race, nation, and diaspora as the politics of representation speak to broader debates of ethnic studies, women's, and gender studies. For example, many scholars have researched representations of race and blackness in reggaeton. Influences of reggaeton, including Jamaican dancehalls (later translated to reggae in Spanish) and hip-hop, come primarily from black communities in the Americas. (Rivera-Rideau, P. R.) Across the Caribbean, Black Panamanians grew up listening to reggae, creating a new generation of fans who spoke Spanish. Around this time, MCs like Leonardo “Renato” Aulder and Edgardo Franco began translating Jamaican reggae into Spanish. “El D.E.N.I,” a song by Renato released in 1985, spoke explicitly on issues of the unique racism English-speaking people from Panama often faced. In New York, rappers touched on issues of racism in the United States (Zelazko, A). From its beginning, the genre was a space where artists could shed light on deeper topics of the African diaspora/black identity and other often ignored issues of discrimination. It was a way for

Afro-Latines to affirm their black identity in a culture that sought to separate itself from Blackness.

In the 1990s, the genre spread to Puerto Rico through Jamaican immigrants (Flynn, G.). Reggaeton is characterized by a fast-paced Jamaican dancehall rhythm called dembow, which emphasizes the bass. (Butler, B., Galocha, A., Shapiro, L., & Velarde, L.). Hip-hop also traveled to Puerto Rico, and many rappers began rapping in Spanish. Then, reggae and Spanish hip-hop converged to produce what was called *Underground*. Underground was cultivated in nightclubs, specifically at The Noise, founded by DJ Negro. Here, many notable reggaeton artists tested their talents and later became worldwide sensations, including Daddy Yankee and the one woman who contributed to the largely male-dominated genre early on: Ivy Queen. Similar to reggae and Spanish hip-hop, Underground was known for being misogynistic, homophobic, and having sexually explicit lyrics. But it also has been known for discussing issues of racism and life in low-income housing projects that they called caseríos. Reggaeton was essentially shamed by mainstream society, particularly by the white population, coupled with a significant Puerto Rican anti-crime initiative that targeted reggaeton because it was associated with crime, violence, and hypersexuality, thus deemed immoral. Many of the artists lived in caseríos and were also targeted as drug dealers or other criminals (Zelazko, A).

Beginning in the 21st century, the genre became known as reggaeton, and it became more widely accepted once it became associated with Latine identity, which can be heard through the traditional Latin influences in the genre. *Blaqueamiento* has distanced reggaeton from its black cultural roots. The term translates to whitening and, in this respect, refers to, in reggaeton, taking steps away from the subject matters of its original black influences. At this time, artists were

fusing reggaeton with more Latin genres: bachata, merengue salsa, etc. This meant the genre changed from being heard and “proclaimed as Black music, to reggaeton Latino” (Butler, B., Galocha, A., Shapiro, L., & Velarde, L.) This transformation in the genre made it more marketable to white audiences, contributing to its rise in popularity. This, in turn, led to increased visibility for Latines and Latinidad through reggaeton, which is fantastic, but completely ignoring the genre’s Black roots is a disservice to black creators in the genre (Flynn, G). Artists continued writing sexually explicit lyrics as the genre progressed, like Tego Calderón’s “Loíza.” Others like Daddy Yankee, however, made lyrics more radio-friendly and produced hits like his 2004 album “Barrio Fino,” which was the first reggaeton album to debut at No. 1 on the Top Latin Albums chart featuring his hit “Gasolina.” Gasolina would introduce the world to reggaeton; Daddy Yankee would later tell Billboard. In 2006, Nuyorican rapper N.O.R.E. released his bilingual Latin pride song “Oye Mi Canto” (hear my song) featuring Calderón; this song hit No. 12 on the Hot 100 chart. When the song was released, the industry was getting accused of “whitewashing.” The music video for this song was criticized because Calderón (an artist of darker complexion) did not appear in the video, but instead, a much lighter Daddy Yankee. The label claims it was because Calderón was “unavailable” and Daddy Yankee could deliver on short notice, but “fans took note” (Butler, B., Galocha, A., Shapiro, L., & Velarde, L.)

Soon after, many labels were eager to sign on reggaeton artists, and radio stations converted to reggaeton stations. However, these artists were less successful than labels had initially hoped, which caused them to hesitate to sign more artists, and radio stations struggled to advertise on predominately Spanish radio stations throughout the United States. Regardless, the genre remained popular in several other Spanish-speaking countries like Colombia, where Nicky

Jam rose to fame. Though it would take nearly a decade for reggaeton to return to the billboard chart, in the 2010s, new performers began growing in popularity, like J Balvin and Maluma, who started creating reggaeton music. The boom of Spotify in 2014 allowed artists and listeners to be no longer limited to what they heard on the radio. Now, you can stream whatever songs you want, whenever and wherever you want. This allowed reggaeton to be streamed worldwide. After that, the genre steadily grew in popularity over the next decade (Zelazko, A).

Despite these significant successes, reggaeton still primarily gained popularity in Spanish-speaking countries. To enter the mainstream pop world, many Latin artists, including Selena, Ricky Martin, and Shakira, began creating bilingual music and albums to appeal to broader audiences. Some scholars even thought reggaeton might have been a short-lived fad. But artist Nicky Jam, who was very prominent in the genre and created collaborations with other sensations like Daddy Yankee, moved to Medellín, Colombia, because of struggles with addiction. There, he was inspired and uplifted by the musical traditions in Colombia. His music departed from hardcore rap to more lyrical and romantic. This kickstarted what would soon become a crucial and central country for reggaeton to develop. However, it took over a decade after the hit release of 2004 *Gasolina* for the reggaeton to top the Billboard charts again. In 2015, only two Spanish-language songs were on the Billboard's top 100 songs. In 2016, there were four. Then, in 2017, the reggaeton hit "Despacito" by Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee would peak the charts and remain popular without bilingual lyrics or the need for translation. Neither artist anticipated the song's success, as it was "just another song in Spanish," Fonsi told Billboard. This year, there were nineteen mostly Spanish songs in the Billboard Top 100, and by 2020, there were 41 songs. Furthermore, four months later, when famous artist Justin Bieber loved the

Spanish ballad, they collaborated to create a bilingual remix, the first Spanish-language No. 1 on the Billboard charts since “The Macarena.” Fonsi, Yankee, and Bieber transformed how Latin music was heard and normalized these mainstream crossovers, elevating Spanish to a new international language in music. Soon, other well-known artists continued the trend and collaborated with reggaeton artists like Drake & Bad Bunny on “MIA” in 2018 and Madonna & Maluma on “Medellín” in 2019 (Butler, B., Galocha, A., Shapiro, L., & Velarde, L.)

Nonetheless, reggaeton’s success went beyond these bilingual crossover hits. With streaming now available, artists could begin creating their own music before needing to catch the attention of a major record label. This was how former grocery store bagger Benito Martínez, also known as Bad Bunny, found worldwide success when uploading trap songs to SoundCloud. Martínez was adamant about wanting to create music entirely in Spanish and was set on reaching global audiences in his native language. After collaborating with numerous artists such as Becky G, Cardi B, Karol G, and Ozuna, Bad Bunny released his debut album in 2018: “X 100pre”. This record reached No. 11 on the Billboard 200 chart. It took these cross-genre collaborations to a new level, with appearances from many famous artists, including Drake, Ricky Martin, Diplo, and even El Alfa, the Dominican rapper known as the “king of dembow.” Rosalia, a pop artist from Spain, rose to fame after the production of her second album, which had cross-overs with reggaetoneros like J Balvin and Ozuna. She then went on to produce a reggaeton-inspired album, “Motomami”. The singer’s quick success added to the previously developed scholarship of the *blaqueamento* in the genre. The genre continues to grow in popularity, as Ivy Queen received the Icon Award at Billboard’s Latin Music Awards. Bad Bunny released a recent album of rap and

reggaeton entitled “Nadie Sabe Lo Que Va a Pasar Mañana.” (Butler, B., Galocha, A., Shapiro, L., & Velarde, L.)

Although the genre has been widely criticized for its controversial and violent themes, it is crucial to understand the role reggaeton plays for youths, specifically in Puerto Rico. It has been an outlet for them to express feelings about “urban life and social problems like racism, poverty, and crime.” (KID Museum) Artists like Bad Bunny, one of the first to enter the Latin Trap subgenre of reggaeton, who is streamed worldwide, challenge gender norms with his colored hair and painted nails. Ivy Queen is known as the Queen of reggaeton and one of the earliest voices for women in the genre, breaking gender norms. Tego Calderon centers on issues of race and blackness in Puerto Rico and Latin America. Karol G is driven to break gender norms and pursue collaborations with Pitbull, Niki Minaj, and the Jonas Brothers (KID Museum). And was awarded the 2024 Woman of the Year Award at the Billboard Women in Music Awards on March 6, 2024 (Cook, A). As these artists and others continue producing music, they also spread Latine representation. Furthermore, these artists continue to make ripples in the genre and, through its vast spread, the world.

YOUNG MIKO

A new artist who has recently entered the reggaeton genre in the last few years is 25-year-old Puerto Rican rapper Young Miko. The young artist signed with her first record company, Wave Music Group, in 2021 and, by 2022, was performing with massive artists like Bad Bunny and Karol G and headlining a tour in over 50 countries across the Americas and Spain for her debut EP, Trap Kitty. Like Bad Bunny, Miko began her career fidgeting around with beats on SoundCloud. Not long ago, the artist Maria Victoria Ramirez de Arellano Cardona

was channeling her artistic energy into her full-time job as a tattoo artist. She succeeded in her original goal of tattooing to finance her music career until things took off. Her Billboard Hot 100 debut in July 2023 with “Classy 101,” a smooth number in collaboration with Columbian artist Feid. Her cooperation with Karol G on the song “Dispo” reached No. 22 on Hot Latin songs. (Raygoza, I). Her first entry on the Billboard Global 200 peaked at No. 17, a “risque collab” with famous artists Bad Gyal and Tokischa in “Chulo pt.2”. (Machado, M.)

Many journalists credit her success with her hyper-femme aesthetics and unapologetically bold, raunchy lyrics that speak to women. Since arriving on the scene, the young artist has both played into and transposed the male-centric Latin tropes common for the genre. She is one of few women and one of, if not the only, lesbian artists with incredible talents as a songwriter and a storyteller. She draws on her experiences as a queer woman through her music and provides representation and visibility to the LGBTQ+ community. This is uncommon for the genre, but when asked about the topic, she says, “fuck it, people already know I’m gay, so respectfully, if I do not like men, I am not going to dedicate a song to one.” Her commitment to her authenticity and who she is, coupled with her “unmatched” and “unhurried” flow, makes Miko so unique. She has been able to captivate large audiences nationally in a very short time and created an enormous fanbase who call themselves “Mikosexuals.” Her fiery passion and ability to connect with fans have struck a chord with people across the globe (Raygoza, I). She has a suave demeanor and is one of the most humble individuals. Rather than only rapping about what happens on the streets, she is creating a world with its own narrative where women are creators of their own destinies rather than victims. One thing that sets Miko apart from the other artists in

the genre is her domain of “malianteo” in English, or a “bad boy” aesthetic in English. (Leandra, V.)

In 2020, she began downloading beats from YouTube onto her computer and rapping her own lyrics over them. She eventually posted these pieces to Soundcloud to “test the waters” she had never personally explored. Her crew consists of her manager, Mariana, and her producer, Mauro, who also happens to be Mariana’s brother. She says they constantly learn from one another (Leandra, V.). They had the talent, idea, vision, and work ethic, and they utilized SoundCloud before her career took off when she could afford studio time. Miko says, “Soundcloud was definitely a moment, especially for trap,” and that it was integral to defining what kind of artist you would be during the transition between high school and university on the island. (Machado, M.) Miko also shared in an interview with Popsugar that “Puerto Rico is a difficult audience to captivate; we are very picky and demanding, which is part of why so many major artists come from the island.” (Leandra, V.)

This hard work paid off when Angelo Torres, co-founder of Wave Music Group in Puerto Rico, came across her tracks and was instantly captivated by her sound; he says he remembers thinking: “I need to meet this person,” when he did, it was months later through her manager Mariana Lopéz. Young Miko’s first official track didn’t come out until 2021: 105 Freestyle, a catchy track in collaboration with Caleb Calloway, the other co-founder of Wave Music Group. Calloway was integral to her success, and they produced other tracks that same year, including “Puerto Rican Mami,” which came out that December. Caleb Calloway says that sincerity remains essential to Miko’s success, and she does not let fame/success impact this in any way. He says Miko was able to perfectly fit into his sound and elevate it to another level with

her rapping and singing, “it sounds like we have been together our whole lives.” (Raygoza, I).

The following year, in 2022, Miko, Calloway, and her other longtime partner Mauro created hits like “Wiggy”, “Lisa,” and her debut album “Trap Kitty,” demonstrating her “laid-back approach to trap, rap and reggaeton– a refreshing blend of boldness and nonchalance” (Raygoza, I). This nine-song EP sets the scene inside a strip club in Puerto Rico. Its main character, “Riri,” is one of Miko’s best friends who is a pole dancer. Miko says she wanted to “get into her world,” as she is one of the most confident women she knows, “a *trap kitty*” (Solá-Santiago, F.)

This same year, she accumulated 20 million monthly listeners on Spotify, was endorsed by popular artists like Ivy Queen and Camila Cabello, and performed hits from her EP onstage with Bad Bunny and Karol G in some of Puerto Rico’s largest arenas. Miko says her success comes from her simply throwing herself into whatever scares her, and being one of the very few lesbian rappers in a heteronormative male-dominated industry is undoubtedly one of them. But she said not staying true to herself was never an option, “my music is for the girlies and the they/them’s,” she said, “having the courage to talk about how I feel and what I like is what makes my project so different” (Sola-Santiago, F.). Miko says that she personally writes about things that have happened to her or are manifesting stuff she wants to happen to her. Regardless, if it’s real, it flows better. Miko says when she first posted on SoundCloud, she sang and harmonized in a higher pitch than her natural tone; she hadn’t accepted that her voice was deeper than women’s “typically” is. But Mauro helped her understand that her deep vocals are unique and made her stand out. After discovering her voice and flow, she took a year off to master her sound without producing a single track. She took this time to get to know herself and become more secure in herself and her music. She says everything has changed in the last few years, and

is a lot of pressure. She acknowledges she cannot be perfect and says she just tries to give her best to her fans (Machado, M.).

Like Ivy Queen, Miko grew up in the northwestern town of Añasco, Puerto Rico. She attended Catholic school in Maragüez, where she would write poems, always about girls. She also grew up reading Buddhist texts and watching animes like *Avatar the Last Airbender* and its sequel, *The Legend of Korra (LOC)*. She even name-drops Asami Sato (from LOC) in her hit song *Puerto Rican Mami*, another strong female figure that Miko is drawn to. Her name even comes from inspiration for her love for anime; she picked up a Japanese dictionary and learned that “Mi” means beautiful and “ko” is a common way to end a girl’s name. “Miko” means “daughter of God,” and this has been her stage name since she was discovered. (Leandra, V.)

She grew up as a middle child with both older and younger brothers. She speaks of them, as well as their parents, as her biggest supporters. Although her parents had issues with her coming out because of their traditional religious beliefs initially, regardless, they eventually came around. “If I have the acceptance of my parents, the people who matter most to me in the world, do I need anyone else’s? I don’t need anyone’s approval,” Miko says. She remains true to herself in and in a scene that threatens to quiet openly queer artists, is the ultimate flex. (Leandra, V.)

Some of her biggest inspirations include Ricky Martin, Kany García, Miguel Bosé, Shakira, and Julieta Venegas, amongst others. (Solá-Santiago, F.).

LITERATURE REVIEW:

REGGAETON:

Many things characterize reggaeton, but one area that has interested many scholars is the lyrics commonly sung in reggaeton. In general, lyrics of reggaeton are known to be sexist as they refer to sex, violation, and gender inequalities, specifically women acting in a submissive role to men. This is why it is often criticized for its commercial component of “vulgar, violent, egocentric and sexist lyrics” (Vankova, P.) In *Gender Relations in Reggaeton Discourse Among Adolescents*, Fuentes and Peregrín analyzed different focus groups of young people to study the impact of gender relations on reggaeton consumers. Many of the young girls in the group spoke of the negative stereotypes conveyed in reggaeton music, how you are defined as good or “Buena,” “si tienes culo y tetas” (if you have ass and tits). Other young girls mentioned that the lyrics were conflicting, especially because this was music they often listened to/sang along to. When asked why they still listen despite not agreeing with these concepts, they said this music was a large part of their culture, and many say they have been around it since a young age. (Escobar Fuentes, S., and Montalbán Peregrín, F.M.)

In contrast, other participants mentioned the “feel-good feminism” that artists like Becky G sing about: “a bailar, seducir, disfrutar, divertirse, sentirse empoderada, y que eso no vaya en contra de considerarse feminista”: to dance, seduce, enjoy myself, have fun, to feel empowered, and those things do not contradict being a feminist. One participant said: “soy feminista y me gusta el reggaetón”: “I am a feminist, and I like reggaeton”. Fuentes and Peregrín highlight how the growing popularity of reggaeton opens the possibility of the genre becoming a “feminist vehicle.”

In *Ni pobre diabla ni candy: Violencia de género en el reggaetón* [Neither poor thing nor candy: Gender violence in reggaetón], the authors conduct a longitudinal study based on a quantitative analysis of gender to show that gender transformations have changed in Latin American societies, the attitudes in reggaeton have not. Furthermore, while sexual and physical violence has fallen, symbolic and psychological violence continues to grow. These scholars argue that there are five dimensions: physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, economic violence, and symbolic violence, and that each of these dimensions is oftentimes spread and reinforced through reggaeton music.

LATINE (PUERTO RICAN) REPRESENTATION IN MEDIA

As I previously mentioned, although there is no direct scholarship on Young Miko herself, there is much scholarship concerning Latine representations in the media: television, movies, commercials, music, and, more specifically, pop. With respect to general Latina representation: *Brain, Brow, and Booty: Latina Iconicity in U.S. Popular Culture*, Guzmán and Valdivia examine how latinidad is represented in popular culture and mainstream media when reviewing the stereotypical Latina representations. They remind us that in the dominant culture, women often function as a sign or as a stand-in for the objectification of women in many aspects, like beauty and sexuality. The simultaneous racialization and gendering of the Latina identity create a sense of otherness, as femininity and latinidad stray from the hegemonic masculinity and whiteness that is predominant in Western cultures. They also bring in the concept of Tropicalism: erasing specificity and homogenizing all Latine identities. Tropicalism typically characterizes Latine identity with bright colors, rhythmic music, and brown or olive skin. There are also gendered aspects of this trope; for men, the Latin lover who is dark-haired and macho, and for

women, bold-red lips, seductive clothing, curvy hips and breasts, extravagant jewelry, and long brown hair. Typical representations of brown bodies include an emphasis on the butt, breasts, and hips, “as well as bodily waste and racial contamination.” When women are shown in the media, they are often fetishized and sexualized. Tropicalism homogenizes latinidad by erasing all specificity. “For the past 20 years, Latina/o marketing and advertising agencies have worked diligently to reframe dominant discourses about the U.S. Latino audience as ethnically homogenous, racially non-White, Spanish-dominant, socioeconomically poor, and most often of Mexican origin”. The marginalization of the Latina body can also be coupled with the Latina stereotypes of beauty and desire. In other words: “Latina desirability is determined by their significance as a racialized, exotic group.” Whenever Lopez appears in magazines, popular press, newspapers, or whatever media, she often appears as a gorgeous stereotypical Latina booty, and her hips are glamorized and fetishized. (Guzmán, I. M., & Valdivia, A. N.)

Jennifer Lopez is one of the world's most prominent Latina artists and actresses, and thus, she is the center of many discussions around Latina representation. In *100% Puerto Rican: Jennifer Lopez, Latinidad, and the Marketing of Authenticity*, Carmen Lugo-Lugo analyzes Jennifer Lopez’s claims of being “100% Puerto Rican” as a marketing campaign for a Loreal foundation. The author mentions that Latines are on the margins of whiteness and exist outside blackness. Latines will be in this complex in-between in a society fixed on categorization and binary representation. In addition, Jennifer Lopez has an exciting relationship with Puerto Rico (PR), as she is a U.S.-born citizen and the daughter of two Puerto Ricans. She is at least one generation removed from the racial authenticity that characterizes PR. Lugo-Lugo further examines the complexity of Jennifer Lopez’s claims of her ethnicity in an ad campaign and her

authenticity in creating her identity in the media. Lugo-Lugo further discusses that finding a “pure ethnicity” for a person is difficult. If it were possible, Latina would not be a “pure” racial identity, and it never will be as long as we live in a society that is so stuck on racial fixity. Lopez herself has identified as American, Nuyorican, and Latina, all suggesting a more complex identity than simply “100% Puerto Rican”. Mainstream authentic Puerto Rican or Latine identity is on the in-between of authentic marketable and commodifiable exotic beauties. (Lugo-Lugo, C.)

The various ways Jennifer Lopez’s identity is “ethnically and racially described (and even chastised for)” reflect the ways in which professional and public persona illustrate and understand her closer to whiteness at some times, blackness at other times, but always through that Latina lens, and her Puerto Rican identity takes precedence over anything else. The author discusses how popular Latina icons influence public perceptions of Latino identity in the United States. She does so by bringing examples of polls in the United States, where numerous polls showed that a portion of Americans feel that immigrants are “welfare recipients,” do not learn English fast enough, or do not try to adapt to the American way of life. These narratives add to the already prevalent hegemonic narrative that Latines are an imposition or a burden on American culture/society. She concludes that using the phrase “authentic Latina” can be an effective marketing strategy. Still, it is also an authentic threat to accurate representation in juxtaposition to the stereotypes perpetuated through such mediums. (Lugo-Lugo, C.)

Reggaeton in Puerto Rico

While Jennifer Lopez is a prominent Latine representation in music, she is just one of three artists who were a part of the Latin Invasion in 1999. Jennifer Lopez mainly identifies with

her Latin roots by drawing on her relationship with her family members from Puerto Rico. Licia Fiol-Matta writes about this and the later named “Latin Explosion,” explicitly looking at the other two men who were a part of the explosion: Marc Anthony and Ricky Martin, two prominent reggaeton artists. She says that this explosion was no coincidence but rather careful marketing on the parties of Anthony and Martin as “new Latinos” and how connections to their Puerto Ricaness as part of their marketing strategy was strategic. She references Globalization theory to help understand how these two artists used similar methods and modifications to grow in popularity: “language distinctions and purity, and territorial representations of national belonging (Fiol-Matta, L.) Though it is common for artists to market themselves through their identities, Fiol-Matta emphasizes the distinction between this and carefully marketed commodity-based identity-making.

Ricky Martin anglicized his name long ago before we were being marketed to U.S. Latines. Enrique Martín Morales became Ricky Martin in 1984 when he joined Menudo. He left the band in 1989 and became a Spanish-singing pop star. His anglicizing his name is “consonant with the general trend of his social class to culturally assimilate to the U.S., and to appeal to whiteness by not sporting a Hispanic name” (Fiol-Matta, L.) While Marc Anthony, originally Marco Antonio Muñiz, claims on his website to have changed his name so as not to be confused with his namesake, Marco Antonio Muñiz, Fiol-Matta questions who in the English-speaking world would confuse the two? Anthony and his managers also wanted him to release something in Spanglish, a mix of Spanish and English, to appeal to his roots and Latine fan base... they came up with “Livin la vida loca.” However, the song is entirely in English, except for the words in the title when sung. Categorizing this song as Spanglish is a marketing strategy rather than an

actual example of code-switching that many U.S. Latines use. As Marc Anthony became a sensation in the Spanish language pop genre, Salsa for short. With that, he disliked performing “soneos,” extended improvisation where the artist directs the band, as many salsa singers do. Further, Anthony’s clean Latino boy esthetics in his first three Spanish albums contrasted with the grunge-y, chain smoking street male. The author continues to investigate some of these changes to understand how this marketing of latinidad is distinct from authentic and genuine Latine representations.

Staying with the common trend that the recording industry often pushes on artists, it is not uncommon to see identities marketed. Both Martin and Anthony’s initial campaigns surrounded their latine identity and rehearsed stories of childhood memories and returning home, the relationship between the two cultures they’re a part of, and bilingualism/biculturalism. They note how the spread of latine representation through music is a very important and popular means of inter-connected entertainment. The author in the end reiterates that it is not as to completely invalidate] either artist’s claims to authenticity, but rather to simply question the genuineness of such claims to authenticity, naturalness, and spontaneity (Fiol-Matta, L.)

Additionally, Petra Rivera, in her paper *Tropical Mix”: Afro-Latino Space and Notch’s Reggaeton*, adds to the scholarly work of many other communication scholars, including Juan Flores, Tanya Kater Hernández, argues that US understandings of Latine identities are “whitened” and separate from the Afro-Latine identities/roots. She further reminds us that reggaeton is a highly masculinized space, often with misogynistic and hypersexualized representations/mentionings of women. She examines how reggaeton artist Notch uses visual, musical, and oral cues in his music and music videos to disrupt traditional racial hierarchies

while reinforcing heteronormative patriarchal relations and black hypermasculinity. She does this by examining “Que te pica,” which portrays an environment where women are the object of the masculine gaze and whose sexuality is either readily available for men or the property of another. While it highlights the African diaspora in Afro-Latine identity, it reinforces the hegemonic tropes of gender hierarchies, heteronormativity, and hypersexuality of men, especially black men. There are few references to the woman’s personality traits or interests, but rather simply her physical appearance and sexuality. The song even castigates the woman for being a “tease”, and thus a threat to male sexual desires. (Rivera, P. R).

In *Walk like a woman, talk like a man: Ivy Queen’s troubling of gender*, Dara E Goldman discusses the complexities of Ivy Queen being the first female voice in the male-dominated genre of reggaeton. She is characterized as having a grain in her voice, a resonance that other mainstream artists lacked. Goldman credits Ivy Queen’s ultimate power to her ability to manipulate the codes of femininity and masculinity that are often prevalent in reggaeton. The author discusses how reggaeton is hypermasculine to the extreme; most performers are men, and the music “range from exceedingly phallogentric to downright misogynistic.” Women are most often depicted as conquests of the male protagonist and reasserting his superiority. Women’s voices are rarely heard, and even when they are, their presence is limited to responses and/or affirmations to male desirability or dominance. The author looks at the female response: “dame más gasolina” (give me more gas) in response to the verse “A ella le gusta/le encanta mas gasolina” (she loves the gas) in Daddy Yankee’s 2004 reggaeton hit “Gasolina.” Or the “Papi, dame lo que quiero” (baby give me what I want). In this call/response dynamic, women are reduced to merely responding/reacting to male desire and dancing to fulfill male desires.

Although these male centric dynamics are not limited to this genre, the prevalence of the explicit gender performativity “reinforced through the trifecta of lyric, image, and dance— makes the case of reggaeton worthy of special consideration.” Further, the author claims that masculinity in reggaeton offers a performance of amplified misogyny.

With this in mind, we are able to take a unique perspective in analyzing where Ivy Queen fits into this world of reggaeton. She is celebrated as a feminist pioneer, and is discredited as a “femme fatale”. Women objectification is still present in female performances in reggaeton. In Ivy Queen’s “Chika Ideal,” she presents herself as a woman willing to bring a friend to the dancefloor to satisfy her male partner’s fantasy when he calls her to. But her music is unique from her male counterparts in that she tells stories. Often these stories are a narrative of betrayal and lost love, the inability of the male character to fulfill their role, reaffirming traditional patriarchal gender norms. Yet, she is still assuming agency within this system by not allowing herself to be a victim, but instead goes about evaluating her options and chooses which partner seems most worthy to her. She emphasizes women’s ability to leave their relationships if they are not getting what they need out of them to take care of themselves. Her performance of gender challenges traditional patriarchal gender roles by having the feminine figure take back agency by revealing the man incapable of fulfilling this traditional role she is criticizing. His ability to conquer and possess women.

Moreover, Goldman also mentions the importance of Ivy Queen’s persona. She has many nicknames that highlight her feminine position, specifically: la reina de reggaeton (the queen of reggaeton). Additionally her wardrobe and accessories are described as hyper feminine, coupled with her skintight clothing, elaborate gowns, high heels, and long nails. Along with her raspy

voice, some even characterize her as a drag queen. Her insertion into these hegemonic roles questions her ability to embody pure female empowerment. The author concludes that Ivy Queen's performance is ultimately queer, in that it combines conventional feminine and masculine attributes and calls to attention the constructs surrounding gender and sexual desire. She also introduces paradigms of multidirectional interaction as opposed to unidirectional consumptions of gender constructs. The singer refuses to be limited by gendered signifiers traditionally in the genre. Her power lies in her capacity to embody both traditional and nontraditional subject positions. She expresses highly normative gender performances of masculinity and femininity in order to assert her ability to be fluid across these norms. So while she can be characterized as "talking like a man," it has allowed her to enter the hypermasculine and male dominated world of reggaeton. She has been criticized being called a drag performer, which presents the limitation of the reception to these challenges to hegemonic normativity and the inability to reproduce them.

DISIDENTIFICATION POLITICS

In *DISIDENTIFICATION: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, Jose Esteban Muñoz define disidentification as "descriptive of the survival strategies the minority subject practices to negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously elides or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform to the phantasm of normative citizenship" (Muñoz 4). Those who go against the stereotypes they're faced with receive further prejudice and discrimination for not conforming to fit the group they represent. By not falling into the stereotype of the norms societally placed on them, they disidentify. We also must take note of Creshaw's theory of intersectionality, meant to represent the overlapping/intersecting oppressions

of black and feminist issues, which adjusted the issue of considering race at the expense of one's gender or any such intersecting identities. There is a lack of representation of bodies of color in LGBT spaces. Further, Yvonne Yabro-Berjarano reaffirms that we cannot consider sexuality without considering race.

To build on the theory of disidentification, Pecheux describes three modalities in which a subject can be constructed by ideological practices. The first mode is the subject that "identifies" with a path in line with the discursive ideological forms; these are "good subjects". "Bad subjects" on the other hand, reject and resist these identificatory sights provided by dominant ideology and choose to "counter-identify" with this symbolic system. The third mode of handling dominant ideologies neither assimilates to dominant culture nor strongly resists it. Instead this mode of disidentification works on and against these dominant ideologies. To disidentify is to read "one's own life narrative in a moment, subject, or object that is culturally coned to 'connect' with the disidentifying subject." What's more, queers of color face the same issues of white normativity as much a source of antagonization as heteronormativity, hence queer discourse must include issues of class, gender, and race as well as sexuality.

ANALYSIS:

This analysis will be centered around Young Miko's music video to her hit song "Riri", from her 2022 album *Trap Kitty*. This video was released July 8, 2022 on Miko's YouTube account which has over 1.5 million subscribers. The video has over 35 million views. The video and song were both produced through Wave Music Group. The video sets scenes in two locations: the first is on a party bus, and the second is at a pool house party. After the flashing lights warning the opening scene is a woman of color in high-waisted black leather pants and a

blue patterned top that covered her breasts. This woman tosses a bag to Young Miko who is fully clothed, and invites her into the bus, and then there's a frame of her name, as if we are being invited into Young Miko's world.

As the first half of the video begins we see a party happening, the bus full of feminine presenting individuals with colorful, small and/or tight clothing. There is a stripper pole in the middle of the bus and many of the women are dancing around it. Miko herself has changed into a hot pink and black long sleeve top that only covers her chest and arms, showing off her muscular abdomen, along with black baggy pants. There are close ups of her face in isolated shots of her singing which show off her bright pink eyeliner on her eyelids and gems added to her makeup and on her bottom teeth. There are also scenes of her sitting between two individuals, presumably a man and a woman. The few men that are present in this atmosphere appear more feminine, with feminine clothing and more effeminate mannerisms.

Something very noticeable is the absence of the male patriarchal protagonist that is typically common in reggaeton. As we have seen, the male dominated genre often consists of men positioning women for their own desire. Nonetheless, even as we saw with Ivy Queen, straight women's narratives around love and romance, common topics of reggaeton songs, are still heteronormative. Whether it is not needing a man, being heartbroken over a man, wanting the attention of a man; it is centering the narrative around men. Here Miko is disidentifying with the dominant narratives around reggaeton. She is descentering cis-hetero-men from the narrative, which is considered superior to femininity in traditional patriarchal/hegemonic gender roles. But rather, her and those around her almost exaggeratingly express their femininity, in their clothing/style, their dance and interactions.

At around minute 0:54, the group arrived at their destination and are now exiting the vehicle. We now can see them in the daylight in their swimsuits and party outfits. Although many of their outfits are very black or neutral, they all have a pop of a vibrant color in at least one article or part of their clothing. A gorgeous young brown woman in a silver outfit with a cropped halter top covering her chest, and matching low rise pants appears. She has a ponytail with blue braided into it. The girl takes Miko by the hand and guides her through the gate down a walkway to where the main pool party is taking place. Young Miko appears in a green, black, and white tie dyed turtle neck long sleeve shirt that covers her neck, arms and chest. She is also wearing low-rise baggy pants with a playboy waistband peeking out. She is also wearing lime green sneakers, and white eyeliner on her eyelids to complete her look. This second half of the video consists of many frames clipped together. Some centering Miko, dancing on a rooftop or on a rubber bird float in the pool. Other clips consist of more feminine bodies of color dance. One recurring body that stands out to me is the man in the center of a trio in many of the clips, in a long sheer tight black and purple dress with pink lips going down the right side of the dress. Under the dress they are wearing a small black bra and a hot pink thong. The outfit is complete with thigh high purple boots, white sunglasses, and lots of jewelry including bulky silver hoop earrings. This individual appears many times, and in the small group of three they always appear dancing flamboyantly and having fun together.


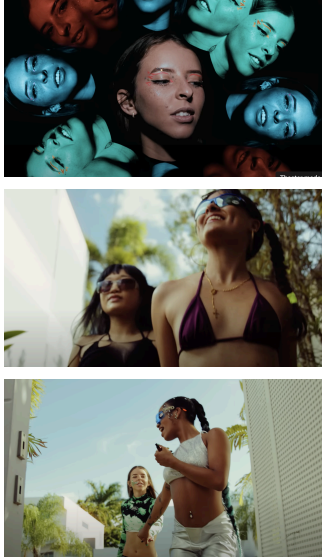

In these clips of Miko dancing on the roof or singing on the float, her movements and clothing accentuate her muscular abdomen, which is typical of masculine figures in the genre. Rather than drawing attention to her ass and tits like many reggaeton songs that center women often focus on. Her disidentification in her gender performativity strays from traditional feminine


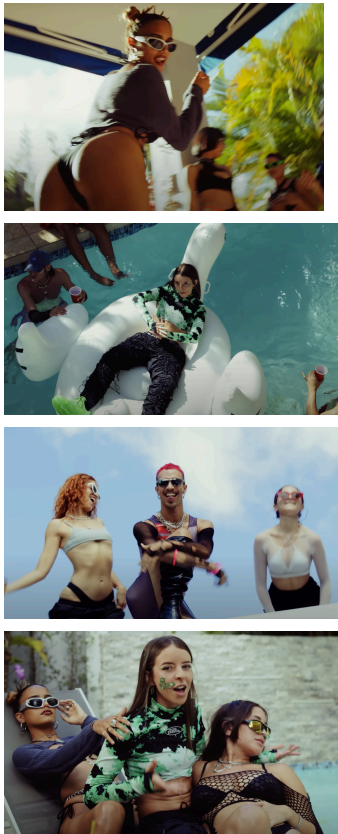
representations in reggaeton. She is in the third option Muñoz discusses that allows marginalized groups to rearrange themselves within oppressive systems. She is additionally decentering heteronormativity and contributing to a “worldmaking” that sees lesbians and queer bodies as equal, and to where these bodies can be expressed in a safe way. By that I mean she does center women in her music, but not putting herself in a position of power or dominance over them. But rather, she raps about the characteristics of the woman in her sight, is successful and is “all about her money,” and wears branded clothing like Coralina Herrera. She even includes lines of “carita de revista y ropa de design” talking about how she has a model face and designer clothing. But she never mentions physical characteristics to sexually objectify the person who she sings about. This is disidentification from traditional reggaeton protagonists who position themselves in traditional masculine dominant roles over women and contribute to heteronormative narratives within the genre. Miko often centers women in her narratives, but in a way that decenters traditional norms within the genre, removing violence and threat from women. We can see this in the music video as well. The way the people interact, it does not appear as though anyone is dancing for anyone else. There is no men “being seduced” as the men that are present, also are a representation of masculinity, as I previously mentioned they are more queer presenting.


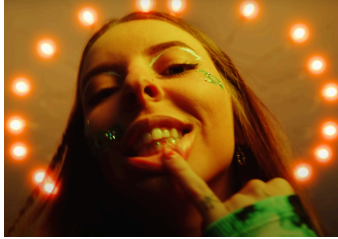

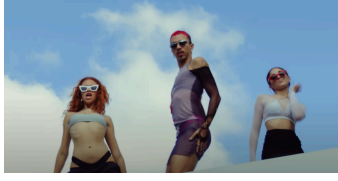
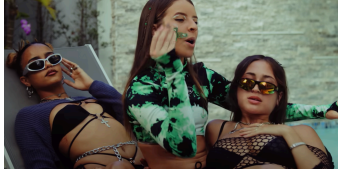

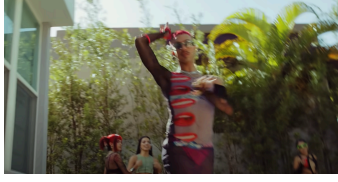
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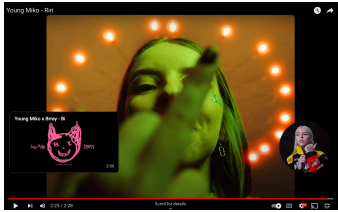
Time/Snapshot	Description	Lyrics/verse	Translation
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  <p>0:00-0:16</p>	<p>The video begins with a young, attractive, half-naked woman of color greeting the protagonist, Young Miko, and tosses her bag. They then both enter what appears to be a party bus.</p>		
  <p>0:17-0:28</p>	<p>The first verse consists of Miko surrounded by numerous women dressed in small tops, seemingly like rave clothing. They are all dancing around, and there is a stripper pole in the center of the bus. For this and the next few sections of the video, Miko is dressed in a long-sleeved black and hot pink top and black pants.</p>	<p>dame contacto le digo mi diabla <i>sabe lo que hace al oído me habla</i> <u>le toco su cuerpo eso es lo que ella ama</u> y prende la webcam cuando está en su cama</p>	<p>Give me contact, I tell you, my devil. <i>She knows what shes doing, she speaks in my ear</i> <u>I touch her body.</u> <u>That's what she loves</u> And turn on the webcam when she is in her bed</p>
   <p>0:29-0:39</p>	<p>This clip starts with three heads, red, blue and green (left to right) of Young Miko singing the verse. The outer faces have “futuristic” glasses on. The next clip is her singing with these same glasses in front of a bunch of heart emojis. The next few seconds are more heads of the same colors and clips of her in the bus with a blue tint over, surrounded by dancers and girls twerking.</p>	<p>bebesita tu solo indica <i>un corazón emoji yo sé que significa</i> <u>ella se va viral en IG cuando publica</u> me dijo que sus captions siempre me los dedica</p>	<p>Baby, you just indicate <i>A heart shaped emoji, i know what it means</i> <u>She goes viral on IG when she posts</u> She told me that her captions are always dedicated to me</p>

 <p>0:40-0:51</p>	<p>In this clip, there are many clips stringed together of the heads singing, and clips from the bus of Miko and the people surrounding her dancing and singing to the song from many angles, from above, below, eye level. These clips are characterized by white flashing lights and a blue tint where Miko sits and sings. There is also a clip of a kaleidoscope of her head finishing this verse. In this clip she has bright pink eyeliner on her eyelids.</p>	<p>ella se enrola varios siempre está en demon time. <i>cuando llama la calle la baby no da decline</i> <u>pa ver su contenido</u> <u>tienes que pagar el prime</u> carita de revista y la ropa de design</p>	<p>She enrolls several times, she's always on demon time. <i>When the street calls the baby does not decline</i> <u>To view her content you have to pay the prime</u> Magazine face and designer clothes</p>
 <p>0:52-1:02</p>	<p>This clip begins with a kaleidoscope of heads, centered in regular colored and surrounded by different heads of her singing the same verse with blue, green, and red tints. Following this, many clips of members from the group walking outside are stringed together. It seems as though they have arrived at their destination. They all turn the corner to a pool where there seems to be a party going on.</p>	<p>yo le enseño how to dougie <i>all my bitches bad all my bitches yummy</i> <u>la baby trabaja</u> <u>she's all about her money</u> sabe que está ricota sabe que es una mami</p>	<p>I teach her how to dougie <i>All my bitches bad, all my bitches yummy</i> <u>The baby works because shes all about her money</u> She knows she's rich, she knows she's a mommy</p>
	<p>There are many frames mashed together during this clip. Clips of people in swimming suits dancing, Young Miko on a swan floatie, and top of a roof, dancing and singing to the song. In these clips, she is again wearing a long-sleeved black and</p>	<p>Dame contacto, te digo mi diabla <i>Sabe lo que hace, al oido me habla</i> <u>Le toco su cuerpo eso es lo que ella ama</u> Y prende la webcam cuando esat en su cama</p>	<p>Give me contact, I tell you, my devil. <i>She knows what shes doing, she speaks in my ear</i> <u>I touch her body.</u> <u>That's what she loves</u> And turn on the webcam when she</p>

 <p>1:03-1:15</p>	<p>green tie-dye covering her chest and showing her stomach (and her 6 pack of abs). She wears this with black baggy cargo pants. There is also a clip of three dancers dancing sensually, moving their hips and hands. They all have sunglasses on. What stands out to me is what I assume is a man in the center with red hair and rather feminine clothing.</p>		<p>is in her bed</p>
 <p>1:16-1:26</p>	<p>During this clip, there is more compilations of people outside dancing to music. Many shaking booty, in thongs/very small swimwear. We again see clips of Young Miko on the blowup swan. We also see the three dancers from earlier dancing on the rooftop again. The person in the middle seems more male presenting but is dressed femininely. Furthermore, he and the other two dancers are dancing rather flamboyantly. We also have a clip of Miko between two women, one leaning up against her between her legs, in her lap almost, and the other behind her, caressing her.</p>	<p>Dame contacto, te digo mi diabla <i>Sabe lo que hace, al oído me habla</i> <u>Le toco su cuerpo eso es lo que ella ama</u> Y prende la webcam cuando esat en su cama</p>	<p>Give me contact, I tell you, my devil. <i>She knows what shes doing, she speaks in my ear</i> <u>I touch her body.</u> <u>That's what she loves</u> And turn on the webcam when she is in her bed</p>

  <p>1:27-1:38</p>	<p>In this portion of the video many of the dancers and people in the video are posing and doing different things in front of the camera. They all do different things. The first two kiss and others pose, do dance moves, etc. Again it is a compilation of many clips, with different vibrant color hues over people.</p>	<p>la baby es exclusiva no anda con cualquiera <i>tiene pal de pesitos se compra lo que ella quiera ropita de marca carolina herrera</i></p>	<p>My baby is exclusive, she doesn't go with just anyone. <i>She has enough pesos, she buys what she wants</i> <u>Branded clothes Carolina Herrera.</u></p>
   <p>1:39-1:50</p>	<p>In this clip, we see the three dancers that we have consistently seen throughout the video. For a few seconds, they are on the ground, and then it pans to them three dancing on the roof again. We then have Miko again with the two women leaning against each other in a lawn chair outside the pool.</p>	<p>Yo le enseño how to dougie <i>All my bitches bad, all my bitches yummy</i> <u>La baby trabaja, she's all about her money</u> Sabe que está ricota, sabe que es una mami</p>	<p>I teach her how to dougie <i>All my bitches bad, all my bitches yummy</i> <u>The baby works because shes all about her money</u> She knows she's rich, she knows she's a mommy</p>
 	<p>In this portion, there are more compilations of different young people dancing together at the pool. There is a solo of the center person in the familiar trio. They have short red hair matching the lips along the side of their shirt. The shirt itself has sheer black sleeves, and a purple sheer middle. They have a purple bandeau top underneath.</p>	<p>Bebesita, tú solo indica Un corazón y emoji yo sé que significa Ella se va viral en IG cuando publica Me dijo que sus captions siempre me los dedica, ah</p>	<p>Baby, you just indicate <i>A heart shaped emoji, i know what it means</i> <u>She goes viral on IG when she posts</u> She told me that her captions are always dedicated to me</p>

 <p>1:51-2:01</p>	<p>There is also another clip of Young Miko on the blowup swan, in a relaxed position, singing along and showing her abs.</p>		
 <p>2:02-2:12</p>	<p>There is a compilation of a few small clips. From people dancing, Miko sitting and singing with the women, and close-ups of the woman Miko lays on dancing. And there are clips again of her on the floatie.</p>	<p>Dame contacto, te digo, mi diabla Sabe lo que hace, al oído me habla Le toco su cuerpo, eso es lo que ella ama Y prende la webcam, cuando está en su cama</p>	<p>Give me contact, I tell you, my devil. <i>She knows what shes doing, she speaks in my ear</i> <u>I touch her body.</u> <u>That's what she loves</u> And turn on the webcam when she is in her bed</p>
 <p>2:13-2:28</p>	<p>In the last bit of the song there is another compilation of the dancers again: dancing, posing, looking at the camera. And ends with a similar closeup of Miko.</p>	<p>*Dame contacto Dame contacto Dame contacto Dame contacto*</p>	

I have acted with honesty and integrity in producing this work and am unaware of anyone who has not. /s/ Adrianna Flores-Vivas

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