

Adrianna Flores-Vivas

Dr. Bob Bednar

Communication Capstone

February 2024

Initial Prospectus

INTRODUCTION:

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: they refer to sex, violation, and gender inequalities (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.) *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” translated to “if you have ass and tits.” Others mentioned that the lyrics were conflicting, especially because this was music they often listened to/sang along to. Coupled with the fact that this music was a large part of their culture and they have been around it since a young age, many recall the 2004 hit *Gasolina*. (Escobar Fuentes, S., and Montalbán Peregrís, 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.

LATINA REPRESENTATION

As I previously mentioned, although there is no direct scholarship on Young Miko herself, there is much scholarship concerning Latine representations in the media: from 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, from beauty to sexuality. The simultaneous racialization and gendering of the Latina identity simultaneously 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. 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 signification as a racialized, exotic Others.” (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 L’Oréal 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 interesting 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.

LATINE AND PUERTO RICAN REPRESENTATION IN MUSIC

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. 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.)

Marc Anthony, originally Marco Antonio Muñiz, claims on his website to have changed his name to not 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.” Although the song is entirely in English, except for the words in the title when sang. 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, chainsmoking 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 (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 (Rivera, P. R).

Further, we can look at Kenneth Burke's theory of identification and José Esteban Muñoz's theory of disidentification to understand how particular artists associate or disassociate with certain hegemonic stereotypes to establish themselves in a genre dominated by "performing" in ways that align with parts of their identity that are not aligned with societal norms.

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