

**Reggaetón,**  
**struggle for international recognition,**  
**and popular culture**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In my thesis I explore reggaetón, or more specifically, I analyze interviews that have been conducted with reggaetón artists Daddy Yankee, Bad Bunny, Rauw Alejandro, and J Balvin, to identify ways a struggle for international recognition can be interpreted in relation to reggaetón. Furthermore, I discuss how reggaetón can be connected to popular culture, based on how the four reggaetón artists refer to reggaetón. I use cultural discourse analysis when analyzing the interviews. The way I understand cultural discourse analysis is based on what Donal Carbaugh writes in his book: “Cultural Discourse Analysis: Communication Practices and Intercultural Encounters”. I use cultural discourse analysis to lay the foundation for a more trustworthy interpretation of which ways a struggle for international recognition can be interpreted in relation to reggaetón. In my analysis I take terms from what Carbaugh defines as the interpretive mode, and I use these structurally in my analysis. The terms I use include the five radiants, Carbaugh mentions, as well what is referred to as cultural propositions, cultural premises, and finally norms. For popular culture I present six definitions, which I in my discussion connect with quotes from the four reggaetón artists. The way I describe popular culture is based on what John Storey writes in his book: “Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction” During my discussion I also summarize some of the terms I have used from cultural discourse analysis in my analysis.

My thesis is based on a constructivist ontology and epistemology. I would also argue that I use inductive reasoning. I mainly use qualitative data in my thesis because I want to analyze quotes from interviews. I do though include a few examples of quantitative data as well. In my discussion and conclusion I use a comparative method.

I do a literature review in my thesis where I present shortly four academic projects. The first two projects I mention in this section have used theory on cultural discourse analysis and the last two have used theory on popular culture. In this section of my thesis I comment on similarities and differences in relation to the theories and their implementation.

In my analysis I got to understand in depth the quotes I have selected from each interview with the four reggaetón artists by applying cultural discourse analysis. I also identified different ways that the artists may express struggle. I could conclude that a

struggle for international recognition in relation to reggaetón was especially present in the case of Daddy Yankee and Rauw Alejandro. It was not as evident in the case of Bad Bunny and J Balvin, although I did conclude struggles for both of them that could be argued to be of a similar theme. In my discussion I was able to connect each of the six definitions of popular culture with at least one of the four reggaetón artists.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Reggaetón is a musical genre I believe has a lot of presence today, but I want to explore how reggaetón might be more than just music. Therefore, I have chosen in my thesis to answer the following problem formulation: “Based on interviews conducted with reggaetón artists Daddy Yankee, Bad Bunny, Rauw Alejandro, and J Balvin, in which ways, if any, can a struggle for international recognition be interpreted in relation to reggaetón? Also, how can reggaetón be connected to popular culture, based on how the four reggaetón artists refer to reggaetón?”

Cultural discourse analysis will be used in my analysis to understand the four reggaetón artists, especially in the context of reggaetón, which will lay the foundation for a more trustworthy interpretation of which ways a struggle for international recognition can be interpreted in relation to reggaetón. Having in mind what I have analyzed using cultural discourse analysis I then want to discuss how reggaetón can be connected to popular culture, based on how Daddy Yankee, Bad Bunny, Rauw Alejandro, and J Balvin refer to reggaetón, respectively.

Exploring this topic is relevant because I believe that it is important to understand us humans. By looking into popular phenomenons and analyzing them, I believe that we can become more understanding of each other as well as more respecting. We cannot analyze everything we humans do around the world but we can look into what seems to be dominant in large parts of the world at the moment, and right now I would argue that reggaetón is being that. I believe that when something gains a noticeable presence it says a lot about us humans. It is possible to analyze that “something” in different ways, but all ways reward us with new knowledge.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this section I present what has shaped my thesis. I will comment on the following:

- Paradigm
- Research design
- Data collection
- Selection of theory
- Limitations

### **Paradigm**

My thesis is based on a constructivist ontology and epistemology. I believe that we humans experience different realities, meaning that we do not all perceive our surroundings in the same way. I will argue though that culture for instance has a major role in shaping our subjectiveness, meaning that groups of people together can generally construct a common way of perceiving the world. Having this in mind, this would obviously mean that my way of analyzing and interpreting may have been influenced by my culture, which in theory suggests that I will be biased in my thesis. By knowing that this can be the case, I will approach my thesis critically to avoid bringing personal opinions and ideology into my work (Bryman, 2016).

In my thesis I would argue that I use inductive reasoning because I want to conclude patterns based on what I analyze and interpret during my project. I am therefore not trying to confirm or disconfirm any hypotheses. I am trying to answer two overall questions in order to gain new knowledge about reggaetón, and to unveil this knowledge I analyze different interviews using terms and concepts from theory on cultural discourse analysis. I also discuss them in the context of popular culture (Bryman, 2016).

### **Research design**

In my thesis I mainly use qualitative data because I want to analyze quotes from interviews, although at certain points I do include numbers that show specific results in

relation to the reggaetón artists' music and careers, which would be considered as quantitative data (Bryman, 2016). I choose to mainly focus on qualitative data because I believe that if I want to understand how someone may think, I have to analyze what they say.

Finally, a comparative method is used in my discussion and conclusion.

### **Data collection**

In my analysis and discussion I analyze quotes from interviews. I have found these interviews on the internet and three of them are written down in articles published by El País, GQ, and Vogue, respectively. The fourth interview is video format and is published by Billboard on YouTube. These are the four interviews I will be analyzing quotes from:

- “Daddy Yankee Reflects On His Career & The Impact Of 'Gasolina' | Billboard Latin Music Week” published by Billboard on YouTube September 23, 2021.
- “Hay que romper eso de que los gringos son dioses... No, papi” published by El País on their website January 3, 2021.
- “La entrevista a Rauw Alejandro sobre el nuevo reggaeton, hacer música y conciertos con millones de espectadores durante la cuarentena y el vídeo viral de Ester Expósito bailando 'El efecto'” published by GQ on their website July 1, 2020.
- “J Balvin es la voz que hace sonar a Latinoamérica en todo el mundo” published by Vogue on their website March 27, 2020.

All interviews have been conducted in Spanish. For the sake of the analysis and discussion I have translated the quotes present in my thesis into English.

The theory I use in my thesis are from two different texts: the way I refer to cultural discourse analysis is based on what Donal Carbaugh writes in his book “Cultural Discourse Analysis: Communication Practices and Intercultural Encounters” published by Routledge in 2007. The way I refer to popular culture is based on what John Storey writes in his book “Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction” published by Pearson Longman in 2009.

I also have a section in my thesis titled CONTEXT. For this section I write shortly about information that I have found at Spotify's website as well as Famous Birthdays' website.

The sources I use in my analysis and discussion could be categorized as secondary sources because three of the interviews I use in my analysis and discussion are quotes written down by different authors in online articles. The fourth interview is video format but has been edited and posted on YouTube by someone who is not me (Paperpile).

All sources used in my thesis are referenced in the section titled REFERENCES.

### **Selection of theory**

As I mention in my data collection, I use theories on cultural discourse analysis and popular culture. I explain the theory in detail in the section titled THEORY. I believe that these two theories in particular combine well with my constructivist ontology and epistemology because of its heavy focus on culture and how this theme may be approached and understood.

As mentioned in the introduction of my thesis, cultural discourse analysis will be used in my analysis to understand the four reggaetón artists, especially in the context of reggaetón, which will lay the foundation for a more trustworthy interpretation of which ways a struggle for international recognition can be interpreted in relation to reggaetón. Having in mind what I have analyzed using cultural discourse analysis I then want to discuss how reggaetón can be connected to popular culture, based on how Daddy Yankee, Bad Bunny, Rauw Alejandro, and J Balvin refer to reggaetón, respectively.

### **Limitations**

I have been limited in my thesis in the way that my approach towards cultural discourse analysis can be interpreted as being unique, meaning that although I use it critically and with a specific structure in my analysis, there is not much justification academically online for my approach. I personally believe that my approach is relevant and legitimate because it is inspired by how I in previous academic projects have used critical discourse analysis in my analyses: an approach that is justified and known to be used academically. Carbaugh in his book about cultural discourse analysis also mentions that



when designing a study the analyst can adopt or create a specific theoretical, descriptive, and interpretive approach to it that serves its purposes (Carbaugh, 2007).

Another limitation in my thesis is that I only analyze interviews from four reggaetón artists, which does generalize my conclusion. Three of the reggaetón artists are also from Puerto Rico, which may influence how reggaetón is understood; reggaetón artists from other countries may understand the genre differently.

The reggaetón artists I have chosen for my thesis are Daddy Yankee, Bad Bunny, Rauw Alejandro, and J Balvin. I chose these because they were the ones I could find that actually talked about their music and culture enough so that I would have material to analyze. In this sense, it could be argued that I have been limited as well, which also explains why three of the artists are from Puerto Rico. It also explains why all four are males.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

For my literature review I will present shortly four academic projects: two using theory on cultural discourse analysis and two using theory on popular culture. I will also explain what my thesis and these projects have in common and also how they might be different in relation to theory and its implementation.

### **Papers using cultural discourse analysis**

The first project using cultural discourse analysis I want to mention is a thesis by Mily Vázquez Harkivi from the University of Helsinki. The thesis is titled: “Environmental professionals’ cultural discourse about the environment” and was submitted in 2015. In the thesis Harkivi analyzes interviews just like I do in my thesis, and the general approach is to apply cultural discourse analysis on language and context.

In the introduction of the thesis, Harkivi writes the following: “The research purpose of this thesis was to identify cultural discourses about nature and the environment that would illustrate deeply held values and beliefs about nature [...] The research question is aimed to identify beliefs and values about nature, personhood, and relationships hold by seven Finnish professionals of the environment working in the forest company UPM.” (Harkivi, 2015).

In Harkivi’s analysis all modes of inquiry are analyzed and interpreted whereas in my analysis my major focus is on the five radiants that are part of the interpretive mode. In Harkivi’s analysis, the five radiants are only referred to when analyzing the mode of inquiry that they are part of.

The second project using cultural discourse analysis I want to mention is a paper by Bagus Indro Nugroho and Sigit Ricahyono from Universitas PGRI Madiun. The paper is titled: “Hooligan: Barclays Premier League: A Cultural Discourse Analysis” and was submitted in 2014. In the paper Nugroho and Ricahyono analyze ways of referring to hooligans, and the general approach seems to be applying cultural discourse analysis on socio-cultural context.

In the introduction of the paper, Nugroho and Ricahyono write the following: “Hooligan has a nickname as “English Disease”. The choice word of “English Disease” comes to the

researcher's mind to keep the curiosity why it should be that words. Besides, the construction of the name by hooligan pays attention to be analyzed. The background of creating the names will be followed by the culture of its followers. It would be challenging to do analyses within. For that reason, the research focuses on England hooligan. How come both culture and hooligans firm's name in Barclays Premier League merge one in another is an interesting topic to study." (Nugroho & Ricahyono, 2014).

Nugroho and Ricahyono mention in their paper that they want to analyze their topic using three approaches of cultural discourse analysis. They define these three to be:

- The linguistic resources
- The various media used when communicating
- The way verbal and nonverbal signs create and reveal social codes of identity, relationships, emotions, place, and communication itself

(Nugroho & Ricahyono, 2014).

Where cultural discourse analysis will be used in my analysis to understand the four reggaetón artists, especially in the context of reggaetón, which will lay foundation for a more trustworthy interpretation of which ways a struggle for international recognition can be interpreted in relation to reggaetón, it is in Harkivi's analysis used to identify beliefs and values about nature, personhood, and relationships held by seven Finnish professionals of the environment working in the forest company UPM (Harkivi, 2015). This ultimately means that Harkivi seems to be using the theory to gain instant results, meaning that there is a direct connection between theory and analysis, whereas I use the theory as a way of opening interpretation and discussion in relation to 'struggle' and popular culture. I find it confusing to understand the use of cultural discourse analysis in the case of Nugroho and Ricahyono's paper.

### **Papers using popular culture**

The first project using popular culture I want to mention is a thesis by Julie Kjerri Rasmussen from Aalborg Universitet. The thesis is written in German; the English version of its title is: "Pop or flop? How popular is German popular culture amongst

Danish high-school students? An empirical study of the individual and situational interest for German popular culture of Danish high-school students in Northern and Southern Jutland” and was submitted in 2018.

In the thesis Rasmussen analyzes results from a questionnaire she herself has conducted. She does mention though that interviews would have been another great option to conduct and analyze (Rasmussen, 2018). In my thesis I discuss how reggaetón can be connected to popular culture based on quotes from interviews.

Rasmussen presents the theory on popular culture in a similar way to mine, also mentioning Storey’s six definitions, except that she in her paper seems to be focusing mostly on the first two definitions (Rasmussen, 2018).

The second project using popular culture I want to mention is a paper by Jamila Aliyu Mohammed from Ahmadu Bello University. The paper is titled: “CULTURE AND SOCIETY: POPULAR CULTURE IN A CHANGING WORLD” and was submitted in 2021. This paper is different from the three others because it does not include an analysis as such. I have chosen to mention it anyway because it highlights how popular culture is defined in various ways. In the paper Mohammed gives examples of how different phenomena can be connected with a definition of popular culture (Mohammed, 2021), which is similar to what I try to do in my discussion: I do a discussion on how reggaetón can be connected to popular culture, based on how Daddy Yankee, Bad Bunny, Rauw Alejandro, and J Balvin refer to reggaetón, respectively.

## **THEORY**

I will now present the two theories I use to construct my analysis and discussion. The first one I will present is on cultural discourse analysis.

### **Cultural discourse analysis**

To understand theory on cultural discourse analysis I have read: "Cultural Discourse Analysis: Communication Practices and Intercultural Encounters" by Donal Carbaugh. The book was published by Routledge in 2007.

According to Carbaugh, using cultural discourse analysis, one can investigate communication with an ethnographic approach; it is an analysis with special attention to social life. Furthermore, cultural discourse as a concept is used to manage ways of understanding how culture is not only an integral part of discourse systems but also a product of these. Cultural discourse analysis can be understood as communication practices, acts, events, and styles that are historically transmitted and which are produced of specific symbols and norms. Cultural discourse analysis can be divided into three main focuses with the first one being an exploration of identity, action, emotion, relationships, and dwelling in nature when people communicate. The second focus is on the deep meanings that these last mentioned terms (identity, action, emotion, etc.) create when being used. The third focus is on the idea that every social interaction is an outcome of sequential or interactional sequences with cultural integrity (Carbaugh, 2007). I would argue that one could understand these as being forms of social influence.

When it comes to cultural research, modes of inquiry are important to discuss. Carbaugh says that there exists five of these but he also argues that the first three are necessary for a cultural discourse analysis, while the remaining two are not always (Carbaugh, 2007). I will be explaining the first three only because of their relevance for my thesis; the third mode is also especially important because this mode in particular is what shapes my analysis.

The first mode is the theoretical mode, which is about the understanding of culture and communication. Carbaugh argues that the task would be for the analyst to describe how culture in discourse is understood and the basic communication phenomena of concern

(Carbaugh, 2007). I believe in the five types of communication because I think each can be important to understand in depth one's culture. In this project I cannot include all types because I for the most part in my analysis and discussion analyze and interpret quotes that have been written down. I still think that important and relevant elements of the artists' view on reggaetón can be revealed because of the way I incorporate the third mode, that Carbaugh describes, into my analysis. This way also reflects on how culture can be understood as a concept. I will present definitions of culture when I later present Storey's take on popular culture.

The second mode is the descriptive mode. This mode is about the data that is being analyzed. Carbaugh argues that preferred data is usually video and audio recordings that have not been manipulated by the analyst (Carbaugh, 2007). In the case of this thesis this is not possible because I have chosen to rely on material found online. I would argue because of my problem formulation that this is not a significant issue though. Although a possible concern could be that the quotes written down in the articles have been manipulated a lot or that the interview that is in video format has been heavily edited so that quotes are being cut and taken out of context.

The third mode, which is what will be structuring my analysis, is the interpretive mode. Carbaugh mentions that the general question one must answer is: "What is the significance and importance of that phenomenon to participants?" The idea is to reveal the premises of belief and value of someone (Carbaugh, 2007). I understand this mode in particular to be about what one can interpret from what is being said both explicitly and implicitly.

Carbaugh divides this mode into two concerns and these concerns are the ones I will take terms from and use structurally in my analysis. The first concern is referred to as the semantic content of cultural discourses: hubs and radiants of meaning. The radiants that Carbaugh mentions are what I will use as terms when I analyze the interviews. These radiants are to be understood as radiants of cultural meaning or hubs of cultural meaning (Carbaugh, 2007).

The first radiant is meanings about being, personhood and identity, which I in my analysis and discussion will refer to as *identity*. Carbaugh says that messages about identity can become a solid part of communication through the use of identity terms, pronouns, terms of address, or membership categorization (Carbaugh, 2007). In my

analysis I will focus particularly on the last mentioned: membership categorization.

The second radiant is meanings about relating, relationships, which I in my analysis and discussion will refer to as *relationships*. The question here is about how people relate to one another when engaging in communication practices. Carbaugh mentions that an analyst can ask of a communication practice how it works to relate people, one to others, or others to one (Carbaugh, 2007).

The third radiant is meanings about acting, action and practice, which I in my analysis and discussion will refer to as *action*. The idea behind this radiant is to understand what people are doing (Carbaugh, 2007). I understand this radiant in the way that one should be able to recognize explicit and implicit choices formulated through communication.

The fourth radiant is meanings about feeling, emotion and affect. This radiant focuses on emotions and feelings that are expressed in communication. Carbaugh mentions the concept of the feeling of the practice a lot in relation to this radiant, which is why in my analysis and discussion I also will refer to this radiant as *the feeling of the practice* (Carbaugh, 2007).

The fifth and final radiant is meanings about dwelling, place and environment, which I in my analysis and discussion will refer to as *place and dwelling*. The idea is to understand where people are located as well as how they relate to this location and establish their place within it.

I will now continue with the second concern of the interpretive mode. This concern is referred to as concepts for formulating interpretive accounts. This concern presents, among other terms, *cultural propositions*, *cultural premises*, and norms (Carbaugh, 2007). As well as the five radiants I will focus on these three terms in my analysis. *Cultural propositions* reflect personal interpretations of cultural terms and concepts, which could be seen as taken-for-granted knowledge. *Cultural propositions* are reflecting a participant's view of what is experienced (Carbaugh, 2007).

*Cultural premises* are when something is mentioned that is understood as being common sense and therefore does not have to be explained (Carbaugh, 2007).

Finally, a norm, according to Carbaugh, is an analyst's formulation of a moral message that is stated by participants themselves; this moral message can also be implicit in the structuring of discourse (Carbaugh, 2007). When possible, I will interpret possible norms that can be reflected by statements made by the reggaetón artists in the

interviews.

I will now present a theory on popular culture.

### **Popular culture**

To understand theory on popular culture I have read: “Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction” by John Storey. The book was published by Pearson Longman in 2009.

First I want to present three ways Storey defines culture. Storey first mentions that culture may refer to a general process of intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development. Culture could though also suggest a particular way of life of a people, a period, or a group. This means that the concept would reflect development of elements such as literacy, holidays, sport, and religious festivals, and not just intellectual and aesthetic factors. A third way could be that culture can refer to works and practices that are understood to be of activity that is intellectual and artistic. This would then mean that the concept of culture is defined by texts and practices (Storey, 2009).

When it comes to popular culture, Storey mentions the second and third way of understanding culture to be relevant because popular culture, according to Storey, usually means to mobilize these two meanings of the word. This is because the second meaning allows one to speak of for example celebrations and youth subcultures as examples of culture; the third meaning allows one to speak of for example pop music and comics as examples of culture. Storey also mentions that to understand popular culture, one should define what ‘popular’ means. Storey introduces the following definitions: something is popular when it is well liked by many people, is a kind of work that is inferior, is a work that is deliberately setting out to win favor with the people, or is a culture actually made by the people for themselves (Storey, 2009).

Storey specifies six definitions in which one can understand exactly what popular culture could be believed to be as a concept. I will present these six definitions. I will discuss which definitions that can be connected with each of the four reggaetón artists based on what I have analyzed in my analysis; I will do this in the section of my thesis titled DISCUSSION.



The first definition of popular culture is that popular culture is a culture that is widely favored as well as well liked by many people. One could approach this by looking at sales of for instance books, CDs and DVDs or at attendance records at concerts, sport events, and festivals. Storey mentions though that it might be difficult to agree on when something is interpreted as being widely favored and well liked (Storey, 2009).

The second definition of popular culture is that popular culture is what is left after one has decided what is high culture. Popular culture would then be texts and practices that do not meet the required standards of high culture. This idea also gives popular culture the perception of being an inferior culture (Storey, 2009).

The third definition of popular culture is that popular culture is a commercial culture that is mass produced for mass consumption. This suggests that its audience is consumers that are non-discriminating. It also means that popular culture is manipulative (Storey, 2009).

The fourth definition of popular culture is that popular culture is the culture that originates from the people. This suggests that popular culture is not something imposed on the people but rather an authentic culture of the people (Storey, 2009).

The fifth definition of popular culture is that popular culture has to do with hegemony. It is the struggle between dominant and subordinate cultures. We must understand that popular culture is the process of culture going from subordinate to dominant (Storey, 2009).

The sixth and final definition of popular culture avoids the idea of referring to something as being popular culture. A distinction between high culture and popular culture is no longer recognized. Without a distinction, everything should be seen as being of a postmodern culture instead (Storey, 2009).

Finally, before concluding my section about theory I want to define what I refer to when I say "to struggle". It is relevant for me to do so because it is part of my problem formulation and because I am going to use this verb in my thesis frequently. The definition of the word would be the following: "to experience difficulty and make a very great effort in order to do something." (Cambridge Dictionary).

## **CONTEXT**

In this section I will shortly introduce each of the four artists I have chosen for my thesis. I will also mention how many monthly listeners they each have on Spotify, a digital platform with 422 million users (Spotify).

Daddy Yankee is 45 years old and from Puerto Rico (Famous Birthdays).

At the time of writing this, Daddy Yankee has 46.752.088 monthly listeners on Spotify.

He is currently the 27th most listened to on Spotify (Spotify).

Bad Bunny is 28 years old and from Puerto Rico (Famous Birthdays).

At the time of writing this, Bad Bunny has 57.824.562 monthly listeners on Spotify (Spotify). He is currently the 6th most listened to on Spotify (Spotify).

Rauw Alejandro is 29 years old and from Puerto Rico (Famous Birthdays).

At the time of writing this, Rauw Alejandro has 40.685.270 monthly listeners on Spotify (Spotify). He is currently the 36th most listened to on Spotify (Spotify).

J Balvin is 37 years old and from Colombia (Famous Birthdays).

At the time of writing this, J Balvin has 53.686.111 monthly listeners on Spotify (Spotify). He is currently the 14th most listened to on Spotify (Spotify).

## **ANALYSIS**

This is the section of my thesis where I analyze quotes from interviews with Daddy Yankee, Bad Bunny, Rauw Alejandro, and J Balvin, respectively. The analysis is conducted using terms I have presented in the section of my thesis titled THEORY. Furthermore, during this section I interpret and conclude ways a struggle for international recognition can be interpreted in relation to reggaetón. I will conclude each analysis of an interview by doing a short conclusion of the interview that summarizes general points I have made about the struggle I have interpreted.

### **Daddy Yankee**

For the analysis of Daddy Yankee I have found an interview posted on YouTube by Billboard titled: “Daddy Yankee Reflects On His Career & The Impact Of 'Gasolina' | Billboard Latin Music Week” It was published September 23, 2021.

The first quote from the interview with Daddy Yankee I want to analyze is the following: “It’s a song (“Gasolina”) that without a doubt changed music. Not just Latin music but music worldwide. It introduced a culture and it put reggaetón on the international scene. We are now enjoying the fruits that “Gasolina” grew; countless artists have sat here (at the Billboard Latin Music Week) thanks to my album “Barrio Fino” that introduced reggaetón to other cultures and to people without knowledge of the genre.” (Billboard, 2021).

Starting with the *identity* aspect of the quote, a noteworthy sentence would be: “It introduced a culture and it put reggaetón on the international scene.” The key words would be ‘culture’ and ‘reggaetón’. One can understand that the culture Daddy Yankee refers to would be the one behind reggaetón; one that he is part of and one that his song “Gasolina” presented to an international audience. This connects a bit with *relationships* when analyzing the sentence: “[...] countless artists have sat here thanks to my album “Barrio Fino” that introduced reggaetón to other cultures and to people without knowledge of the genre.” Daddy Yankee claims that his album gave opportunities to other artists in the industry, which may make Daddy Yankee seem like he believes himself to be superior, or it could simply be because he believes his statement to be a fact. Either way, Daddy Yankee presents himself as someone who has created a product

that is the reason behind various artists having been getting invited to the Billboard Latin Music Week. Daddy Yankee also establishes two groups of people in a way: he defines a group of people that has knowledge about reggaetón and one that does not, which is also part of what could be interpreted as membership categorization in the context of *identity*. When it comes to *action*, Daddy Yankee is trying to convince the audience that his song “Gasolina” had a great impact on music and that it, as mentioned earlier, introduced reggaetón to an international audience on another level. This can be interpreted from the sentences: “It’s a song (“Gasolina”) that without a doubt changed music. Not just Latin music but music worldwide. It introduced a culture and it put reggaetón on the international scene.” He could say this with the intention of creating credibility of himself and his musical craft, but it could also be to highlight that reggaetón is a musical genre capable of shaping popular musical tendencies all around the world, which may or may not give the culture behind reggaetón recognition. I will get back to which culture specifically this one may be later in the analysis. In relation to *the feeling of the practice*, the emotions that Daddy Yankee feels during this quote can in particular be interpreted when he says: “We are now enjoying the fruits that “Gasolina” grew [...]” This metaphor could express positivity and also enjoyment based on the idea that his song had the impact he believed it had. The sentence that comes right after sort of confirms this idea, at least if one believes artists getting invited to the Billboard Latin Music Week and introducing reggaetón to other cultures to be a positive thing. Reading the whole quote gives the impression that Daddy Yankee himself believes this, at least. Finally, in relation to *place and dwelling*, when Daddy Yankee refers to artists being invited to the Billboard Latin Music Week, where he is also located during the interview, one must assume that Daddy Yankee sees the Billboard Latin Music Week as an important event that apparently has the power to create awareness about certain musical genres and introduce them to other cultures that before did not have any knowledge about them. Daddy Yankee also expresses pioneership that is connected to the Billboard Latin Music Week in a way by saying that his album was what changed the situation: making the Billboard Latin Music Week have an interest in reggaetón artists. The whole quote in itself could be seen to be a *cultural proposition* because the claims cannot be proven and therefore might just be personal interpretation of the situation. Possible *cultural premises* that can be understood from the quote would be that everyone at the event as well as the ones seeing the interview in general already know

what “Gasolina” and “Barrio Fino” are, as well as what reggaetón is and which culture both this musical genre and Daddy Yankee are part of.

With this in mind, I would interpret that the claims Daddy Yankee makes in the quote could be seen as a struggle for international recognition in relation to reggaetón and himself as an artist internationally; it seems as if Daddy Yankee is making an effort to solidify his interpretation of reggaetón and the recognition he believes that it has. As I also just mentioned, it seems as if Daddy Yankee wants the audience to accept his belief that his song and album was what gave reggaetón an international presence, promoting a recognition of him as an important artist in relation to the genre. When Daddy Yankee says: “[...] countless artists have sat here thanks to my album [...]” it gives the impression of struggle, because it is a claim that highlights an interpretation of the Billboard Latin Music Week that cannot be proved.

The second quote from the interview with Daddy Yankee I want to analyze is the following:

“I remember before I released “Barrio Fino”, it was just the East Coast that knew about reggaetón and people on the West Coast were like: “What is that kind of music?” On the West Coast people did not know about reggaetón, nor did the people in the south. It was up to me to explain to the world what the reggaetón movement was, as well as who Daddy Yankee and all my colleagues were, who also made music. I had to introduce not only my own songs but also my colleagues’ songs so that people could understand the movement [...] it was a huge responsibility because I knew that I had an opportunity to either represent myself as an artist or represent a whole culture and movement - and that’s what I chose to do: represent the movement.” (Billboard, 2021).

The *identity* is especially present in this quote when Daddy Yankee says: “It was up to me to explain to the world what the reggaetón movement was [...]” and “[...] and that’s what I chose to do: represent the movement.” There is a presence of membership categorization when Daddy Yankee says that it was up to him to explain to the world what the reggaetón movement was, because he then connects himself with the movement. Also by referring to reggaetón as a movement, Daddy Yankee implicitly says that there is a culture represented through the genre. The connection between Daddy Yankee and the reggaetón movement, he mentions, is also strengthened when he says

that he chose to represent the movement. It can also be said that the sentences reflect *relationships* in the way that Daddy Yankee compares himself to the rest of the movement by establishing himself as a front man. Continuing a bit with this term, one might be able to say that Daddy Yankee, based on the whole quote, once again establishes two groups of people: he defines a group of people that has knowledge about reggaetón and one that does not. In this quote in particular, Daddy Yankee presents the genre not only as music but as a movement, one that he wanted to bring recognition internationally. This point brings me to *action*, because it explains well what Daddy Yankee is trying to do: make the audience understand that reggaetón is not only music; it is a people. The sentence: "I had to introduce not only my own songs but also my colleagues' songs so that people could understand the movement [...]" once again creates an idea of Daddy Yankee being a front man for reggaetón and an essential part of the movement's recognition. *The feeling of practice* is interpretable when Daddy Yankee says: "[...] it was a huge responsibility because I knew that I had an opportunity to either represent myself as an artist or represent a whole culture and movement [...]" - especially the word 'responsibility' reflects feelings because it might give an impression of pressure and expectations. *Place and dwelling* is observable in the quote in the way that Daddy Yankee, although he does not mention the exact origin of himself and the reggaetón movement, mentions places where the movement did not have any presence before his album; places he refers to as the West Coast and the south. This could be because of *cultural premises*: Daddy Yankee believes that everyone already knows his origin as well as the reggaetón movement's. Furthermore, he also seems to believe that everyone present in the audience knows which places he refers to when saying the East Coast, the West Coast, and the south.

The sentence: "[...] I knew that I had an opportunity to either represent myself as an artist or represent a whole culture and movement [...]" is peculiar because it sort of captures all five radiants:

- *Identity* because Daddy Yankee categorizes himself as an artist but also as someone who could be a representative of a culture and movement.
- *Relationships* because Daddy Yankee establishes a relationship between him and the culture and the movement he talks about - but an unequal relationship in the way that he implicitly expresses to have had a power to represent the culture and

movement that others may not have had. This is especially evident in the beginning of the whole quote when Daddy Yankee mentions his album “Barrio Fino”.

- *Action* because of Daddy Yankee saying that he had the option to make a choice that would have an influence on himself as well as the culture and movement he mentions.
- *The feeling of the practice* because of the word ‘opportunity’ which may be connected with emotions such as excitement, interest, and triumph.
- *Place and dwelling* because Daddy Yankee refers to his past self as being in a closed environment with a local culture and with the opportunity to bring the local culture to the international scene.

*Cultural propositions* are present in the quote especially when Daddy Yankee says “[...] it was just the East Coast that knew about reggaetón and people on the West Coast were like: “What is that kind of music?” On the West Coast people did not know about reggaetón, nor did the people in the south.” Daddy Yankee expresses his own interpretation of who already knew about reggaetón and who did not. Finally, he also interprets himself as being very important if not the most important figure in relation to explaining to the world the identity behind the reggaetón movement, when he says: “It was up to me to explain to the world what the reggaetón movement was.” This sentence makes Daddy Yankee seem like he was the only one who could do that.

This quote in particular connects with the interpretation about struggle I made just before. Daddy Yankee also expresses a struggle in relation to international recognition of reggaetón that was present in the past: Daddy Yankee mentions some regions that he believed did not know about reggaetón as well as their reaction towards it: “[...] people on the West Coast were like: “What is that kind of music?”” Through the whole quote Daddy Yankee presents himself as the one who made the greatest effort in promoting not only a genre but a movement. As with the other quote, these statements are claims that cannot be proven, which ultimately creates an interpretation of Daddy Yankee as someone struggling to get the recognition of his role in relation to international recognition of reggaetón.

The third quote from the interview with Daddy Yankee I want to analyze is the following:

“When the song (“Gasolina”) was released, people did not understand it. I was like: “Give it time.” Not even in Puerto Rico did people understand the song, because Puerto Rico has a more traditional taste in music, even today, so when you bring new things to Puerto Rico, on occasions, people show resistance towards them. I like to always use traditional elements in my music but I also like to take risks. That’s what I do, so when “Gasolina” was released a lot of people didn’t understand it but it ended up becoming a huge hit and had an impact.” (Billboard, 2021).

Earlier I mentioned that Daddy Yankee did not specify exactly which culture he was from except being part of the reggaetón movement. During this quote Daddy Yankee mentions Puerto Rico, and he mentions it when talking about how Puerto Rico has a more traditional taste in music. This can be understood as a *cultural proposition* but it also connects with the *identity* aspect because Puerto Rico in fact is Daddy Yankee’s birthplace (Famous Birthdays). *Identity* is also present when he says: “I like to always use traditional elements in my music [...]” with the words “traditional elements” being important. There is some membership categorization because Daddy Yankee must have an idea of what these traditional elements are and to whom they are traditional.

Regarding *relationships*, Daddy Yankee mentions that when his song “Gasolina” was released a lot of people did not understand it but that it ended up becoming a huge hit and had an impact. This combined with the sentence: “I was like: “Give it time.””, which also refers to “Gasolina”, makes Daddy Yankee seem like he knows what creates a hit song even if people do not understand it at first, which consequently gives the impression that Daddy Yankee has a superior knowledge in relation to musical success and that he has confidence about how people change their opinion about a song over time. *Action* is present when Daddy Yankee says: “[...] but I also like to take risks. That’s what I do [...]” because these sentences reflect choices that define Daddy Yankee’s way of making music. The sentences also give the audience an insight into why Daddy Yankee’s music sounds the way it does. *The feeling of the practice* can be interpreted in relation to the culture of Puerto Rico; when Daddy Yankee says: “[...] so when you bring new things to Puerto Rico, on occasions, people show resistance towards them.” The word ‘resistance’ could be connected with emotions such as disgust and maybe fear. When it



comes to *place and dwelling*, maybe Puerto Rico can be mentioned, although Daddy Yankee is not there physically during the interview. I mention this because the way he first refers to Puerto Rico is in the past when he released “Gasolina”. It is a short story that makes it seem like he was present on the island during that period.

I mentioned a *cultural proposition* in the beginning of this section; another one would be when Daddy Yankee says “When the song (“Gasolina”) was released, people did not understand it.” This is because that is how he interprets the situation: people did not understand his song, according to him. A third *cultural proposition* would be when Daddy Yankee says that people in Puerto Rico show resistance towards new things, on occasions: this is how Daddy Yankee interprets the culture to be. A *cultural premise* would be “traditional taste in music” as well as “traditional elements” because it is not specified by Daddy Yankee what these actually are.

In this quote a struggle can be interpreted in relation to Daddy Yankee wanting to be unique but also as an artist who knows better: again through using “Gasolina” as his example, Daddy Yankee this time takes the opportunity to mention that he knew that his song would become a hit despite people not understanding it, according to him. I would argue that this can be seen as Daddy Yankee making another effort at solidifying his position as someone important in relation to building international recognition of reggaetón. Finally, by claiming that “Gasolina” had an impact, Daddy Yankee is making an effort to convince people that his song in fact did promote the genre at a high level.

The final quote from the interview with Daddy Yankee I want to analyze is the following: “If an artist, who has just started his career, is whining, I don’t want to talk with him, honestly. If I see a new artist who is complaining, I’m leaving, because with all of the platforms that exist nowadays- look, we started with nothing and we didn’t complain, so if you are starting your career today and you are complaining, then you are a loser. Period.” (Billboard, 2021).

During this quote, *identity* can be found in the sentence: “I don’t want to talk with him [...]”, because Daddy Yankee excludes certain people from his social life: artists who just started their career and complains about it. There is also the membership categorization in the form of artists: during the quote he indirectly defines himself as an artist. *Relationships* can also be interpreted in relation to my first point; the following

sentence: “[...] so if you are starting your career today and you are complaining, then you are a loser.” shows how Daddy Yankee relates to a certain kind of behavior new artists may have. *Action* is, in particular, evident when he says “If I see a new artist who is complaining, I’m leaving [...]” because the sentence shows a specific action that Daddy Yankee believes in: showing no interest in being present with a new artist who complains. Reading the whole quote, one might even have the thought that Daddy Yankee tries to convince the audience to share his opinion on the matter. This I say because of the repetivity in relation to the word ‘complain’ and its synonyms in the quote, as well as Daddy Yankee’s way of labeling these new artists that complain as losers. The part where Daddy Yankee says that if you are starting your career today and you are complaining, you are a loser, can also be connected with *the feeling of the practice* because it reflects an emotion due to the use of the word ‘loser’. This emotion could be interpreted as disgust. Regarding *place and dwelling*, I want to comment on the sentence: “[...] because with all of the platforms that exist nowadays- [...]”. This sentence shows where Daddy Yankee is located at the moment, at least in relation to time: he mentions that we are living in a time where a lot of platforms exist, which because of the topic of the interview must be digital platforms where users can listen to music, and he compares this with the past when he says that *they* started with nothing. The part about platforms can also be understood as a *cultural premise* due to the lack of specification of the term. Other *cultural premises* are ‘whining’, ‘career’, ‘loser’, and ‘period’. A *cultural proposition* can also be connected with the sentence about the platforms, because the sentence implicitly expresses his interpretation of the possibilities that he believes that these platforms give new artists.

A norm can also be interpreted from the quote, which would be something along the lines of “don’t complain, if you have possibilities and opportunities that people before you did not have.”, at least in relation to the music industry.

This quote I would not say reflects much in relation to international recognition of reggaetón, but it does show Daddy Yankee making an effort to sort of convince new artists that with the platforms of today they should not be complaining, with the reason being that he did not have the same opportunities, which indirectly could be interpreted as Daddy Yankee saying that he in fact has been making music for a long time, which may or may not be something that should be seen as proof in relation to his claims made

earlier about “Gasolina” and his album “Barrio Fino” giving reggaetón international recognition.

I will now do a short conclusion of the interview with Daddy Yankee that summarizes general points I have made about the struggle I have interpreted:

The case of Daddy Yankee (based on the quotes I have analyzed)

- A struggle for international recognition in relation to reggaetón and himself as an artist internationally.
- A struggle in relation to international recognition of reggaetón that was present in the past. Daddy Yankee presents himself as the one who made the greatest effort in promoting not only a genre but a movement.
- A struggle in relation to Daddy Yankee wanting to be unique but also as an artist who knows better. Daddy Yankee is also making an effort to convince people that his song “Gasolina” promoted reggaetón at a high level.

### **Bad Bunny**

For the analysis of Bad Bunny I have found an interview written down in an article on El País’ website. The article is titled: “Hay que romper eso de que los gringos son dioses... No, papi” It was published January 3, 2021.

The first quote from the interview with Bad Bunny I want to analyze is the following: “You gotta let go of the idea that the *gringos* are gods... No, *papi*.” (Mars, 2021).

From this small quote, I have identified four of the radiants. The first one would be *identity*; there is a membership categorization when Bad Bunny says ‘gringos’, a group of people that Bad Bunny apparently believes is seen as gods, and one that he is not part one, one must assume. Another membership categorization that is more indirect is when he uses the word ‘papi’ which directly translated means ‘daddy’ but often in Spanish is used as slang with a meaning similar to ‘bro’ in English, I would argue. In the

same context as mentioned about the *gringos*, *relationships* would be interpretable because Bad Bunny expresses how he believes that people relate to this group of people; that they see them as gods, which is something that he does not do. *Action* is present when Bad Bunny says: “You gotta let go of the idea [...]” because he tells people to change their interpretation of *gringos*. Finally, the short sentence: “No, *papi*.” can be connected with *the feeling of the practice* because Bad Bunny shows confidence by concluding his quote with only “no” followed by the use of the slang term “papi”. *Cultural premises* in the case of this quote would be the words ‘gringos’, ‘gods’, and ‘papi’. A *cultural proposition* would be the fact that Bad Bunny indirectly says that there is the belief that the *gringos* are seen as gods.

This first quote from Bad Bunny does not show struggle in relation to international recognition of reggaetón, but it does reflect a struggle that Bad Bunny may have regarding the perception that he believes to exist of the *gringos*. The quote can then be interpreted as him making an effort to change this perception.

The second quote from the interview with Bad Bunny I want to analyze is the following: “Maybe it was necessary (referring to Ricky Martin and Enrique Iglesias doing English versions of their Spanish songs) to open the doors for this Latin boom, but for me that moment has passed. I am very proud of the level we now have gotten to using Spanish, and not just Spanish, but the Spanish we speak in Puerto Rico, without changing the accent.” (Mars, 2021).

The first example of *identity* can be interpreted from when Bad Bunny says: “Latin boom”, this is because of the word ‘Latin’ that can be understood as a general term for Latin Americans. In the case of this quote, Bad Bunny uses the words “Latin boom” to refer to the international success of music sung in Spanish, one can assume. Another example of *identity* would be: “[...] and not just Spanish, but the Spanish we speak in Puerto Rico, without changing the accent.” The membership categorization here is Bad Bunny referring to himself as someone who speaks Spanish but also more precisely as a Puerto Rican speaking the Spanish specifically spoken in Puerto Rico. An example of *relationships* can be interpreted in the way that Bad Bunny refers to Ricky Martin and Enrique Iglesias sort of *maybe* being the ones who created possibilities for Spanish speaking artists to have success internationally (“Maybe it was necessary to open the

doors for this Latin boom [...]). Regarding *actions*, one might say that Bad Bunny wants to make clear that it is no longer necessary for Spanish speaking artists to do English versions of their songs, when he says: “[...] but for me that moment has passed.” This could be to encourage Spanish speaking artists to not feel as if it is important to do English versions of their songs to have success musically on an international level. Bad Bunny also expresses emotion during this quote when he says: “I am very proud of the level we now have gotten to using Spanish [...]”. It is the word ‘proud’ that is doing this because it is a word that can be connected with emotions such as being content and pleased. This would then be an example of *the feeling of the practice*. Finally, *place and dwelling* can be interpreted when Bad Bunny refers to Puerto Rico because he expresses importance in relation to the linguistic element of the culture: that he can sing in Spanish without changing his accent.

A *cultural proposition* would be that Bad Bunny has the idea that Ricky Martin’s and Enrique Iglesias’ English versions of their songs “have opened the doors for the Latin boom”.

*Cultural premises* would be “this Latin boom” and the idea that the interviewer already knows who Ricky Martin and Enrique Iglesias are.

A possible norm that can be interpreted from the quote could be that it is important to hold onto one’s identity of which your language and accent are part of.

In this quote Bad Bunny expresses a possible necessity of Spanish speaking artists doing English versions of their Spanish songs in the past, which implies that there may have been a struggle of international recognition in the past and that the way of getting it would be translating songs sung in Spanish into English as well. Bad Bunny explains that the moment of doing that has passed but with a presence of doubt, understood as that it actually may not be the case for everyone yet. This I argue based on the fact that Bad Bunny says: “[...] for me that moment has passed.” with the “for me” insinuating that it may not be the case for everyone else. Being a conscious choice to add the “for me” or not, the wording does imply that a certain struggle for international recognition of music sung in Spanish may still exist.

The third quote from the interview with Bad Bunny I want to analyze is the following: “It is part of the *fronteo*<sup>1</sup>, the urban genre (answering a question about why 100 dollar

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<sup>1</sup> word with a meaning similar to feeling superior.

bills are mentioned so much in his songs). I always try to keep a balance and stay close to my roots, to the streets... In the end I just like that, I grew up listening to these things. Sometimes you see people criticizing it, but the audience likes it, they like to sing it. [...] Singing it is like feeling that you got it." (Mars, 2021).

*Identity* in this quote can be interpreted when Bad Bunny says: "I always try to keep a balance and stay close to my roots, to the streets..." There is membership categorization because he refers to himself being part of the streets and that his roots are from there. Based on what I have analyzed so far, it is highly possible that the streets he refers to would be the ones of Puerto Rico. After having read the whole quote, it can also be argued that Bad Bunny establishes three overall groups of people:

- The artists, in this case part of the urban genre.
- The audience.
- The people that are not part of the artists or the audience.

Regarding *relationships*, Bad Bunny relates to the streets; the streets may be important to him since he tries to keep a balance and stay close to them. I have not been able to interpret anything in relation to *action* and *the feeling of the practice*, except that one maybe could argue that regarding *the feeling of the practice* that emotion is expressed when Bad Bunny says: "In the end I just like that [...]" with 'like' being the key word.

*Place and dwelling* can be interpreted from the sentence: "I grew up listening to these things." because it, even though not directly reflecting a physical location, does express something about Bad Bunny's past life, which should be connected to the streets.

The first *cultural proposition* would be that Bad Bunny says that singing about 100 dollar bills is part of the *fronteo* and the urban genre. The second would be that he believes that singing about them gives you the feeling of owning them.

*Cultural premises* would be "*fronteo*", "urban genre", "100 dollar bills", and "the streets". These are *cultural premises* because I would argue that it requires cultural knowledge about them to understand what they each refer to.

Maybe one could say, in relation to norms expressed in the quote, that it is a norm to sing about money if one's songs are of the urban genre.

Bad Bunny is making an effort to justify his reasons for singing about 100 dollar bills in

his songs. By saying that it is part of the urban genre, Bad Bunny implicitly could express that it is a core element within the genre that needs to be present in his songs if he wants to connect with the genre's audience. This interpretation is sort of confirmed by the fact that Bad Bunny mentions that the audience likes it and that singing it is like feeling that you got it. This could ultimately reflect that artists may struggle in connecting with the urban genre's audience if they do not incorporate this element in their music. It also makes sense then that Bad Bunny would say that people sometimes criticize the choice of singing about 100 dollar bills but that it is justified because the audience likes it. Bad Bunny does not exactly express a struggle for international recognition of reggaetón in this quote but he does express one in relation to the genre's recognition in general, at least if we assume that reggaetón is part of the urban genre, which based on the whole interview in itself would make sense.

The fourth quote from the interview with Bad Bunny I want to analyze is the following: "And that's why I do it (referring to supporting feminism and the LGBT community), because I know the reach that I have in Latin America. I have different kinds of fans; fans from the LGBT community and also, I am sure, homophobic fans as well as feminist and male chauvinist fans. I have the capability of capturing my fans with this kind of reggaetón and vocabulary. I talk to them like we do and give them a message without them feeling like it's a sermon." (Mars, 2021).

In this quote, *identity* can be seen through the following sentences: "[...] because I know the reach that I have in Latin America." and "[...] this kind of reggaetón and vocabulary." In the first one because of the connection Bad Bunny establishes between him and Latin America due to his supposed reach there. He does not say directly in the quote that he believes himself to be identified with Latin Americans, but based on what I have interpreted earlier, it makes sense that this is the case to a certain extent. There is also the membership categorization in the way that Bad Bunny supports feminism and the LGBT community. The second sentence, I mentioned, Bad Bunny expresses that he is doing a certain kind of reggaetón and has a certain kind of vocabulary; this would also then be considered a part of his identity because they, looking at the quote, seem to represent him as an artist. In this sentence: "I have different kinds of fans; fans from the LGBT community and also, I am sure, homophobic fans as well as feminist and male chauvinist fans." Bad Bunny mentions the LGBT community, homophobic fans, feminist

fans, and male chauvinist fans, which all also could be considered different people representing different identities but with the element in common that some members of these categories are fans of Bad Bunny. Regarding *relationships*, Bad Bunny basically expresses that he has the ability to influence his fans, thus creating an unequal relationship between him and them, when he says: “I have the capability of capturing my fans with this kind of reggaetón and vocabulary.” *Action* is present in the quote, first when Bad Bunny says: “And that’s why I do it, because I know the reach that I have in Latin America.” Here he expresses why he is acting the way he is in relation to feminism and LGBT. Another example is when he says: “I talk to them like we do and give them a message without them feeling like it’s a sermon.” Here Bad Bunny mentions a conscious choice that he makes in relation to his music and his way of communicating. I have not been able to interpret anything regarding *the feeling of the practice and place and dwelling*, but a *cultural proposition* could be that Bad Bunny thinks he has fans from the LGBT community as well as homophobic fans, feminist fans, and male chauvinist fans. Another one would be that Bad Bunny believes that he has the capability to capture his fans with his kind of reggaetón and vocabulary; this might just be an interpretation of his and not an actual fact. Some *cultural premises* would be “the LGBT community”, ‘homophobic’, ‘feminist’, ‘male chauvinist’, “this kind of reggaetón and vocabulary”, and ‘sermon’.

A norm that can be interpreted from the quote would be that if one has a reach somewhere, it is important to use it, especially if this reach can provoke support for feminism as well as the LGBT community.

I cannot interpret anything that connects with a struggle as such in relation to international recognition of reggaetón but it can be said that Bad Bunny expresses that he is making an effort in doing a different kind of reggaetón that gives a message to his audience in Latin America, in particular. By supporting feminism and the LGBT community through his music though, a broad international recognition of the genre may have a greater chance of occurring because these two themes have a lot of presence in various countries at the moment.

The final quote from the interview with Bad Bunny I want to analyze is the following: “And I was there in the streets with some dudes that could say that they didn’t like Bad Bunny anymore because he was doing weird things, things that aren’t masculine, but



they actually thought that the song (“Yo Perreo Sola”) was dope. One said to me: “Hey, it was awesome when you dressed up like a woman.” and I was thinking: “Wow, this is the hood.” Some artist or someone from the industry could have told me that the streets wouldn’t support me, but the streets were actually listening to my record. Because the streets are also changing. Exactly, even the streets are changing.” (Mars, 2021).

*Identity* in this quote is evident when Bad Bunny says: “Some artist or someone from the industry could have told me that the streets wouldn’t support me [...]” because of the membership categorization of artist, the industry, and the streets. Something that also could be connected with *identity* to a certain degree would be when he mentions the word ‘masculine’ which Bad Bunny implicitly expresses to have a certain definition in relation to the identity of someone who is from the streets. *Relationships* could be interpreted in relation to how Bad Bunny seems to believe how people from the streets may or may not relate to him having changed his way of being. In the first example I mention regarding *identity*, it is also clear that Bad Bunny has an idea of how “some artist” or “someone” from the industry relates to the streets and how he or she thinks that Bad Bunny would lack support from them. An element of *action* could be the choice Bad Bunny makes to talk about how he believes that the streets are changing, even implying that the streets are changing their ways of defining what is masculine or “dope”. The following sentences can express something in relation to *the feeling of the practice*: “Wow, this is the hood.” The ‘wow’ expresses an emotion that in this case can be connected with surprise and optimism. Finally, *place and dwelling* is evident when he says: “And I was there in the streets [...]” because Bad Bunny literally says where, in broad terms, he was located physically during the moment he describes. The same goes for the sentence: “Wow, this is the hood.” with the hood being the location. One could interpret a certain importance to the streets and the hood for Bad Bunny through the ways he refers to them during this quote and another quote I analyzed earlier.

A *cultural proposition* would be when Bad Bunny says: “And I was there in the streets with some dudes that could say that they didn’t like Bad Bunny anymore because he was doing weird things.” because it reflects how Bad Bunny interprets what the people, who were around him at the location, may think about him, based on his own interpretation of their culture. Another *cultural proposition* would be when he says: “Wow, this is the hood.” because he expresses his interpretation of the location: he says that the location

is what one could refer to as being the *hood*.

*Cultural premises* would be “the streets, “weird things”, ‘masculine’, ‘dope’, “the hood”, and “the industry”.

Bad Bunny also expresses in the quote that there is a certain norm about the culture of the streets being that the people there may judge support of feminism and the LGBT community. He also confirms this norm through being surprised about the reaction he allegedly got from a person when he was there. He also confirms his own belief in the norm by concluding that the streets are changing.

I have not been able to interpret anything in this quote in the context of struggling for international recognition in relation to reggaetón.

As I did with the interview with Daddy Yankee, I will now do a short conclusion of the interview with Bad Bunny that summarizes general points I have made about the struggle I have interpreted:

The case of Bad Bunny (based on the quotes I have analyzed)

- A struggle that Bad Bunny may have regarding the perception that he believes to exist of the *gringos*.
- A struggle in the past with artists having to make English versions of their Spanish songs. Bad Bunny does kind of insinuate though that the moment of doing this has not passed for everyone, necessarily, which could imply that a certain struggle for international recognition of music sung in Spanish may still exist.
- Artists may struggle in connecting with people listening to reggaetón if they do not sing about 100 dollar bills in their songs.

### **Rauw Alejandro**

For the analysis of Rauw Alejandro I have found an interview written down in an article on GQ’s website. The article is titled: “La entrevista a Rauw Alejandro sobre el nuevo

reggaeton, hacer música y conciertos con millones de espectadores durante la cuarentena y el vídeo viral de Ester Expósito bailando 'El efecto'" It was published July 1, 2020.

The first quote from the interview with Rauw Alejandro I want to analyze is the following:

"Reggaetón is the genre commanding the world right now. Before it was an underrated genre and now it's the biggest, musically speaking. It went from being "underground" to the new pop. We have to be eternally grateful for all those artists we refer to as "old school" because they went to hell and back to open those doors that were closed. Obviously, reggaetón has experienced many conflicts during its growth but it has evolved so much in its lyrics and rhythms to end up becoming global." (Girela, 2020).

The *identity* aspect in this quote can be seen when Rauw Alejandro says: "[...] all those artists we refer to as "old school" [...]" This sentence could say something about his identity in relation to others' identity in the sense that he mentions the existence of artists that are considered "old school", which implicitly could mean that he sees himself as an artist of the "new school", thus creating two membership categorizations within the overall artist category. By including the whole sentence, which is: "We have to be eternally grateful for all those artists we refer to as "old school" because they went to hell and back to open those doors that were closed.", it also connects with *relationships* because Rauw Alejandro describes how he relates to those of the "old school" and how he thinks others should do as well. *Action* is present in the way that Rauw Alejandro says in the beginning of the quote that reggaetón is the genre commanding the world right now. Rauw Alejandro is presenting the genre as being not only influential but also rather dictatorial worldwide. He also addresses the actions the artists of the "old school" did that, according to Rauw Alejandro, "opened those doors that were closed": "[...] they went to hell and back to open those doors that were closed." Saying this also gives a message about how important Rauw Alejandro believes these artists to be for the success of reggaetón, and making the choice of saying this may influence people's opinions about these artists. *The feeling of the practice* is present when he says: "We have to be eternally grateful [...]" because there are emotions expressed that could be connected with being devoted and celebratory. It can be argued that *place and dwelling* is kind of present when Rauw Alejandro says: "Reggaetón is the genre commanding the

world right now. Before it was an underrated genre and now it's the biggest, musically speaking." I argue this, because Rauw Alejandro refers to reggaetón's position in the world and its development from being a local genre to being heard worldwide, at least according to Rauw Alejandro. This interpretation in relation to *place and dwelling* can though be somewhat far-fetched, also because it does not say anything about Rauw Alejandro's location physically, even if it might say something implicitly about where his music is being listened to.

The whole quote is actually a *cultural proposition*; Rauw Alejandro mentions a few thoughts about reggaetón that may be interpretations and not facts.

Some *cultural premises* would be "old school" and what I have translated into English as "they went to hell and back"<sup>2</sup>.

A norm that can be interpreted from the quote would be that one has to be grateful for the work others have done before you, maybe especially if it has something to do with your profession, which in the case of Rauw Alejandro is making reggaetón music.

This quote from Rauw Alejandro expresses a struggle for international recognition in relation to reggaetón, but as in the case of one of Bad Bunny's quotes, it is a struggle that existed in the past. This I interpret from the following sentences in particular: "Before it was an underrated genre and now it's the biggest, musically speaking. It went from being "underground" to the new pop." It also does not seem that Rauw Alejandro believes this struggle to exist anymore; his first sentence confirms this idea: "Reggaetón is the genre commanding the world right now." Rauw Alejandro expresses that the artists of the genre that experienced this struggle were the ones he refers to as "old school". This can be understood when he says: "We have to be eternally grateful for all those artists we refer to as "old school" because they went to hell and back to open those doors that were closed."

The second quote from the interview with Rauw Alejandro I want to analyze is the following:

"Music is magic (answering a question about reggaetón, R&B and dancehall influences in his music), and it has the power to unite all cultures worldwide. It unites languages and races, and it has the capability to conquer every part of the world and fill people's souls with happiness. The same thing happened to me: R&B and dancehall, which are genres

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<sup>2</sup> The original metaphor from the interview in Spanish is: "Sufrieron la gota gorda."

that are not from Puerto Rico, made me want to make music. The best part about making music is to have influences that have nothing to do with your origins, and that can offer something new and make you a big name.” (Girela, 2020).

Some elements that I might be able to connect with *identity* is when Rauw Alejandro says: “Music is magic [...]” and “The same thing happened to me: R&B and dancehall, which are genres that are not from Puerto Rico [...]” The first one is a little far-fetched but it could be argued that the way Rauw Alejandro interprets music to be magic is part of his identity and maybe part of the membership categorization that is being an artist. The second one is relevant because Rauw Alejandro sort of associates different genres with different countries, which then creates membership categorization but in relation to music. The last part of the whole quote can also be interpreted in relation to *identity*: “The best part about making music is to have influences that have nothing to do with your origins, and that can offer something new and make you a big name.” Rauw Alejandro basically expresses that not all have the same origins and that one can be influenced by elements that someone with another origin than yours may possess; in this case it is in relation to music. *Relationships* is a bit difficult to point out exactly, but it can be said that Rauw Alejandro’s way of relating to others, in the case of this quote, is through an idea of unity, which can be created through music. I interpret this from the following sentences: “Music is magic, and it has the power to unite all cultures worldwide. It unites languages and races, and it has the capability to conquer every part of the world and fill people’s souls with happiness.” Continuing with *action*, it can be interpreted that Rauw Alejandro, consciously or not, promotes music by referring to it as a phenomenon with the power to unite all cultures worldwide, at least if one interprets that to be something positive. He also supports the idea of embracing influences that are foreign to one’s origins: “The best part about making music is to have influences that have nothing to do with your origins, and that can offer something new and make you a big name.” *The feeling of the practice* is only present when Rauw Alejandro mentions happiness, which one, based on what is expressed in the quote, should be interpreted as an emotion that especially is present within a person when listening to music. *Place and dwelling* can be relevant to comment on, if I look at the fact that Rauw Alejandro in this quote has his focus on the world, meaning that his location physically could just be interpreted as being somewhere in the world. This could also

then be connected with *identity* in the way that his membership categorization would as a very general term be humankind.

Most of the quote could be interpreted as a *cultural proposition*, because almost everything Rauw Alejandro mentions is his interpretation of in particular music, unity, and culture.

A *cultural premise* could be 'race' because this term is occasionally understood differently depending on the person using or hearing it.

Regarding norms, Rauw Alejandro could be expressing a norm in relation to music that is viewing it as something powerful and uniting. Although, it can also just be his opinion and interpretation of it.

I would say that this quote does not reflect anything in the context of struggling for international recognition in relation to reggaetón.

The third and final quote from the interview with Rauw Alejandro I want to analyze is the following:

"The question of urban music is a sensitive topic (answering a question about the use of the term "urban music"). I make music without thinking about the genres. In the case of reggaetón it is about time we recognize the word for what it is. Referring to reggaetón as the "urban genre" is to undervalue it because urban music includes everything from hip hop to trap, it even includes salsa, bachata, and merengue. The music from the streets is a kind of music that comes from the *pueblo* and ends up spreading. I am not ashamed when people refer to reggaetón as such. I am from the streets and I am very proud of my origins." (Girela, 2020).

In this quote there are two examples of *identity*. The first example is when Rauw Alejandro says: "I make music without thinking about the genres." It can be argued that not thinking about which genres his music is part of is part of who Rauw Alejandro is, which implicitly means that he acknowledges the existence of membership categorization of artists in relation to certain genres, which ultimately is something that he does not want to promote. The second example of *identity* is when Rauw Alejandro says: "I am from the streets and I am very proud of my origins." The membership categorization in this example would be "the streets", a culture that he expresses to be of. *Relationships* can be interpreted when Rauw Alejandro says: "I am not ashamed when

people refer to reggaetón as such.” This sentence reflects how Rauw Alejandro relates to people that would refer to reggaetón as being urban music. Based on the wording, it can be understood that Rauw Alejandro believes that people who refer to reggaetón in this specific way do it with an intent of shaming the genre. Regarding *action*, Rauw Alejandro is expressing that a change in relation to how one refers to reggaetón is needed: “In the case of reggaetón it is about time we recognize the word for what it is. Referring to reggaetón as the “urban genre” is to undervalue it because urban music includes everything from hip hop to trap, it even includes salsa, bachata, and merengue.”

According to Rauw Alejandro, reggaetón is being labeled as urban music, which for him is undervaluing the genre - and that is something he wants to be stopped. He makes the choice of mentioning other genres he believes to be under the same category, which can be interpreted as an attempt of showing how diverse urban music is, thus stating a reason for why it would be undervaluing reggaetón by just referring to it as being urban music. Rauw Alejandro wants to have reggaetón recognized as a specific genre and not just as urban music. *The feeling of the practice* can be interpreted in three of the sentences, with the first one being: “Referring to reggaetón as the “urban genre” is to undervalue it [...]” with ‘undervalue’ being a verb reflecting emotion, which in this case could emotions such as frustration and annoyance. The second sentence is: “I am not ashamed when people refer to reggaetón as such.” with ‘ashamed’ being an adjective expressing emotion. The third sentence is: “[...] I am very proud of my origins.” with ‘proud’ being the adjective expressing emotion. These three examples are all examples that show what feelings Rauw Alejandro has towards reggaetón and his origins in “the streets”. I have not been able to interpret anything in relation to *place and dwelling*, but a *cultural proposition* would be when Rauw Alejandro mentions that the question of urban music is a sensitive topic. This might as well just be a personal interpretation of the use of the term urban music. Another *cultural proposition* could be when he says that the music from the streets is a kind of music that comes from the *pueblo* and ends up spreading. Again because this is an assertion that may just be an interpretation of the music and not a fact.

Some *cultural premises* in the case of this quote would be “urban music”, “hip hop”, “trap”, “salsa”, “bachata”, “merengue”, “the streets”, and “the *pueblo*”.

This quote reflects a struggle in relation to how one should refer to reggaetón. This

means that although Rauw Alejandro may believe that reggaetón as a genre has got international recognition and even, as he mentioned earlier, is “commanding the world” right now, he still believes that there is a presence of people *undervaluing* the genre by referring to it as the urban genre. Rauw Alejandro is also defending his origins, which he refers to as being the streets, which in the quote can create the image of Rauw Alejandro struggling to accept a perception that could exist of the streets. For this interpretation I especially focus on the lines: “I am not ashamed when people refer to reggaetón as such. I am from the streets and I am very proud of my origins.”

I will now do a short conclusion of the interview with Rauw Alejandro that summarizes general points I have made about the struggle I have interpreted:

The case of Rauw Alejandro (based on the quotes I have analyzed)

- A struggle for international recognition in relation to reggaetón is a struggle that existed in the past. It does not seem that Rauw Alejandro believes this struggle to exist anymore.
- A struggle in relation to how one should refer to reggaetón. Rauw Alejandro may believe that reggaetón as a genre has got international recognition and even, as he mentioned at one point, is “commanding the world” right now, he still believes that there is a presence of people *undervaluing* the genre by referring to it as the urban genre.
- Rauw Alejandro may be struggling to accept a negative perception that could exist of the streets, which he mentions to be his origins.

## **J Balvin**

For the analysis of J Balvin I have found an interview written down in an article on Vogue’s website. The article is titled: “J Balvin es la voz que hace sonar a Latinoamérica en todo el mundo” It was published March 27, 2020.

The first quote from the interview with J Balvin I want to analyze is the following:



“We are all equal in the world and we Latinos are a very strong force in relation to contributing to the growth of the world.” (Escutia, 2020).

In this small quote, I have been able to identify that *identity* is present when J Balvin says “we Latinos” because he then expresses an existence of a membership categorization that is of Latinos, one that he is a part of. *Relationships* is present at two points in the quote with the first being when J Balvin says in the beginning of the quote: “We are all equal in the world [...]” In the case of this example J Balvin relates to others by mentioning his belief of equality. The second point where *relationships* is present is when he says: “[...] we Latinos are a very strong force in relation to contributing to the growth of the world.” Here J Balvin expresses how he relates to his own membership categorization and maybe implicitly how his membership categorization may differentiate from others; this can be interpreted because of the choice of mentioning himself as being Latino in a sentence that could have ended right after “We are all equal in the world.” This interpretation can also be connected with *action* because it could be a choice that J Balvin makes with the purpose of creating recognition of Latinos. *The feeling of the practice* can be interpreted when J Balvin says: “[...] we Latinos are a very strong force [...]” because I would argue that the sentence expresses emotions such as empowerment. I have not been able to identify any examples of *place and dwelling* nor any examples of *cultural propositions*. A *cultural premise* could though be ‘Latinos’. A possible norm could be that one should interpret all human beings as being equal.

J Balvin does not express a direct struggle for international recognition in relation to reggaetón but he does seem to make an effort to convince people, through his statement, that Latinos are contributing a lot to the growth of the world. This can be understood as his interpretation of Latinos or it could be an indirect way of implying that Latinos deserve international recognition that they may or may not be getting. The beginning of the quote: “We are all equal in the world [...]” could seem as a claim that has the purpose of hiding that J Balvin could be biased towards Latinos or hiding a potential struggle for international recognition, not so much in relation to reggaetón but rather in relation to being Latino.

The second quote from the interview with J Balvin I want to analyze is the following: “The sound of today is a mix of our cultures, of our roots, of what we are, of what we

inspire, of our taste, and our folklore. It is the result of a diversity of customs and of talents that have come to make their own wave.” (Escutia, 2020).

*Identity* has a main focus in this quote. I say this because J Balvin uses the possessive adjective ‘our’ as well as the personal pronoun ‘we’ a lot. J Balvin does not specify what *their* culture is but one can assume, based on the previous quote, that he refers to the cultures of Latinos. J Balvin expresses a membership categorization that differentiates from others when he says that the sound of today is a mix of the different elements he mentions. I have not been able to identify a specific example of *relationships* in the quote, but one could maybe say that there is an implicit presence of it through the way J Balvin relates to his own culture, of which he also refers to as a wave, thus indirectly relating to other cultures as less dominant in the case of the sound of today. Regarding *action*, J Balvin makes the choice of expressing his interpretation of the sound of today while claiming that his membership categorization is what has produced it. *The feeling of the practice* can also be interpreted in this quote but not through a specific word necessarily; the whole quote in itself sort of reflects the emotion of pride. *Place and dwelling* is not very interpretable in the quote although J Balvin might have his mind in Latin America. This though is a loose interpretation made on the fact that J Balvin has a mayor focus on his membership categorization (which must be the Latinos) and its supposed contributions in the quote.

A *cultural proposition* is when J Balvin says: “The sound of today is a mix of [...]” and another is: “[...] it is the result of [...]” Both of these parts of the quote are claims and they reflect J Balvin’s interpretations of the sound of today.

In the quote there are also a lot of *cultural premises*: “the sound of today”, “our cultures”, “our roots”, “what we are”, “what we inspire”, “our taste”, and “our folklore”. Someone with no or limited knowledge of the membership categorization J Balvin refers to would not know what these different elements are specifically.

A norm that can be interpreted from the quote could be that it is important to show pride as well as promote one’s own culture. This is a rather far-fetched interpretation though.

The struggle I interpret in this quote connects with the interpretation I made of the previous quote: J Balvin could be hiding a potential struggle for international recognition in relation to being Latino. It is the frequent use of the possessive adjectives

and personal pronouns that gives me this thought. A difference in this quote is that J Balvin's focus is on music whereas in the other quote it is on contribution to the growth of the world.

The third quote from the interview with J Balvin I want to analyze is the following:

"Because of our rhythm (answering a question about why music sung in Spanish has success), our sound, our easy and catchy lyrics, our way of narrating in our music." (Escutia, 2020).

I chose to include this quote because it shows explicitly the presence of *identity* and almost only *identity*. This is because of the use of the possessive adjective 'our', which also was present in the quote I analyzed before. J Balvin is expressing features that characterize the membership categorization that he himself believes to be part of; these features are a certain type of rhythm, sound, catchy lyrics, and narration of music. The general membership categorization J Balvin is part of is what can be interpreted to be one that sings in Spanish. I interpret this because this quote is made as an answer for why he believes that music sung in Spanish has success. It is also worth mentioning that he says "our" and not "my". By using 'our' he implies that he is not the only one singing in Spanish. Also *relationships* can be interpreted in this short quote, again because of the use of the possessive adjective 'our'; J Balvin creates a distinction between his membership categorization and others by mentioning why music sung in Spanish has success. By mentioning the examples he does while also saying 'our' he indirectly accepts the idea that there is an existence of music sung in other languages that is part of other cultures that are not "theirs" (the opposite of "ours").

The whole quote is a *cultural proposition* because it is an interpretation of the music's success.

It can furthermore be argued that the quote reflects a *cultural premise* because someone with no or limited knowledge could not know what J Balvin refers to when mentioning the examples of why music sung in Spanish has success; J Balvin does not specify what the "our"s are or how they are different in music sung in other languages.

This quote does not reflect anything in the context of struggling for international recognition in relation to reggaetón. On the contrary, J Balvin expresses confidence towards the idea that music sung in Spanish does have success, and in his answer he

mentions why believes that to be the case. It is also worth mentioning that it is not only about recognition of reggaetón but about music sung in Spanish in general.

The fourth quote from the interview with J Balvin I want to analyze is the following:

“Being real (answering a question about his music), I have never used masks, I have never followed tendencies. It’s the other way around. I try to create, explore, propose, but above all I respect people, I respect their space, their essence, and I view women as inspiration, with admiration, with strength.” (Escutia, 2020).

In this quote *identity* is basically a part of the whole quote because J Balvin explains how he makes his own music being the person he claims to be. A membership categorization in the case of this quote could be connected with “being real” because by implying the existence of someone being real, someone not being real must also exist, thus creating two overall membership categorizations: the ones who are “real” and the ones who are not. *Relationships* in the quote can be interpreted indirectly by the way that J Balvin mentions what he has not done, because he this way expresses other options: things he could have done but have chosen not to. The whole quote can be interpreted of him differentiating himself from others. The last part of the quote: “[...] I view women as inspiration, with admiration, with strength.” can also be interpreted as *identity* because it may be J Balvin expressing that he is not a male chauvinist. *Action* could in the case of this quote be that J Balvin makes the choice of saying what he is not to create a certain image of himself, one that his audience may be fond of. I have not been able to identify any examples of *the feeling of the practice* or *place and dwelling*.

I cannot interpret anything in relation to *cultural propositions* but a *cultural premise* would be “being real” as well as “using masks”.

Some norms I would interpret from this quote are that being “real” is a positive thing and that following tendencies is somewhat negative.

This quote, like the previous one, does not reflect anything in the context of struggling for international recognition in relation to reggaetón, but it does give the idea that J Balvin makes an effort to convince people that he is unique and honest in relation to his musical craft and that he is not a male chauvinist.

The final quote from the interview with J Balvin I want to analyze is the following:

“There are a lot of things I still want to do, I feel like I am just starting, that we have not

done a lot, that we must continue working together, that we have to keep making music, that we have to continue giving a great message of respect and admiration to everyone.” (Escutia, 2020).

In this final quote, the radiant of *identity* also has a lot of presence because of the frequent use of the personal pronoun ‘we’. The membership categorization in this quote can be interpreted to be of him and his team, if one looks at the context of the quote which is making music. *Relationships* is present, especially at the end of the quote when J Balvin says: “to everyone”, which with the whole quote in mind can be interpreted as J Balvin relating to others: he believes that giving messages of respect and admiration to everyone is important. *Action* can be interpreted as J Balvin’s choice to say what he says in the quote, which can be seen as an intent of telling people that he is not going to retire anytime soon. His use of words such as ‘great’, ‘respect’, and ‘admiration’ might also be an intent of creating a positive image of himself, his team, and the music he releases. In relation to *the feeling of the practice*, one could mention that when J Balvin says: “[...] I feel like I am just starting, that we have not done a lot [...]” he expresses a feeling of humility. This I argue because J Balvin supposedly released his first song in 2004, which is more than 18 years ago. It could also be argued that J Balvin expresses the emotion of confidence when he claims that he gives a great message of respect and admiration to everyone. I interpret this as a claim because he uses the word ‘continue’ in the context. I have not been able to interpret anything in relation to *place and dwelling*, *cultural propositions*, or *cultural premises*. A norm could though be that if you feel like there is more you can do to contribute to the world, you should do it.

I cannot say that this final quote I have chosen to analyze shows a struggle of any kind. It does give the idea though that J Balvin believes that he gives people a great message of respect and admiration and that he and possibly his team should continue making an effort to do so.

I will now do a short conclusion of the interview with J Balvin that summarizes general points I have made about the struggle I have interpreted:

The case of J Balvin (based on the quotes I have analyzed)
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- J Balvin could be hiding a potential struggle for international recognition, not so much in relation to reggaetón specifically but rather in relation to what Latinos contribute to the world in the context of growth and in the context of music.
- J Balvin expresses confidence towards the idea that music sung in Spanish has success.

This concludes my analysis.

## DISCUSSION

I will now do my discussion on how reggaetón can be connected to popular culture, based on how Daddy Yankee, Bad Bunny, Rauw Alejandro, and J Balvin refer to reggaetón, respectively.

In the interview with Daddy Yankee there are passages I can connect with the 2nd and 5th definition of popular culture. The 2nd definition of popular culture is that popular culture is what is left after one has decided what is high culture. Popular culture would then be texts and practices that do not meet the required standards of high culture. A first example of that is from a part of a quote I have interpreted as reflecting *identity*: “It introduced a culture and it put reggaetón on the international scene.” Daddy Yankee expresses that on the international scene reggaetón was unknown. Also when Daddy Yankee talks about his song “Gasolina” it can be interpreted that before “Gasolina”, reggaetón was unrecognized, at least as being high culture: “It’s a song (“Gasolina”) that without a doubt changed music. Not just Latin music but music worldwide. It introduced a culture and it put reggaetón on the international scene.” I interpreted this part in the analysis as *action*. Other examples of *identity* that also can be connected with the 2nd definition of popular culture are: “It was up to me to explain to the world what the reggaetón movement was [...]” and “[...] and that’s what I chose to do: represent the movement.” Daddy Yankee says that it was up to him to explain to the world what the reggaetón movement was, and by referring to reggaetón as a movement, Daddy Yankee implicitly says that there is a culture represented through the genre, which in this case could be seen as a culture that in general was seen as popular culture because it does not seem, based on what Daddy Yankee expresses, that it was viewed as being high culture. In another part of the interview I analyze the statement: “[...] it was a huge responsibility because I knew that I had an opportunity to either represent myself as an artist or represent a whole culture and movement [...]” I connected this statement with *the feeling of the practice* and *action*. This reminds me of the 2nd definition of popular culture because it could be interpreted as Daddy Yankee considering attempting to lead reggaetón towards becoming high culture. Reggaetón not being part of high culture on a local level can also be interpreted from the interview with Daddy Yankee. An example of that would be when he says: “I like to always use traditional elements in my music [...]”

and “When the song (“Gasolina”) was released, people did not understand it.” I connected these examples with *identity* and *relationships*, respectively. What Daddy Yankee mentions as being traditional, that one must understand would not be reggaetón, would be interpreted as being high culture. The idea that people did not understand “Gasolina” would also be high culture showing resistance towards reggaetón (Storey, 2009; Billboard, 2021).

The 5th definition of popular culture focused on the idea that hegemony played a role in what would be referred to as popular culture: it is the struggle between dominant and subordinate cultures. We must understand that popular culture is the process of culture going from subordinate to dominant. In the case of Daddy Yankee, the first example that may reflect this idea is a statement I have connected with *identity*: “It introduced a culture and it put reggaetón on the international scene.” This expresses a process that shifted reggaetón from being subordinate to dominant internationally. Reggaetón being a subordinate culture can also be seen in another example of *identity* where Daddy Yankee says: “It was up to me to explain to the world what the reggaetón movement was [...]” It is the fact that Daddy Yankee refers to reggaetón as a movement and himself as someone who had to sort of expand it. I also connected this statement with *relationships* because it shows Daddy Yankee establishing two groups of people: he defines a group of people that has knowledge about reggaetón and one that does not, which in the case of this discussion would be a subordinate culture and a dominant culture.

Finally, this quote that I interpreted as being a *cultural proposition* shows that Daddy Yankee may believe that what once was a subordinate culture in the end became a dominant culture: “It’s a song (“Gasolina”) that without a doubt changed music. Not just Latin music but music worldwide. It introduced a culture and it put reggaetón on the international scene. We are now enjoying the fruits that “Gasolina” grew; countless artists have sat here (at the Billboard Latin Music Week) thanks to my album “Barrio Fino” that introduced reggaetón to other cultures and to people without knowledge of the genre.” (Storey, 2009; Billboard, 2021).

In the interview with Bad Bunny there are passages I can connect with the 3rd and 4th definition of popular culture. The 3rd definition focuses on how popular culture is a commercial culture that is mass produced for mass consumption and that its audience is consumers that are non-discriminating. The first example of this is from a statement I



have connected with *identity*: “[...] and not just Spanish, but the Spanish we speak in Puerto Rico, without changing the accent.” Bad Bunny explains that he can make music in Spanish without having to make English versions as well, and that he can sing using his own accent. This part from showing membership categorization of Bad Bunny also shows how the music industry has stopped discriminating against music sung in Spanish, supposedly. I would also argue that this change that Bad Bunny mentions shows an element in relation to a commercialization of music sung in Spanish. I also get the idea that mass production of music sung in Spanish has become a thing if the idea is that music sung in Spanish before would not even be recognized as such, and now it has a presence where different accents of Spanish are accepted. Another statement I have connected with *actions* also hints towards this idea: “Maybe it was necessary to open the doors for this Latin boom, but for me that moment has passed.” A statement that shows how the audience of Bad Bunny’s music is non-discriminative is a statement I connected with *identity* and also referred to as being a *cultural proposition*: “I have different kinds of fans; fans from the LGBT community and also, I am sure, homophobic fans as well as feminist and male chauvinist fans.” Finally, examples that reflect that there is a mass consumption of Bad Bunny’s music would be the following: “[...] because I know the reach that I have in Latin America.” and “[...] this kind of reggaetón and vocabulary.” Statements I also connected with *identity* (Storey, 2009; Mars, 2021).

The 4th definition of popular culture focuses on the idea that popular culture is the culture that originates from the people and that it is an authentic culture of the people. I have two examples I want to comment on and the first one is from the statement: “I am very proud of the level we now have gotten to using Spanish, and not just Spanish, but the Spanish we speak in Puerto Rico, without changing the accent.” I connected this statement with *identity* and *the feeling of the practice*. It is relevant in this discussion because it also expresses how music sung in Spanish and with different accents sort of always has been natural but that it has been unrecognized. This means that what music sung in Spanish has become is based on what can be interpreted as being authentic. I would also argue that “the streets”’s acceptance of Bad Bunny’s music also shows this: “And I was there in the streets with some dudes that could say that they didn’t like Bad Bunny anymore because he was doing weird things, things that aren’t masculine, but they actually thought that the song was dope.” Among other radiants, I connected this

statement with *identity* and *relationships* in my analysis (Storey, 2009; Mars, 2021).

In the interview with Rauw Alejandro there are passages I can connect with the 2nd and 4th definition of popular culture. I have already mentioned these two definitions: the 2nd definition when I discussed Daddy Yankee's statements and the 4th definition when I discussed Bad Bunny's statements. The 2nd definition was that popular culture is what is left after one has decided what is high culture. Popular culture would then be texts and practices that do not meet the required standards of high culture. The 4th definition of popular culture focuses on the idea that popular culture is the culture that originates from the people and that it is an authentic culture of the people (Storey, 2009).

The first of two examples of the 2nd definition in relation to the interview with Rauw Alejandro is when he says: "Reggaetón is the genre commanding the world right now. Before it was an underrated genre and now it's the biggest, musically speaking. It went from being "underground" to the new pop." In my analysis I connected these statements with *action* and *place and dwelling*. When Rauw Alejandro says that reggaetón was an underrated genre as well as its supposed transformation of being "underground" to becoming the new pop, I would argue that Rauw Alejandro implicitly refers to how reggaetón was not seen as high culture; high culture was the previous pop. When Rauw Alejandro mentions that raggetón then eventually became the new pop, reggaetón therefore became a new high culture. Another example is when Rauw Alejandro says: "In the case of reggaetón it is about time we recognize the word for what it is. Referring to reggaetón as the "urban genre" is to undervalue it [...]" This is an example I connected with *action* and *the feeling of the practice*. This statement shows that reggaetón has been put in a larger category of being the "urban genre", which shows how reggaetón was not high culture and maybe still is not thought to be that, even if Rauw Alejandro believes it to be that (Storey, 2009; Girela, 2020).

An example of the 4th definition of popular culture in relation to the interview with Rauw Alejandro is when he says: "The music from the streets is a kind of music that comes from the *pueblo* and ends up spreading. I am not ashamed when people refer to reggaetón as such. I am from the streets and I am very proud of my origins." In my analysis I connected these statements with *identity*, *relationships*, and *the feeling of the practice*. This example from the interview expresses an authentic culture in relation to reggaetón and music because of its integral part of the streets, which also happens to be

Rauw Alejandro's origins (Storey, 2009; Girela, 2020).

In the interview with J Balvin there are passages I can connect with the 1st and 6th definition of popular culture. These definitions combined almost seem like a paradox, but I will now discuss why I believe J Balvin reflects both.

The 1st definition of popular culture is that popular culture is a culture that is widely favored as well as well liked by many people. The first example from the interview that reflects this definition is when J Balvin says: "The sound of today is a mix of our cultures, of our roots, of what we are, of what we inspire, of our taste, and our folklore. It is the result of a diversity of customs and of talents that have come to make their own wave." This is the whole of a quote. I connected this quote with all five radiants at different points. You could argue that if J Balvin believes that the whole sound of today is a mix of the elements he mentions in the quote, it must be because these elements are widely favored and well liked, else it most likely would not be the case due to J Balvin not mentioning anything about it being forced or dictated. J Balvin kind of does the same thing in another quote where he answers a question about why music sung in Spanish has success: "Because of our rhythm, our sound, our easy and catchy lyrics, our way of narrating in our music." I connected this quote in my analysis with *identity* and *relationships*. The word 'catchy' for me also sort of expresses, in relation to music at least, something that is well liked (Storey, 2009; Escutia, 2020).

The sixth definition of popular culture avoids the idea of referring to something as being popular culture. A distinction between high culture and popular culture is no longer recognized. The first quote I believe to reflect this definition is: "We are all equal in the world and we Latinos are a very strong force in relation to contributing to the growth of the world." In my analysis I connected this quote with *identity*, *relationships*, *action*, and *the feeling of the practice*. Although this quote is not about reggaetón it is about how J Balvin interprets an element within the current state of the world: an element that does not seem to express neither the concept of high culture nor popular culture, even if J Balvin may appear biased towards Latinos. Another example in relation to this definition is: "[...] we have to keep making music, that we have to continue giving a great message of respect and admiration to everyone." a statement that I, among other radiants, connected with *relationships* and *action*. By referring to music in this way as a general topic and how he through music can continue to give great messages of respect

and admiration not just to one group of people but to all groups of people, I would argue that J Balvin is expressing a non-existence of high culture and popular culture (Storey, 2009; Escutia, 2020).

Based on this discussion I would argue that one in theory can connect reggaetón to popular culture in various ways, it just depends on the reggaetón artist which definition one can interpret it from.

This concludes my discussion.

## **CONCLUSION**

I will now conclude my thesis and answer my problem formulation.

My problem formulation was: “Based on interviews conducted with reggaetón artists Daddy Yankee, Bad Bunny, Rauw Alejandro, and J Balvin, in which ways, if any, can a struggle for international recognition be interpreted in relation to reggaetón? Also, how can reggaetón be connected to popular culture, based on how the four reggaetón artists refer to reggaetón?”

I have through my thesis interpreted possible struggles that each of the four reggaetón artists could have expressed during their interviews. I have interpreted a struggle for international recognition in relation to reggaetón in the case of Daddy Yankee and Rauw Alejandro, in particular. I have interpreted that in the case of Rauw Alejandro, he seems to be expressing that the struggle only existed in the past. At the same time he also expresses a struggle in relation to how one should refer to reggaetón. Rauw Alejandro may believe that reggaetón as a genre has got international recognition and even, as he mentions in the interview, is “commanding the world” right now, but he still believes that there is a presence of people *undervaluing* the genre by referring to it as the urban genre. In the case of Daddy Yankee I interpreted that he expresses that especially in the past a struggle for international recognition in relation to reggaetón was dominant but also that it might still be a thing of today. Bad Bunny mentions music sung in Spanish during his interview; from one of the quotes I interpret that Bad Bunny implies that a certain struggle for international recognition of music sung in Spanish may still exist. J Balvin could be hiding a potential struggle for international recognition in relation to what Latinos contribute to the world in the context of music.

Regarding my discussion on how reggaetón can be connected to popular culture, based on how Daddy Yankee, Bad Bunny, Rauw Alejandro, and J Balvin refer to reggaetón, respectively, I interpreted that one in theory can connect reggaetón to popular culture in various ways, it just depends on the reggaetón artist which definition one can interpret it from. In my thesis I presented six definitions of popular culture and in my discussion I was able to connect each definition with at least one of the four reggaetón artists. This also means that reggaetón can be connected to popular culture through first defining what popular culture is and then explore how this or these definitions are reflected in

what reggaetón artists mention about reggaetón.

This concludes my thesis.

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