

Reflection Letter

Within my essay, reggaeton is seen in a new light that many people may not agree with. I explore why reggaeton is not seen as a subgenre of hip hop and why it should be. I do this by first giving a little insight into the history and background of both hip hop and reggaeton. There are a few similarities between the two, but many people do not believe that they are the same, and that is what I get into next. People see others who are different from them, or not what they usually see, and make decisions based on surface-level things like skin color, language, and location. I then go into why these ideas are wrong by explaining why exactly these assumptions may be incorrect.

The research provided in the essay was done based on the structure and ideas that came from writing the overview of my essay. Instead of basing my essay on things I had read, I came up with the ideas and flow before finding research to further support my points in the essay. However, there were some sources that I had in mind before starting the essay. I placed my evidence and research and revised my essay based on how effective it would be in certain places and at certain times. Although evidence and research are not a strong suit of mine, I attempted to put them in places that would have the most impact or make the most sense. One writing choice that I made that I hope will be clear to the audience is that I wrote my essay in a way that states the idea I am debating before attacking it. This was something I felt would be a good choice, as the idea I am debating against is usually a majority opinion, so it felt like a good idea to reiterate it and then challenge it so that my points were clear.

Reggaeton: Is Bad Bunny a Hip Hop Artist?

Michaela A. Zias

ENGL 1102 II

1400 02:00 pm

April 2023

In today's world, it is hard to go anywhere and not hear music. With its abundance of genres, sounds, and instruments, there is something out there for everyone to enjoy. For the most part, when listening to music, you can generally tell what it is, and a lot of the time, if you listen closely enough, you can hear what the song takes inspiration from, whether it be in the form of hearing a sample, a distinct downbeat and flow, or even a certain instrument.

Hip hop is a genre of music many people are familiar with because of its beats, scratches, and artists. Some of today's well-known artists include Pop Smoke, Jay Z, and Tyler, the Creator. For older generations, it is artists like The Notorious BIG and Tupac, or even as far back as Grandmaster Flash and the Sugarhill Gang. Hip hop is a big industry and a major music genre. It originated in New York in the early 1970s, and from there it spread to the West Coast and even the South. Hip hop spread like wildfire and, like any other music genre, is highly adaptive and can be shaped to fit any situation. Many people express themselves through this genre. Hip hop is a music genre that has spread to everyone and has gone everywhere.

Reggaeton is a genre of music that many people do not know how to pronounce or claim not to know. The song "Gasolina" by Daddy Yankee? Reggaeton. Bad Bunny? Reggaeton artist. Have you ever seen The Fast and the Furious movies? Bandoleros and Danza Kuduro by Don Omar? Reggaeton or Latin hip hop. Despacito, that song that had a famous but trash Justin Bieber remix? Reggaeton. It is a genre of music that does not get the recognition it deserves. It is basically Latin hip hop, but it has not been able to officially gain this title due to petty details and ideas. What is the disconnect between the similarities of reggaeton and hip hop that causes reggaeton not to have a hip hop title?

Reggaeton has added Latino culture to hip hop to create something new, but not something entirely different from the original. Artists still use beats and breaks and speak to and for their audience. It even still has reggae roots, which were a key foundational point for hip hop. It is literally in the name. It should be able to have the official title of Latin hip hop.

People like Wyclef Jean, who is Haitian American, have made entire hip hop albums such as Wyclef Jean Presents The Carnival featuring Refugee Allstars. This album has a lot of inspiration from the Caribbean, and he is still considered a hip hop artist, and the album itself is considered a hip hop album. Hip hop creates community for its audience, and so does reggaeton. Many people in these communities intersect. They are part of both, as both are part of their interests and identity.

Hip hop was created in the Bronx, a borough in New York, and from there it spread all over the world. Hip hop is an influential genre of music that many people use as a means to create, express themselves, build community, protest, and speak out. In a book by authors Tim Strode and Tim Wood, *The Hip Hop Reader*, there is a collection of essays directed toward composition students learning about hip hop. The fifth chapter, *Mapping Rap: East Coast, West Coast, Third Coast, and Beyond*, consists of essays from Murray Forman, Ayanna Parris, Kelefa Sanneh, and Kiese Laymon. This chapter explores hip hop not only within the United States but also across the world. It has grown, adapted, and taken influence from many places. Within these essays, each author discusses how hip hop, although rooted in the same foundation, differs from place to place. Each coast and region has different sounds, aesthetics, and ideas within its hip hop community.

Breaking down the elements and origins of hip hop helps show how something can be categorized as hip hop. Emceeing, DJing, break dancing, graffiti, and beatboxing were the first elements of hip hop. The father of hip hop, DJ Kool Herc, was Jamaican American.

Reggae is a staple foundation when thinking about hip hop and music in general. Jamaican culture is a starting point of hip hop. Not only was the founding father of hip hop Jamaican American, but reggae, a genre of music from Jamaica, has direct ties to DJing and hip hop. The article “Reggae’s Impact on Hip Hop” by Jamie Ann Board goes more in-depth into how reggae influenced hip hop and helped surface this topic. Reggae dubbing and toasting led to emceeing and scratching. Jamaican sound systems and reggae techniques gave hip hop the tools needed to be created.

The article “Represent: Race, Space, and Place in Rap Music” by Murray Forman, located in The Hip Hop Reader, introduces the concept of posses. The term posse is defined as a strong force or company. Groups like NWA and the Sugarhill Gang, or modern groups like the Migos, reflect this idea. Originally, posses were groups in Jamaica that fought social and political problems. When this concept came to America, it became a way for people to create a home away from home, a group that shares identity and ideology.

Reggaeton is defined as a form of dance music of Puerto Rican origin, characterized by a fusion of Latin rhythms, dancehall, and hip hop or rap. Originating in Panama, reggaeton did not gain traction until it was adopted by Puerto Ricans in the 1980s, about ten years after the creation of hip hop in New York. Philip Samponaro’s article “Oye Mi Canto: Listen to My Song: The History and Politics of Reggaeton” discusses the evolution of reggaeton and its key influences. Reggaeton was a collective effort by immigrants from many different places and cultures. It has been directly influenced by reggae and American hip hop. Puerto Rico’s close relationship with the United States played a key role in reggaeton’s development.

Reggaeton is not seen as hip hop because Latin hip hop is considered its own genre. In an article by Lorena Macedo, she explains that reggaeton has its own specific beat and rhythm, while Latin hip hop is hip hop recorded by artists of Latino descent. Language plays a major role in categorization. Reggaeton is typically in Spanish, while Latin hip hop often uses Spanglish. The loss of language is common among descendants of immigrant groups, whether through forgetting or choosing assimilation.

In an NPR report, Felix Contreras discusses how reggae and hip hop melded into reggaeton. Contreras and host Michele Norris describe reggaeton as a distant cousin of hip hop and emphasize its role as dance music. This perception reinforces stereotypes that hip hop is not meant for enjoyment or dancing and is instead aggressive or exclusive.

When people think of hip hop, they often associate it with African Americans and negative stereotypes. African American culture was created after identity was stripped away, forming a shared experience. African Americans are Black people, but they are not the only Black people. Black people exist across the Caribbean, Africa, and Latin America. While the Black experience in America is shared, it does not define all aspects of identity.

Cydney Adams explains in a CBS News article that African American is a nation-specific term, while Black people exist globally. This distinction is important when discussing hip hop, as music is often created for a specific audience. Hip hop traditionally speaks to Black communities using direct expression that reflects lived experiences.

Puerto Rican people have always been present in the creation of hip hop, especially through graffiti and break dancing. Nuyoricans, New York Puerto Ricans, played a key role. Juan Flores' essay Puerto Rican and Proud, Boyee! explores this relationship. Black and Puerto Rican communities have long coexisted in New York, influencing each other musically and culturally.

Felix Contreras frequently compares reggaeton to hip hop, yet it remains categorized as separate. Hip hop is versatile and not limited to one group. Puerto Rico is a United States territory, and its residents are United States citizens, yet language and cultural differences often lead to exclusion.

Reggaeton has created its own identity and community. However, recognizing it as a hip hop subgenre would not diminish that identity. It would strengthen it. Reggaeton was created by Afro Latinos and carries reggae and hip hop roots. Giving it a hip-hop title would give credit where it is due. These genres are interconnected, and that larger picture is hip hop itself.

Works Cited

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