The Postmodern Latino Rap Revolution

Remington Lohmeyer & Erik Dalton
Utah State University

Abstract

Throughout the songs and music videos of rising Latino rappers: Chingo Bling, LALA Romero, Lil MoCo, Eddie G, and Nortec Collective, each musician respectively draws upon the benefits of pastiche in order to externally display genuine themed messages through their music. Themes of which include: political stances, racial stigmas, gang violence, celebrity influence, to name a few. Through the use and style of intertextuality, heteroglossia, and multicultural syncretism the rappers establish a platform which allows for lightened tone of conversation when dealing with rather controversial topics. Through rap music, these up-and-coming artists have bridged a gap, for those persons who may or may not have personally experienced said themes, allowing for greater conversation, and ultimately a hope for change, defiance, and action. In this research, the usage of parody will be investigated in modern Latino rap, particularly an analysis of how each rapper styles multilingual lyrics in their music videos. In order to achieve this goal, it will be necessary to review the image portrayed by the rapper, their lyrical construct of songs, and the atmosphere in which their videos are set. A variety of articles regarding Latino rap, and also the videos themselves, will aid in determining the specific themed messages that Latino rappers are attempting to convey to today's audience. Specific songs will be chosen from each rapper in order to ensure an accurate portrayal of the variety of messages that Latino rappers are sharing today.

What is Postmodernism?

Postmodernism is the reaction to the objective, or scientific, efforts to describe reality. In essence, postmodernism seeks to challenge ideas, practices, and beliefs that are supposedly applicable to all people. Instead, the postmodern view leaves it up to the individual to determine that person’s own reality. This all-encompassing term idealizes and emphasizes the natural skepticism of all preconceived social constructs in order to allow the individual to define his or her own personal reality.

Research

Chingo Bling, also known as Pedro Herrera, is an American rap artist of Mexican descent. Bling’s music takes advantage of well-known pop songs and rap, high jacking their tracks and transforming the well-established rhythms into intercultural messages. In the effort to do so, Bling makes use of satiric wearing baggy cholera costumes, wigs, and spending time in low-rider cars. Bling touches on subjects such as racial stereotypes, and machismo. Bling is recognizable for his distinguished black sombrero.

LALA Romero is a young up and coming Latina pop artist who writes from her own experiences. Her style is widely notable throughout her music videos. Romero portrays the stereotypical Latina Chicana, wearing bling and hanging out with her crew of “home girls.” What makes LALA unique is that she portrays the stereotypical Latina Chicana, criticizing what the world sees in a female Latina rap artist, by dressing and acting as such. Romero writes mainly about her time with the home girls, and the stereotypes Chicana Cholitas who have ended up disappointing her.

Lil MoCo takes a similar approach to his rap as does Chingo Bling. Parodying popular rap and pop music, MoCo constructs his songs out of vulgar, satiric, and acerbic expression. What may be most unique about MoCo’s appearance in his videos, is that of the self-drawn sharpie tattoos on MoCo’s face. Stereotypical themes of gangs, violence, skewed politics, and machismo are satirized in order to convey an attitude of absurdity in how many people stereotypically view the typical Latino Man as dangerous, disrespectful, and illegal.

Eddie G implements more of a recent take on the Latino culture. He uses the mixture of English and Spanish very interchangeably throughout his videos. Popular themes include the portrayal of smoking and doing drugs. The portrayal of cars throughout the videos also goes along with the older days of Chicanos culture.

Nortec Collective is a group that focuses their music on specifically throwsback to the sixties and seventies. Their songs focus on the music and the film and the way in which the images are portrayed. There are no lyrics within the songs, which allows the audience to mainly focus on the image. The images include the throwback buses and the mixed images of women dancing. Most of the videos seem to portray the images in no particular order.

Multilingual Lyrics

“Ever since you got your green card you, ya no queres tacos puro pasta. Puro olive garden, no more races.”

-Chingo Bling, “7-899-Chingo Bling”

“No policia home, we don't feel that. Fuck a big wall homie, we can jump that...gringos come around we never say shit, you never know who works for immigration.”

-Lil MoCo Ft. Chingo Bling “Started from the Border”

“It’s hard to be a Sad Girl in a man’s world with a big booty and brain... hold your head up high, just hold it up ninja.”

-LALA Romero, “SADGIRL”

“I don’t do it for the stacks, I do it for the laughs. We blaze and put our voices out there. No vas a desesperar, y risa.”

-Eddie G, “Enamorado de la purple”

“Be careful what the average do, I might just pull a "W". Yeah a "W". That’s a winner winner like I always do.”

-Eddie G, “Lookin for Better”

Study conducted with assistance from USU Assistant Professor of Latinx Studies, Dr. Crescencio López-González

Remington T. Lohmeyer
Utah State University
Department of Languages, Philosophy, and Communication
ähl5gay@email.usu.edu

Erik A. Dalton
Utah State University
Department of Languages, Philosophy, and Communication
erikdalton11@aggiemail.usu.edu