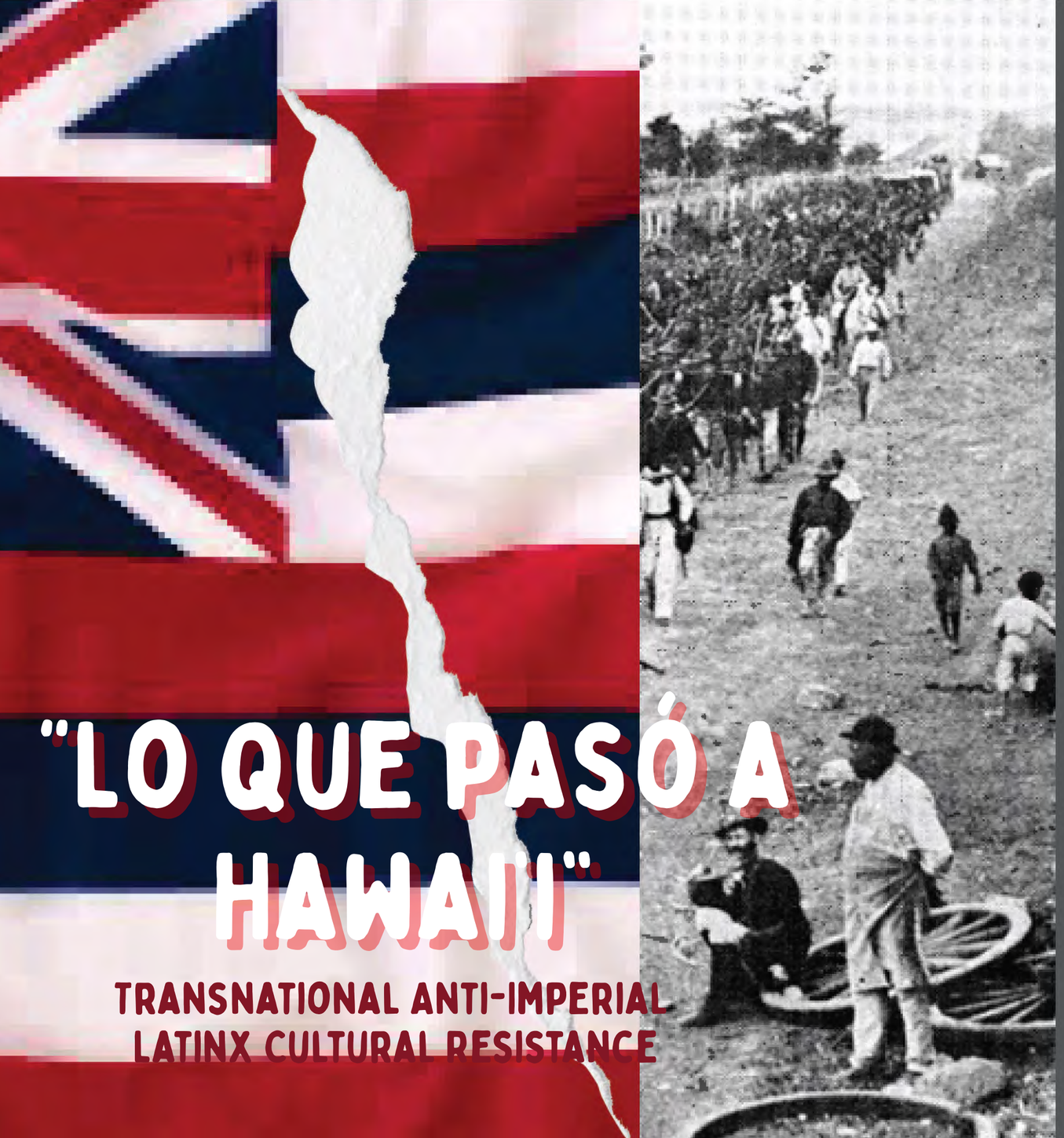


"LO QUE PASÓ A HAWAI'I"

TRANSNATIONAL ANTI-IMPERIAL LATINX CULTURAL RESISTANCE

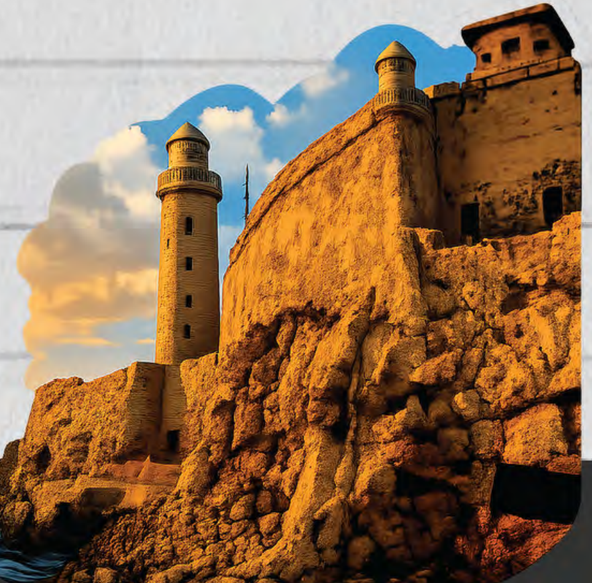
INTRODUCTION:

BAD BUNNY`S "LO QUE LE PASÓ A HAWAI'I" IS A WARNING TO PUERTO RICANS AND HIS GLOBAL AUDIENCE BY DRAWING PARALLELS BETWEEN HAWAI'I`S ANNEXATION AND PUERTO RICO`S HISTORICAL AND ONGOING COLONIAL STATUS. THIS PROJECT EXAMINES HOW BAD BUNNY USES REGGAETON AS A FORM OF POLITICAL RESISTANCE, CONNECTING PUERTO RICO`S STRUGGLE TO HAWAI'I`S HISTORY OF DISPLACEMENT AND CULTURAL ERASURE. THROUGH LYRIC ANALYSIS AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT, I ACKNOWLEDGE HOW MUSIC CAN CHALLENGE COLONIAL NARRATIVES AND DRAW MASS ATTENTION TO REALITIES THAT SCHOLARS HAVE BEEN ARGUING FOR DECADES, BUT THAT HAVE REMAINED LARGELY IGNORED.

"NO QUIERO QUE HAGAN CONTIGO LO QUE LE PASÓ A HAWAI'I"



IN "LO QUE PASÓ A HAWAI'I," BAD BUNNY USES MUSIC AS A POLITICAL WARNING. THE SONG FUNCTIONS AS BOTH A HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY CRITIQUE, CONNECTING HAWAI'I'S HISTORIC AND PRESENT-DAY COLONIAL LEGACY TO PUERTO RICO, WHERE SIMILAR IMPERIAL PATTERNS PERSIST.





WHY HAWAI'I?



BAD BUNNY REFERENCES HAWAI'I BECAUSE IT IS A DOCUMENTED CASE OF U.S. IMPERIAL EXPANSION THAT RESULTED IN THE LOSS OF SOVEREIGNTY, LAND, AND POLITICAL CONTROL.

HAWAI'I'S COLONIAL HISTORY DEMONSTRATES WHAT HE IS WARNING HIS GLOBAL AUDIENCE COULD HAPPEN TO PUERTO RICO.



COLONIZATION THROUGH COUP



THE HAWAIIAN MONARCHY WAS AN INDEPENDENT AND INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED SOVEREIGN NATION. IN THE MID-19TH CENTURY, SUGAR PLANTATIONS ACCOUNTED FOR THE MAJORITY OF HAWAIIAN LAND AND DOMINATED ITS ECONOMY, CONTROLLED BY AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN (PUBLIC LAND, N.D.). ON JANUARY 17, 1893, U.S. MARINES SUPPORTED BY THE COMMITTEE OF SAFETY, A GROUP OF AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN, FORCIBLY OVERTHREW QUEEN LILI'UOKALANI IN A STAGED COUP IN HONOLULU. (EDITORS, 2010). HAWAI'I WAS THEN PROCLAIMED AS A U.S. PROTECTORATE BY SANFORD B. DOLE, THE MAN BEHIND THE COUP (EDITORS, 2010). REFUSING TO RELINQUISH POWER, DOYLE SUBMITTED A TREATY OF ANNEXATION TO THE U.S. SENATE IN 1897 DESPITE DEMOCRATIC AND HAWAIIAN OPPOSITION (THE 1897 PETITION AGAINST THE ANNEXATION OF HAWAII, N.D.).



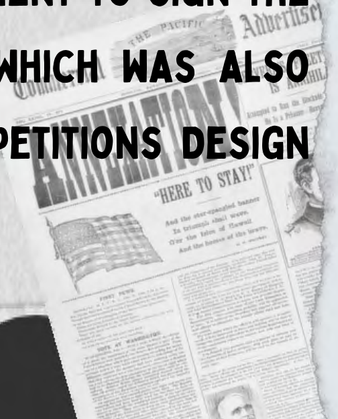


THE ANNEXATION OF HAWAI'I

HOWEVER, IN 1898, THE U.S. WENT TO WAR WITH SPAIN, DURING WHICH THE U.S. REALIZED HOW USEFUL HAWAI'I, SPECIFICALLY PEARL HARBOR, WAS FOR MILITARY PURPOSES. THIS REALIZATION CONVINCED CONGRESS TO APPROVE THE FORMAL ANNEXATION OF HAWAI'I THROUGH THE NEWLANDS RESOLUTION (JOINT RESOLUTION TO PROVIDE FOR ANNEXING THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS TO THE UNITED STATES, 1898).

HAWAI'I'S ANNEXATION WAS AN ACT OF COLONIZATION THAT OCCURRED WITHOUT A TREATY AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, WITHOUT A VOTE FROM THE HAWAIIAN PEOPLE (JOINT RESOLUTION TO PROVIDE FOR ANNEXING THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS TO THE UNITED STATES, 1898). OVER 21,000 HAWAIIANS ORGANIZED A MASSIVE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT TO SIGN THE Kū'ē PETITIONS OPPOSING ANNEXATION, WHICH WAS ALSO IGNORED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT Kū'ē PETITIONS DESIGN COLLECTION, N.D.).





PUERTO RICO AND U.S. IMPERIAL RULE

THE ANNEXATION OF HAWAI'I PROVED THAT THE U.S.'S IMPERIALIST STRATEGY WAS EFFECTIVE. JUST **MONTHS** LATER, IN 1898, PUERTO RICO BECAME A U.S. TERRITORY WITHOUT CONSENT. AND LIKE HAWAI'I, PUERTO RICANS HAD NO VOTE.

IN 1898, THE UNITED STATES COLONIZED PUERTO RICO THROUGH MILITARY INVASION DURING THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR (HISTORY.COM EDITORS, 2009). FOLLOWING THE TREATY OF PARIS, SPAIN **CEDED** PUERTO RICO TO THE UNITED STATES. AS A RESULT, PUERTO RICANS LOST THEIR SPANISH CITIZENSHIP WITHOUT ACQUIRING U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND WERE STRIPPED OF CONSTITUTIONALLY PROTECTED RIGHTS (CABAN, 2005).



PUERTO RICOS ANNEXATION

UNDER THE FORAKER ACT (1901), PUERTO RICO BECAME AN "UNINCORPORATED TERRITORY" OF THE UNITED STATES AND SET UP A LIMITED CIVIL GOVERNMENT. PUERTO RICANS WERE SUBJECT TO U.S. LAWS WITHOUT REPRESENTATION IN CONGRESS (CONGRESS, 2021). IN 1917, JUST BEFORE THE UNITED STATES ENTERED WORLD WAR I, CONGRESS PASSED THE JONES-SHAFROTH ACT. THIS ACT GRANTED PUERTO RICANS STATUTORY U.S. CITIZENSHIP (HISTORY.COM EDITORS, 2023). HOWEVER, PUERTO RICANS WERE STILL UNABLE TO VOTE FOR PRESIDENT OR FOR REPRESENTATION IN CONGRESS AND HAD LIMITED CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTIONS (LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, N.D.). PUERTO RICO HAS REMAINED IN THIS UNDEMOCRATIC, "COLONIAL LIMBO" FOR OVER 125 YEARS (HUNT, 2023).


The New York Times.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 1917—SIXTEEN PAGES.

RTO RICO BILL SIGNED.

Citizenship to Natives and the Denendency "Dry."

The bill provides that the residents of Porto Rico shall become American citizens in a body with opportunity to renounce such citizenship at any time within one year; heretofore any Porto Rican has been a citizen of the United States or any other country, he has to renounce it within one year from the date of the bill. It has been signed by the President.



WHY THESE LYRICS?

"SE OYE AL JÍBARO LLORANDO, OTRO MÁ' QUE SE MARCHÓ / NO QUERÍA IRSE PA ORLANDO, PERO EL CORRUPTO LO ECHÓ."

- THE LYRICS DESCRIBE MIGRATION AS FORCED REMOVAL, NOT CHOICE.
- ACT 60 IS A TAX INCENTIVE TO BRING IN WEALTHY INVESTORS TO PUERTO RICO. CONSEQUENTLY, GENTRIFICATION AND THE DISPLACEMENT OF PUERTO RICAN RESIDENTS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY RISING BECAUSE FOREIGN NEWCOMERS' ECONOMIC INTERESTS OVERRIDE THE RIGHTS OF LOCAL PUERTO RICANS.
- THESE LYRICS MIRROR HAWAII'S TRAJECTORY. AFTER HAWAI'I'S ANNEXATION, NATIVE HAWAIIANS WERE SYSTEMATICALLY DISPLACED THROUGH LAND LAWS THAT TRANSFERRED 1,750,00 ACRES OF HAWAIIAN LANDS TO U.S. CONTROL AND PRIVATE CORPORATIONS (DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES, 2017).





BAD BUNNY'S WARNING

BAD BUNNY USES THESE LYRICS TO DOCUMENT WHAT'S ALREADY HAPPENING IN PUERTO RICO. THE SAME PROCESS THAT DESTROYED HAWAIIAN SOVEREIGNTY AND DISPLACED NATIVE HAWAIIANS OVER A CENTURY AGO.

"NO, NO SUELTE` LA BANDERA NI OLVIDE` EL LELOLA"[1]

- THE "LELOLAI" IS A TRADITIONAL PUERTO RICAN FOLK CHANT OF THE JÍBARO COUNTRYSIDE PEOPLE THAT REPRESENTS THE ISLAND`S INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND HISTORY (CAPETILLO, 2025).
- BAD BUNNY URGES PUERTO RICANS NOT TO LET IMPERIALIST POWERS ERASE THEIR IDENTITY. PUERTO RICO'S POPULATION FELL 11.8% BETWEEN 2010 AND 2020, LARGELY DUE TO THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND OVER-TOURISM, WHICH DROVE UP PRICES IMPOSED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS ELITES (MARTINEZ, 2021). THIS HAS CAUSED MANY PUERTO RICANS TO MOVE TO THE MAINLAND TO TRY TO AFFORD BASIC LIVING.
- THIS MIRRORS HAWAI'I'S COLONIAL EFFECTS OF CULTURAL SUPPRESSION, WHERE THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE WAS BANNED IN SCHOOLS FROM 1896 UNTIL 1986, NEARLY ERASING NATIVE HAWAIIAN IDENTITY ACROSS GENERATIONS (NAKATA, 2017).



COLONIAL PATTERNS IN CANCÚN

BEFORE 1970, CANCÚN DID NOT EXIST. THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT TRANSFORMED MAYAN FISHING VILLAGES INTO MEGA-RESORTS TO BOOST ITS ECONOMY (DALTABUIT ET AL., 2010). TODAY, HOTEL WORKERS COMMUTE HOURS FROM AFFORDABLE AREAS BECAUSE THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO LIVE NEAR THE BEACHES WHERE THEY WORK (GONZALEZ, 2021). ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORTS KEEP TOURIST DOLLARS FROM REACHING THE LOCAL ECONOMY. MAYAN CULTURE IS USED AS ENTERTAINMENT FOR GUESTS, WHILE REAL MAYAN COMMUNITIES ARE PUSHED OUT BY NEW DEVELOPMENT (GONZALEZ, 2021).

COLONIAL PATTERNS IN CUENCA

IN CUENCA, UNESCO AND NORTH AMERICAN RETIREES DROVE UP HOUSING COSTS, FUELING TRANSNATIONAL GENTRIFICATION. COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE AND INDIGENOUS TRADITIONS WERE COMMODIFIED TO ATTRACT FOREIGN BUYERS WHEN MARKETED AS AN AFFORDABLE LIFESTYLE, DISPLACING LOWER-INCOME RESIDENTS AND STREET VENDORS WHO COULD NO LONGER AFFORD TO LIVE IN CUENCA (HAYES, 2018).









BAD BUNNY AS A TRANSNATIONAL CULTURAL FIGURE

BENITO ANTONIO MARTÍNEZ OCASIO, KNOWN AS "BAD BUNNY," HAS BECOME A TRANSNATIONAL CULTURAL FIGURE WHILE KEEPING HIS PUERTO RICAN ROOTS CENTRAL IN HIS WORK. AS THE WORLD'S MOST-STREAMED ARTIST, HIS ADVOCACY FOR PUERTO RICO'S COLONIAL STATUS RESONATES WITH AUDIENCES ACROSS LATIN AMERICA WHO RECOGNIZE SIMILAR PATTERNS OF GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT (BARREIRO LEON, 2025).

UNSETTLING ANGLO-CENTRIC AMERICA

IN "LO QUE LE PASÓ A HAWAII," BAD BUNNY DIRECTLY CHALLENGES AMERICA'S LONG-STANDING NARRATIVE OF FREEDOM AND UNITY BY EXPOSING THE COLONIAL INSTITUTIONS IT SEEKS TO SILENCE. THE SONG IS PRODUCED ENTIRELY IN SPANISH, REFUSING ANGLO ASSIMILATION WHILE ADDRESSING THE REALITY THAT PUERTO RICANS ARE U.S. CITIZENS STILL EXPERIENCING COLONIALISM SHAPED BY AMERICAN IMPERIAL POWER. THE SONG FORCES AMERICANS TO CONFRONT THE CONTRADICTION THAT THE U.S. CLAIMS PUERTO RICO BUT DENIES ITS PEOPLE SOVEREIGN POWER AND AUTONOMY. THIS PATTERN OF U.S. IMPERIAL CONTROL EXTENDS BEYOND PUERTO RICO AND IS STILL SEEN IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES ACROSS LATIN AMERICA.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

BEFORE THIS COURSE, I LISTENED TO BAD BUNNY BECAUSE I LOVED HIS TAKE ON REGGAETON. HE IS THE ARTIST WHO MADE ME FEEL PROUD OF MY ECUADORIAN HERITAGE AFTER COMING TO GWU. INTERPRETING AND ANALYZING HIS MUSIC AS POLITICAL RESISTANCE RATHER THAN JUST LISTENING TO MUSIC HAS MADE ME REALIZE THAT POPULAR MUSIC CAN BE AN ARTISTIC FORM OF COLONIAL RESISTANCE. THIS CLASS INITIALLY TAUGHT US THAT THE LATINX TERM CAN, ITSELF, BE DIVISIVE BECAUSE IT DOESN'T ENCAPSULATE THE COMPLEXITIES THAT LATIN AMERICA, GEOGRAPHICALLY AND INDIVIDUALLY, CARRIES. AFTER READING TORRES'S "LATINIDAD IS CANCELLED," I BEGAN QUESTIONING WHO IS INCLUDED IN LATINX IDENTITY AND WHO IS ERASED. BAD BUNNY'S MUSIC, FOR ME, BRIDGES THIS BY CENTERING THE VOICES OF AFRO-LATINX AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WHO ARE TYPICALLY EXCLUDED. HIS ANTI-IMPERIALIST STANCE SPEAKS TO COLONIAL REALITIES THAT MANY COUNTRIES GLOBALLY STILL FACE. BAD BUNNY CHALLENGES THE U.S.'S COLONIAL CONTROL OF PUERTO RICO, AMPLIFYING THE SAME MESSAGES OF PREVIOUS SCHOLARS LIKE IRIS MORALES, AS IN THE YOUNG LORDS: THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY, WHO ADDRESSED COLONIALISM, RACISM, AND STATE VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES DURING THE LATE 1960S AND 1970S. THROUGH HIS MUSIC, BAD BUNNY IS GARNERING GLOBAL ATTENTION FOR STRUGGLES THAT WERE PREVIOUSLY SILENCED AND OVERLOOKED.

THANK YOU, AND I HOPE YOU ENJOYED!





THANK YOU FOR ENGAGING WITH THIS PROJECT! LIKE IN HAWAI'I AND PUERTO RICO, COLONIALISM DIDN'T END: IT JUST FOUND NEW METHODS TO EXPAND THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA. BAD BUNNY UTILIZED MUSIC AS A FORM OF POLITICAL RESISTANCE TO SHOW MILLIONS WHAT DISPLACEMENT LOOKS LIKE IN REAL TIME. HIS WARNING FOR PUERTO RICO IS CLEAR. CAN WE STOP IMPERIALISM FROM CONTINUING TO RAVAGE LATIN AMERICA?