



Television Production: Bad Bunny's Super Bowl LX Performance as a Political Act

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ABSTRACT

On February 9, 2026, before more than 125 million viewers, Puerto Rican artist Bad Bunny headlined the Super Bowl LX halftime show in a sociopolitical context marked by the Trump administration's immigration policies and the systematic persecution of undocumented Latino populations in the United States. This paper analyzes the performance as an audiovisual discourse of symbolic resistance through the combined application of Critical Discourse Analysis in its historical-discursive approach (Wodak, 2001) and multimodal analysis (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001). The object of analysis is the set of resources deployed in the show, including verbal, musical, scenographic, sartorial and gestural elements. The paper examines the extent to which these resources construct a narrative of pan-Latin identity affirmation and symbolic reconfiguration of the concept of "America", and the extent to which this narrative operates as genuine resistance or as a form of controlled integration within the entertainment industry. Preliminary results point to a productive tension between both readings, deliberately activated by the performance itself. It is concluded that the performance constitutes a paradigmatic case of counter-hegemonic discourse, with implications for the study of audiovisual communication as political practice.

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1. Introduction

On 9 February 2026, Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, known by his stage name Bad Bunny, headlined the Super Bowl LX half-time show, held at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, which has a maximum capacity of 68,500 spectators. Meanwhile, the televised broadcast of the show reached an audience of 125.6 million viewers in the United States, making it the fourth most-watched half-time show in history, trailing only Kendrick Lamar, with 133.5 million in 2025, Michael Jackson, with 133.4 million in 1993, and Usher, with 129.3 million in 2024 (ESPN, 2026; Nielsen, 2026). To this audience figure must be added the 137.4 million views on the NFL's official YouTube channel in the two weeks following the broadcast.

Scholars such as Dayan and Katz (1992) and Hepp and Couldry (2010) have identified the Super Bowl as one of the media events with the greatest reach in the contemporary media landscape, characterised by its unifying role and its historical tendency to reinforce the dominant symbolic order. That this space was occupied by an artist who performed entirely in Spanish, wearing a T-shirt bearing her mother's surname 'Ocasio' and the number 64, surrounded by the little house that had featured prominently on her tour in Puerto Rico, and closing his performance with a recitation of all the countries of the American continent before uttering "God Bless America", turns the performance into a discursive event that transcends entertainment and justifies its systematic analysis from the perspective of audiovisual communication.

The socio-political context is inseparable from the meaning of the spectacle, as discourse cannot be understood in isolation from the historical, political and institutional conditions that make it possible (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 2001). Since the start of its second term in January 2025, the Trump administration has stepped up the operations of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), with raids in schools, hospitals and churches and deportations affecting at least 200,000 Latin Americans in the first ten months of the administration (CNN en Español, 2025a; 2025b). Against this backdrop, Bad Bunny chose not to embark on his tour of the continental United States for fear that ICE would turn up at his concerts (Jahmal, 2026), and his 'casita', as a symbol of identity for his Puerto Rican tour, became the central stage prop in the world's biggest media showcase (NPR, 2026; NFL.com, 2026). At the same time, the choice of artist was not unrelated to commercial considerations. The NFL's senior vice-president of global marketing, Marissa Solis, stated that the league's growth was "mathematically impossible without Latinos", referring to the more than 39 million Latino fans in the United States (NFL Football Operations, 2024; CNBC, 2024). This tension between the industry's commercial interests and the artist's political dimension constitutes the central issue of this article. Cultural visibility does not eliminate structural inequalities, though it does redefine their forms of representation, inserting the spectacle into an ambivalent dynamic of recognition and capitalisation on diversity (Latinoamérica21a, 2026).

The novelty of this research lies in the fact that, despite the obvious significance of the phenomenon, no academic study to date has systematically applied CDA tools and multimodal analysis to the Super Bowl LX spectacle. Existing work is limited to analysing institutional press releases and statements (Klein College, 2025; UCLA, 2026), without the analytical and methodological contribution proposed by this article. Furthermore, the research contributes to the emerging field of study on mass audiovisual communication as a political practice, offering a case situated at the intersection of discourse studies, Latin American cultural studies and the analysis of global media events (Rodríguez Vicente, 2026; Masciotra, 2026). The question guiding this work is: to what extent did Bad Bunny's performance function as genuine counter-hegemonic discourse, and to what extent was it absorbed by the logic of mass spectacle?

1.2. Background and current situation

1.2.1. The Super Bowl as a subject of academic study

Understanding the Super Bowl as a communicative phenomenon requires situating the analysis within the tradition of studies on media, power and ideology. McLuhan (1964) posited that the

medium is the message; in other words, the form, structure and conditions of production and reception of a medium determine its meaning just as decisively as the content it conveys. Applied to the Super Bowl, this thesis implies that the half-time show is not a neutral vessel onto which artists freely project their messages, but rather a cultural form with its own grammar—such as spectacle, consumption or patriotism—which conditions any discourse produced from within it.

Fairclough (1995) argues along the same lines that media discourse does not merely reflect social reality but actively constructs it, normalising certain power relations and silencing alternatives. From the Gramscian perspective of cultural hegemony, major media events are not neutral arenas of entertainment but spaces in which a society's symbolic consensus are negotiated and reproduced (Hall, 1980); and differential access to these spaces constitutes one of the central mechanisms of the reproduction of power (Van Dijk, 1993).

Real (1975) was the first to apply this framework to the Super Bowl, coining the concept of the 'mythical spectacle' to describe the event's role as a ritual for reaffirming the dominant values and ideology of American culture. Leonard and Lugo-Lugo (2005) expanded on this analysis by positioning the half-time show as the most elaborate cultural expression of American national identity, noting that the commercial dimension and the ideological function are not contradictory but mutually constitutive: cultural capital and economic capital reinforce one another, and any discourse of resistance produced from within the event inevitably operates in tension with the commercial logic that funds it. Dayan and Katz's (1992) theory of media events provides a specific conceptual framework for understanding the Super Bowl as a unique communicative phenomenon: these authors distinguish media events—live broadcasts with mass reach that interrupt the media routine, generate collective communion and are experienced as History—from ordinary news programmes, highlighting their integrative function and their structural tendency to reinforce the dominant symbolic order. However, Hepp and Couldry (2010) have highlighted the limitations of this framework in the contemporary media ecosystem: the proliferation of platforms and the active participation of audiences open up possibilities for reinterpretation and subversion that Dayan and Katz did not envisage, for in the digital age the media event is not exhausted by the live broadcast but is extended and recontextualised on social media, where audiences produce their own interpretations, sometimes radically divergent from the original message.

1.2.2. Studies on part-time work, Latin identity and cultural resistance

The relationship between popular music, identity and political resistance has been the subject of growing academic attention. Van Leeuwen (2012) has argued that music constitutes a discourse that can be analysed in terms of power and ideology, and that its analysis requires consideration of the full range of semiotic resources that comprise it. Way (2019), from the perspective of CDA, has demonstrated how popular music can function simultaneously as an instrument of ideological control and as a platform for resistance, and has argued that critical multimodal analysis reveals the political dimensions of musical communication that remain hidden in exclusively textual or musicological approaches. Applied to the Latin American context, Moreno López (2020) has applied multimodal analysis to the music video for 'No Me Conoce' by J Balvin, Bad Bunny and Jhay Cortez, a video that achieved widespread circulation in the context of Super Bowl LIV in 2020, demonstrating the effectiveness of combining ACD and visual semiotics for the analysis of musical works by Latin artists within the US media ecosystem. Androutsopoulos (2010) has explored, from a broader perspective, how artists from historically marginalised communities use music as a space for identity construction and political resistance.

The study most directly comparable to the present work is that of Van Bauwel and Krijnen (2021) on the intersectional analysis of Super Bowl LIV in 2020 (Shakira and Jennifer Lopez), which identified an ambivalent representation of Latinx identity oscillating between identity affirmation and the reproduction of gender stereotypes, and which demonstrated the relevance of discourse analysis in revealing the ideological tensions of the spectacle. Researchers from universities such as Temple, UCLA and Michigan State have highlighted the historical and colonial dimension underlying Bad Bunny's presence at Super Bowl LX, pointing to the tension between cultural visibility and the

reproduction of a hegemonic Latinx identity that excludes the most vulnerable migrant communities (Klein College, 2026; UCLA, 2026; Latinoamérica21, 2026b). This tradition of research highlights the ability of half-time shows to convey discourses on identity and politics that go beyond mere entertainment, but also their tendency to undermine these discourses through commercial logic.

A historical-comparative review of half-time performances allows us to distinguish three types based on their relationship with the dominant symbolic order, in line with Dayan and Katz's (1992) distinction between media events that reinforce the consensus and those that challenge it. The first type comprises hegemonic entertainment shows with no explicit political dimension, the paradigmatic example being Maroon 5 in 2019 (NPR, 2024). The second type encompasses performances with an identity-based or partial political dimension: Beyoncé in 2016 with "Formation" and Black Lives Matter iconography (CNN, 2026a), Jennifer Lopez in 2020 with children in cage-like structures as a reference to Trump's immigration policy (Boston Globe, 2026), and Eminem in 2022 kneeling in tribute to Colin Kaepernick (Boston Herald, 2026).

The third type—the one exhibiting the greatest degree of counter-hegemonic discursive articulation—is represented by Kendrick Lamar in 2025, who constructed a narrative space in which the figure of Samuel L. Jackson as 'Uncle Sam' explicitly addressed the tension between resistance and integration (Boston Herald, 2026), and by Bad Bunny in 2026, analysed in this study. The criterion organising this typology is the degree of political explicitness in the semiotic discourse and the narrative coherence with which that dimension is articulated: type 1 is characterised by the absence of a stance; type 2, by the mobilisation of identity symbols without a sustained, articulated political narrative; and type 3, by the deliberate and sustained thematisation of the tension between resistance and co-optation. The classification of Kendrick Lamar (2025) as Type 3, rather than Type 2, stems from the fact that his performance constructed an explicit narrative device (the figure of 'Uncle Sam' as an allegory of that tension), which transcends the episodic symbolic mobilisation characteristic of Type 2. This typology highlights the progressive transformation of the Super Bowl from a ritual of reaffirmation of the hegemonic order, in the sense of Real (1975) and Dayan and Katz (1992), into a space of genuine symbolic contestation, in line with what Hepp and Coudry (2010) anticipated for the contemporary media ecosystem.

Despite this growing academic interest, no study to date has systematically applied ACD and multimodal analysis to Super Bowl LX, a gap that this study aims to fill.

1.3. Objectives

The overall aim of this study is to analyse Bad Bunny's performance during the Super Bowl LX half-time show as an audiovisual discourse of symbolic resistance, examining the semiotic devices employed and how they are articulated within the socio-political context in which the performance is situated. The key research question is: to what extent did the performance function as a genuine counter-hegemonic discourse, and to what extent was it absorbed by the logic of mass spectacle?

The following specific objectives stem from the general objective:

1. To identify and describe the discursive and multimodal resources (verbal, musical, scenographic, sartorial and gestural) through which the performance constructs a narrative of 'pan-Latin' identity affirmation and a symbolic reconfiguration of the concept of 'America'.
2. Examine the extent to which this narrative functions as a genuine counter-hegemonic discourse or as a form of resistance that is integrated and neutralised by the logic of the television entertainment industry.

2. Design and methodology

2.1. Formal object and type of research

The formal object of this research is the set of audiovisual semiotic resources deployed in the televised Super Bowl LX half-time show, featuring Bad Bunny on 9 February 2026. The inclusion criterion for the formal object focuses on the audiovisual production and excludes the live performance, as this did not have the reach of the live broadcast and does not meet the objectives of the study. The research adopts a qualitative-interpretative design with a historical-critical perspective and therefore does not consider prior hypotheses, given that the nature of the subject—a unique and historically situated audiovisual production—orients the analysis towards in-depth and critical interpretation rather than towards the verification of prior propositions. The central research question acts as the guiding thread through the two phases of analysis corresponding to 1 and 2 objectives.

2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis: a historical-discursive approach

CDMA forms the first methodological pillar of this study. CDMA conceives of discourse as a situated, historically conditioned social practice with power implications (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). Unlike other approaches to discourse analysis, CDA does not merely seek to describe textual structures but to reveal their ideological functioning: how discourse produces, reproduces or challenges relations of social domination and subordination. This critical dimension is inseparable from an explicit commitment to transforming the structures of inequality that the analysis helps to uncover (Van Dijk, 1993).

In his historical-discursive approach, Wodak (2001) emphasises the importance of reconstructing the historical, political and social context in which discourses are produced and circulated, arguing that the meaning of a statement cannot be understood in isolation from the conditions that make it possible and the discursive traditions within which it is embedded. Historical-discursive analysis operates on three interrelated levels: that of the content or themes of the discourse, that of the discursive strategies employed, and that of the linguistic and semiotic resources through which these strategies are realised. This approach is particularly relevant to the analysis of Bad Bunny's work, the meaning of which is inseparable from the context of persecution of the Latino population in the United States, the colonial history of Puerto Rico as a territory under US sovereignty, and the tradition of Caribbean cultural resistance within which the artist is situated.

2.3. Multimodal audiovisual analysis and audiovisual narrative

Multimodal audiovisual analysis is an interdisciplinary methodological approach that examines media texts (film, television, video games, advertising, social media) not as monolithic units, but as complex semiotic systems. Unlike traditional film analysis, which often prioritises narrative or visual aesthetics, multimodality argues that meaning is constructed through the interaction of various 'modes' operating simultaneously. The model developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) constitutes the second methodological pillar of this work, complementary to and inseparable from ACD. This approach extends the concept of discourse beyond the verbal to encompass the whole range of semiotic resources—image, sound, movement, space, colour, costume—that contribute to the production of meaning in audiovisual texts.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) argue that in contemporary communication, no single semiotic mode operates in isolation: meaning emerges from the articulation of multiple modes in what they term a multimodal design, in which resources are combined to construct messages that none could convey on its own. In the words of these authors, semiotic modes are resources that enable the simultaneous realisation of discourses and types of interaction (2001, p. 21). This perspective is indispensable for the analysis of the half-time show, in which the song lyrics, set design, choreography, costumes, lighting and spatial arrangement of the performers function as an integrated semiotic system whose parts mutually reinforce and re-signify one another. A directly relevant methodological precedent

is that of Moreno López (2020), who applied multimodal analysis to a Bad Bunny music video in the context of Super Bowl LIV, demonstrating the transferability of Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) categories to the analysis of Latin cultural products within the US media ecosystem.

The incorporation of audiovisual narrative as an analytical dimension is based on Bordwell's (2013) framework, whose model of cinematic narration has been applied to the analysis of highly formalised non-fictional audiovisual works (Rivera-Martín and Martínez de Bartolomé Rincón, 2025). In the case of the half-time show—an audiovisual product subject to a premeditated narrative design, with temporal structuring, thematic development and rhetorical closure—Bordwell's (2013) categories relating to the organisation of information, temporality and the construction of point of view are directly applicable, as the show is not an improvised performance but an audiovisual text constructed according to the same principles of narrative economy and formal coherence as fictional cinema.

2.4. Corpus for analysis

The corpus for analysis consists of the full audiovisual recording of the Super Bowl LX half-time show, lasting 13 minutes and 41 seconds, in its complete official version as broadcast live on television and subsequently published on the NFL's official digital platforms. This version has been selected because, as Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) point out, multimodal analysis requires access to the text in its entirety in order to identify the articulation between semiotic modes throughout the narrative sequence. Limiting the corpus to the official primary piece ensures the homogeneity and replicability of the analysis, whilst excluding the fragmented and recontextualised versions circulating on social media, the systematic study of which is proposed as a future line of research. In this regard, and to meet the stated objectives, the lyrics of Bad Bunny's songs prior to the show have been excluded.

2.5. Categories, variables and indicators for analysis

The multimodal analysis is organised around the three categories proposed by Bordwell (2013) – Narrative (C1), Style (C2) and Motivation (C3) – centred on five semiotic dimensions that operate in an integrated manner within the performance and are established as variables for analysis: (V1) verbal and lyrical resources, the linguistic code and interventions (excluding song lyrics); (V2) musical and sound resources, focusing on genres, rhythms, voice and cultural references; (V3) scenographic and audiovisual resources, with attention to the spatial arrangement of the performers and symbolic movements. For each dimension, the degree of political impact of the resource is examined, along with its role in constructing the pan-Latin American identity narrative and its relationship to the tension between counter-hegemonic resistance and commercial integration.

- For the first variable, the ACD indicators are established: lexicon (I1.1), literary devices (I1.2), message (I1.3) and tone (I1.4).
- The second variable focuses on the indicators of music (I2.1), rhythm (I2.2) and silence (I2.3), used as a resource for semantic punctuation.
- The third variable analyses scenographic indicators, with particular attention to set design and symbolic identity (I3.1) and indicators of audiovisual production such as planning (I3.2), framing and camera movements (I3.3), chromaticism as an emotional resource (I3.4) and costume design (I3.5).

3. Results

For the purposes of this analysis, the televised show has been divided into five parts: the opening sequence (Intro), lasting 13 seconds; the Sugarcane plantation, lasting 1 minute 34 seconds; the Creole cottage, lasting 3 minutes 4 seconds; Lady Gaga and New York, lasting 4 minutes 10 seconds; and Ricky Martin and flags, lasting 4 minutes 81 seconds. An analysis of the narrative, stylistic and motivational structure of this artistic and activist project reveals a deliberate construction of pan-Latin identity through music, dance and identity-defining elements. The first of

the analysis tables (Table 1), focusing on verbal and lyrical devices, highlights a phenomenon considered to be one of cultural reversal. The sentence “Now everyone wants to be Latino” identifies a critique of the consumption of all things Latino as an aesthetic trend, whilst simultaneously serving as a public denunciation of the systematic harassment suffered by migrants in the US, as already outlined in the theoretical framework and justification of the case study. The mention of women “perreando sin miedo” (dancing fearlessly) transcends the dance to become a declaration of bodily and social autonomy, framed in a defiant tone that empowers women.

Paradoxically, the lyrics of Bad Bunny’s songs convey the opposite message, as they portray women as objectified and submissive; however, as previously explained, the lyrics were not included in the study because they do not meet the research objectives, which focus on political impact in the US. The imperative “Love without fear” and the ontological advice “Never stop believing in yourself” elevate the spectacle from a mere entertainment event to a ritual of collective celebration and reinforcement of Latin self-esteem. The closing under the slogan “God Bless America” broadens the narrow meaning of America by pluralising it through the mention of the other countries on the continent.

Table 1. Verbal and lyrical devices (V1).

	Intro	Sugarcane plantation	Creole cottage	Lady Gaga & NY	Ricky Martin & Flags
Lexicon	Super Bowl Apple Music Halftime Show.	It’s great to be Latin American. Let’s have a drink today.	Women all over the world dancing “perreo” without fear.	While you are alive, you should love as much as you can. Love without fear.	Now everyone wants to be Latino. God bless América + countries. Welcome to the “calentón”.
Literary devices	-	Rhetorical exclamation. Synesthesia. Ellipsis.	Hyperbole.	Parallelism. Omission of the subject.	Irony. Mixed code (<i>spanglish</i>).
Message	Welcome to Puerto Rico.	The dignity of agricultural harvesting work.	Never stop believing in yourself.	A celebration of love.	The Americas belong to all countries, not just the US.
Tone	Slow tropical.	Nostalgic	Celebration.	Romantic and nostalgic.	Protest.

Source: Compiled by the author, 2026.

The second table analyses the musical and sonic elements. The musical progression described in Table 2 illustrates the fusion of disparate genres such as salsa, reggaeton, pop and classical music. The inclusion of a string orchestra within a reggaeton and salsa context breaks down the traditional hierarchy between classical and urban music, which is interpreted as a proposal for intercultural fusion amongst all American identities. The music, present throughout the performance, is interrupted only by the brief silences during Bad Bunny’s on-camera statements. The use of the calderón (prolonged pause) during the acting creates dramatic tension that compels the viewer to focus their attention on the gestures and the message. Meanwhile, the silence linked to the power cut in the final segment is a direct reference to Puerto Rico’s precarious infrastructure and energy crisis. It is a silence of protest that politicises the Super Bowl LX stage. Furthermore, the silence in the closing scene to the camera functions as an exercise in mass intimacy, where the absence of sound reinforces the authenticity and gravity of the verbal message.

The fleeting appearances of stars such as Karol G, Cardi B, Jessica Alba and Pedro Pascal dancing in the creole cottage lend a sense of symbolism, despite being merely a succession of cameos by singers, actresses and actors with long-standing careers in the US market. This convergence of

cultural capital on stage constitutes an assertion of the current Latin hegemony in the entertainment industry, transforming the event into a manifesto of visibility and identity, without the need to hear them speak directly. For its part, the reinterpretation of ‘Die With a Smile’ to the rhythms of salsa represents Lady Gaga’s aesthetic foray into the genre, creating a cultural hybridisation between Anglo-Saxon and Latin music. By shifting a pop ballad into the canon of tropical music, it produces a decentralisation of Anglo-centric genres, granting salsa the status of a universal musical language, just as the lyrics of the rest of the show proclaim.

Of all the performances, the one with the strongest political message is the rendition of the protest song *Lo que le pasó a Hawaii*—released by Bad Bunny in 2025—by fellow Puerto Rican artist Ricky Martin. In it, Bad Bunny makes a case against the privatisation of Puerto Rico and the displacement of its native population, a situation he compares to the gentrification suffered by the inhabitants of Hawaii following its colonisation, drawing a parallel between the two territories and calling on the population to mount social and cultural resistance against US colonialism.

Table 2. Musical and audio resources (V.2).

	Intro	Sugarcane plantation	Creole cottage	Lady Gaga & NY	Ricky Martin & Flags
Music	Salsa.	Reggaeton and salsa.	Reggaeton and classical (violins)	Lady Gaga covers “Die with a Smile” to a salsa beat	<i>Lo que le pasó a Hawaii</i> and Trap
Rhythm	Key rhythm.	Dembow.	Dembow.	Key rhythm.	Amalgam.
Silence	Domino players and a girl sitting quietly.	Sugar cane harvesters and streets.	Silent cameos.	Calderon's break and acting Bad Bunny.	Silence during the power cut. Silence during the final message to the camera.

Source: Compiled by the author, 2026.

Table 3 analyses the show’s scenographic and audiovisual elements, which serve as indicators of its artistic and political vision. The production opens with scenes depicting everyday life, such as a game of dominoes and a girl playing in the street, thereby affirming the public space as a place of gathering and fellowship. The immersion in the sugarcane field places the audience within the cane grove, dignifying agricultural labour and seeking to foster empathy for rural work. The division of the Casita into three areas (veranda, interior and workshop) functions as a metonymy of resilience, with the veranda signifying a place of socialising, the humble interior representing private space, and the workshop serving as a creative and self-managed workplace.

Image 1. First frame of Bad Bunny’s televised performance at the 2026 Super Bowl.



Source: Official NFL YouTube channel *Bad Bunny’s Apple Music Super Bowl Halftime Show* (2026).

The wedding scene serves as a rite of union between territories. The outskirts of New York become an extension of the island, reaffirming that Latin American identity is part of the great metropolis.

The electricity pylons are an open critique of the fragility of Puerto Rico's energy infrastructure, turning the set design into a visual indictment of government neglect. The most striking set piece is the parade of flags from all the countries of the Americas as Bad Bunny names them one by one. The finale serves as a grand finale that unifies the continent under a single voice, transforming insular nationalism into continental solidarity.

The audiovisual production of live shows—and, in particular, live television broadcasts—involves a massive deployment of material, artistic and human resources, reaching the standards of film production. The pursuit of hyper-realistic immersion and television grandeur results in a meticulously choreographed spectacle, leaving no room for improvisation. The use of the Dolly In during the intro establishes a psychological closeness with the viewer, inviting them to enter the Caribbean diegetic universe.

Figure 2. Hyper-realistic immersion in the sugarcane plantation



Source: Official NFL YouTube channel *Bad Bunny's Apple Music Super Bowl Halftime Show* (2026).

The transition from computer-generated imagery (CGI) aerial shots to a physical immersion amongst the sugarcane plantation the boundary between digital representation and the reality of Puerto Rico, an experience that extends to subjective and dynamic shots that transform the interior of the set into a three-dimensional, habitable space. The multi-camera production, using drones, cranes and tracking shots, allows for comprehensive coverage ranging from the intimacy of the rooftop to the full deployment of the dance troupe. This technique ensures a dizzying visual rhythm, characteristic of the language of high-budget music videos such as those accompanying Bad Bunny's long-standing career.

As far as costumes are concerned, in the intro and the sugarcane plantation, the use of linen and natural fibres (straw hats, work clothes) establishes a direct link with the Caribbean rural working class, which will take centre stage throughout the performance. In later stages, by blending traditional elements with contemporary streetwear codes, the image of the migrant is constructed—one who keeps his aesthetic roots intact and defends them with pride. It is a representation of personal triumph, without complexes. Of Bad Bunny's two outfits, the use of the number 64 on the American football jersey stands out, in memory of his late uncle Cutito (Gallagher, 2026), as does the fusion of the white tuxedo with the shoulder pads from the Super Bowl LX kit as a sign of belonging.

Table 3. Scenographic and audiovisual resources (V.3).

	Intro	Sugarcane plantation	Creole cottage	Lady Gaga & NY	Ricky Martin & Flags
Set design and symbolic identity	A scene depicting everyday life in Puerto Rico (a game of dominoes and a girl playing).	Sugarcane pickers and life on the streets.	Three stage designs: A small house with a porch at the front, a modest interior, and a workshop at the back.	The stage and dance floor at a Puerto Rican wedding. Suburbs of New York.	Plastic chairs amongst the banana trees. Low-voltage electricity pylons. A parade featuring the flags of all the countries of the Americas.
Planning	Caribbean-themed mural and three extras. Animation featuring the Apple logo.	Video featuring an aerial shot of a sugarcane field + a journey through the sugarcane fields and the streets of Puerto Rico. Text displayed on the stadium's giant screen.	Bad Bunny on the rooftop. Cameos + female dance troupe. Interior of the house (VTR). Mixed dance troupe.	Stage, band, singer, wedding guests and dance troupe. Violin orchestra.	Ricky Martin with a handheld microphone on a small stage decorated with banana trees. Acrobats on three electricity pylons.
Framing and camera movements	Dolly In. Computer-generated image (CGI).	Steadicam for subjective shots amongst the reeds. Fixed cameras hidden within the set.	Steadicam, drone, fixed camera, tracking shot and crane. Workshop with a van behind the sugarcane plantation.	Drone, crane and Steadicam.	Steadicam. Drones for top-down and aerial shots.
Chromaticism	A polychromatic Caribbean mural (predominantly blue).	Green and white.	Front (day): Pink, white and cream. Inside (dark): Grey. Back (night): Brown, dirt and sweat.	Wedding white, Lady Gaga blue and musicians' maroon.	Green and white. The lights go out on the towers. A kaleidoscope of colours on the flags.
Costume design	A white linen smock and a straw hat. A figure painted in light colours.	A local man wearing a white guitar and a straw hat. Bad Bunny dressed as an American football player in white, with the number 64 on his shirt.	In front of the Creole house, everyone is dressed in white and brown. Inside, a humble family. Behind, a dance troupe in dark brown. A violin orchestra in black suits.	Guests at the white wedding on stage. Lady Gaga in a blue dress. The band in maroon suits. The dance troupe in short, tight-fitting, brightly coloured outfits. Bad Bunny changes into a white suit	Ricky Martin in white linen. Acrobats in white with straw hats. A small group of dancers wearing costumes from previous scenes.

with American
football-style
shoulder pads.

Source: Compiled by the author, 2026.

A chromatic analysis of the show reveals a narrative visual representation that evolves from an idealised portrayal of rural identity to a socio-political critique of the multicoloured nature of flags. The use of Caribbean blue and pastel shades in the creole house establishes a framework of nostalgic tradition that is deliberately subverted by the raw naturalism (browns and grime) of rural labour and the darkness caused by the power cut. This progression culminates in a pan-Latin multi-chromaticism where the display of all the American flags and the blending of warm tones displace the Anglo-Saxon aesthetic, marked by the use of blue, white and red, transforming the colour palette into a visual manifesto of sovereignty, resilience and continental plurality.

4. Discussion

The analysis reveals several uncomfortable contradictions that could be explored in future research. Whilst the staging advocates for female autonomy, the commercial structure of reggaeton and the lyrics of the songs that catapulted Bad Bunny to global stardom—which have been omitted from the analysis but remain present in the collective imagination—perpetuate dynamics of the objectification of women. This suggests that the industry permits resistance provided it does not disrupt the profit-making structures of the musical genre.

It should also be noted that the Super Bowl is the pinnacle of American capitalism, and if the NFL and Apple Music, as sponsors, endorse and fund this supposedly counter-hegemonic message, one might well ask whether it is truly counter-hegemonic or merely a calculated act of rebellion designed to help the NFL polish its image in the eyes of the Latino community. There is also the risk that the romanticisation of poverty through a multi-million-dollar cinematic production that mimics precarious living conditions may be interpreted as aesthetic appropriation rather than an effective critique.

5. Conclusions

Following the analysis presented above, the following conclusions have been reached in relation to the established research objectives. As has been set out in detail, Bad Bunny's performance at Super Bowl LX went beyond the boundaries of a musical entertainment event to become a cultural instrument of political advocacy in defence of the cultural identities of the Americas. Through the staging, the audience had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the everyday life of the rural Caribbean. This cultural reversal transforms the stigmatisation of Latin culture into a political protest, using the NFL platform to highlight structural traumas such as energy insecurity and territorial displacement, through high-impact visual metaphors such as the electricity pylons and the closing flag parade.

The show demonstrates a breakdown of the hierarchy of musical languages. The inclusion of a string orchestra to accompany urban rhythms and the 'tropicalisation' of Anglo-Saxon hits such as Lady Gaga's 'Die With a Smile' are intended as a declaration of aesthetic sovereignty. By placing salsa and reggaeton on the same level as the canons of classical music or international pop, it validates a Latin hegemony that not only seeks acceptance but also asserts its capacity to assimilate and transform American culture.

The show represents a milestone in contemporary audiovisual political communication. Bad Bunny achieves a cross-cutting identity where the local and the foreign become global and personal, and where insular nationalism expands in search of a Pan-American solidarity that never quite materialises. Although the logic of the show absorbs the form, the content retains a charge that challenges the US historical narrative regarding the continent, making the show an exercise in

power and political visibility. The use of CGI, drones and cinematic production wraps the message of resistance in a luxurious package. As suggested in the research question, subversion becomes a high-definition product, which may diminish its revolutionary impact by transforming it into an aesthetically pleasing and consumable object. Added to this is the fact that the presence, albeit anecdotal, of Latin celebrities such as Pedro Pascal, Jessica Alba and Karol G responds to the logic of cultural capital and the star-system marketing of the very industry which, in other contexts, renders the causes championed by the spectacle invisible; this can be interpreted as a superficial showcase or as a drive for its international reach.

For all these reasons, the performance functions as a counter-hegemonic discourse in terms of its content, but is absorbed by the logic of spectacle in terms of its form; this is interpreted as a Trojan horse strategy in which Bad Bunny plays by the rules of the NFL's multi-million-dollar production to ensure that the decolonial message reaches an audience that would otherwise never hear it. In this sense, the performance is a negotiated form of resistance that allows for criticism of the system provided it is presented with the visual quality and breakneck pace demanded by the global audience. Be that as it may, by closing with 'God Bless America' whilst all the continent's flags were paraded, Bad Bunny wrests the name 'America' from exclusive American use, an act of decolonial semiotics that shifts the centre of power southwards in a manner unprecedented in the world of mass entertainment.

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