IDENTITIES AND IDEOLOGIES ON BILLBOARDS IN THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPES OF CAROLINA, GUAYNABO AND SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

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Abstract

While considering Makoni and Pennycook's (2006) critique of the colonial nature of the notion of singular languages in this dissertation, a documentation and investigation of English and Spanish use on billboards in Carolina, Guaynabo, and San Juan, three cities in Puerto Rico, is presented. The billboards in these towns make use of Spanish, the most widely used language in Puerto Rico along with English, the second official language of Puerto Rico. From a multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) perspective (Ledin & Machin, 2018; Kress, 2012), an examination of the relation between ideologies of the United States of America (US) and of Puerto Rico (PR), as evidenced in texts -written and visual- taken from these billboards, is conducted. Results are discussed in terms of social cognition and power abuse through the linguistic and photographic messages on these billboards.

Key words: Linguistic Landscapes, multimodal discourse analysis, decolonial linguistics, billboards, English and Spanish, fast food and health, Puerto Rican literature

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Chapter One:

Introduction

Indicators of language use in different linguistic communities are present in linguistic landscapes, which include public and private advertisements (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). In this dissertation, while taking into account Makoni and Pennycook's (2006) critique of the colonial nature of the notion of singular languages, I document and investigate English and Spanish use on billboards in Carolina, Guaynabo, and San Juan, three cities in Puerto Rico. The billboards in these towns make use of Spanish, the most widely used language in Puerto Rico, along with English, the second official language of Puerto Rico. From a multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) perspective (Ledin & Machin, 2018; Kress, 2012), I examine the relationship between ideologies of the United States of America (US) and Puerto Rico (PR), as evidenced in texts -written and visuals- taken from these billboards. My results are discussed in terms of social cognition and power abuse through the linguistic and photographic messages on these billboards.

One approach to 'language' considered in this research is inspired by Michael Bakhtin's "*The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*" (1981). Bakhtin's all-sided critique of how the dominant disciplines in Western science approach the study of language addresses not only the limitations of modern (Saussurean/ Chomskian) linguistics, but also the limitations of modern literary studies. In his critique, Bakhtin specifically emphasizes three serious shortcomings in

how academic specialists in both linguistics and literature envision the object of their study: 1) a refusal to acknowledge the *dialectal*, heteroglossic or variational aspects of language and literature; 2) a refusal to acknowledge the *dialogical* or intertextual aspects of language and literature; and 3) a refusal to acknowledge the *dialectical* or political aspects of language and literature.

Bakhtin sees infinite *dialectal* variation or "heteroglossia" as a constant feature in human language. He opposes "centrifugal" heteroglossia to the "centripetal" unitary forces exerted by the standardization projects that have accompanied the artificial construction of national languages that have gone hand-in-hand with the most recent waves of colonial domination. These waves of linguistic standardization include that which has enabled the construction of the imperial nation-states of Europe (and their ideological progeny such as the US) which have been colonizing the world from the 15th century onward. Bakhtin affirms that in heteroglossia,

> the period of national languages, coexisting but closed and deaf to each other, comes to an end. The naïve and stubborn coexistence of "languages" within a given national language also comes to an end - that is, there is no more peaceful co-existence between territorial *dialects* [my italics], social and professional dialects and jargons, literary language, generic languages within literary language, epoch in language and so on (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 12).

Bakhtin also makes readers aware that

> it must not be forgotten that monoglossia is always in essence relative. After all, one's own language is never a single language: in it there are always survivals of the past and a potential for other-languagedness that is more or less sharply perceived by the working literary and language consciousness. (p. 66)

Bakhtin observes that "among the folk, there flourished parodic and travestying forms that kept alive the memory of the ancient linguistic struggle and that were continually nourished by the ongoing process of linguistic stratification and differentiation" (p. 67). Also, he argues that:

> unitary language constitutes the theorical expression of the historical process of linguistic unification and centralization, an expression of the centripetal forces of language. A unitary language is not something given [in Russian, *dan*] but is always in essence posited [in Russian, *zadan*] -and at every moment of its linguistic life is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia. But at the same time it makes its real presence felt as a force for overcoming this heteroglossia, imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding and crystalizing into a real, although still relative, unity - the unity of the reigning conversational (everyday) and literary language, "correct language (p. 270).

When discussing the *dialogical* or intertextual nature of language, Bakhtin affirms that "verbal discourse is a social phenomenon (…) from the sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning" (p. 259). Bakhtin explains that: "no living word relates to its object in a *singular* way: between the word and its object, between the word and its speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other (…) words" (p. 276) and that "a word forms a concept of its own object in a *dialogic* [my italics] way" (p. 279). In his discussion of the dialectical or politically/ideologically saturated nature of language, Bakhtin states that

> the linguistic significance of a given utterance is understood against the background of language, while its actual meaning is understood against the background of other concrete utterances on the same theme, a background made up of contradictory opinions, points of view and value judgements (p. 281).

In such interactions, 'understanding' and 'response' become part of the 'speech' in which "understanding and response are *dialectically* [my italics] merged and mutually condition each other" (p. 282). Bakhtin states that language is not "a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather (…) [is] ideologically saturated, language as world view, even as a concrete opinion, (…) in all spheres of ideological life". Using Bakhtin's approach to the study of language as a general theoretical framework, the research carried out on the linguistic landscapes on billboards that form the basis of the present dissertation takes as its point of departure the idea that language is dialectal, dialogical, and dialectical.

Linguistic Landscape (LL) Studies

I continue this section by introducing the field of Linguistic Landscape (hereafter LL) studies, according to Lyons (2018) in dialogue with Canakis' (2018) asserts t have entered a new "second wave" paradigm. Prior to Landry & Bourhis' foundational work on LL, some authors interested in the use of language(s) in public spaces and its meaning(s). In many of these pre-LL publications, as well as many other publications that have identified themselves explicitly as LL studies, extensive reference has been made to public and commercial language use, including "commercial advertising on billboards" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 25). Discussing this aspect of LL, Ben-Rafael (2009) points out that:

> linguistic objects that mark the public space (…) [and] language facts that landmark the public space are to be seen as social facts the variations of which should relate to more general social phenomena (…) [and therefore] LL can be referred to as symbolic construction of the public space as it is the languages it speaks (…) and the symbols which it evinces that serve as the landmarks of this space (Ben-Rafael, 2009, p. 40-41).

In this dissertation, I will adopt theoretical frameworks from LL studies to examine billboards as "linguistic objects" in the sense invoked by Ben-Rafael above. I will consider both written and image/visual texts to unravel the explicit and implicit messages that they have been designed to convey.

Ben-Rafael also argues "that LL formation may be viewed as a structuration process of its own" (p. 44), which he associates with several principles, one of which he summarizes as the "presentation of self". This principle is about the LL creator(s)' positive image; one that competes and promotes itself among the images of the creators of other elements in the LL. A second principle concerns how LL creators might perceive and embrace collective identities in their targeted communities. A third principle points out relations of power which determine access to input into the creation of LLs and the relative importance and acceptability of the languages that might be used in that process, determining, for example, who is allowed to assume the role of the authority that "diffuses and controls what is "nice" and "decent"" (p. 47).

Ribeiro Clemente, Vieira, Martins, & Andrade, (2014) present some transitional ideas that helped usher in the second wave of LL research described in Canakis. These authors argue that

> the study of LL in urban environments has the potential to explain and understand globalization and language contact consequences over time, as well as to contribute to an urban and human sustainable development project through the recognition of the value that languages have and the importance of displaying languages in public spaces" (Ribeiro Clemente, Vieira, Martins, & Andrade, 2014, p. 130).

Ben-Rafael & Ben-Rafael (2016) add the "global net" to what constitutes a public space. They state that "studying LL as the symbolic construction of the public space teaches about the

structuration of LL as a social reality that is imposed on the passer-by" (p. 198) making specific reference to English and how it "enjoys today the highest prestige among international languages and that its use on LL items functions as a status symbol for businesses' self-presentation" (p. 200).

Ben-Rafael & Ben-Rafael (2016) propose the "LL as a structured configuration of symbolic goods that merits investigation as a reality in its own right". As part of their research methodology, symbolic associations are identified i to track brand names and trademarks using the original language used to construct them. Then, they advocate for a "new code" characteristic of globalization, which takes the form of "a non-linguistic code which still finds its place and roles in the linguistic activity of *parlance*" (p. 201). In their conclusion, they describe the use of "supra-national symbols in downtowns, where big commercial names dominate the public space." (p. 210).

Jaworski & Thurlow (2010) bring another perspective to linguistic landscape research, referring to LL as "semiotic landscape" (…) [which means], in the most general sense, any (public) space with visible inscription made through deliberate human intervention and meaning making" (p. 2). Some of their insights will be incorporated into my research on the linguistic landscapes of Carolina, Guaynabo and San Juan in Perto Rico. They sustain that

> the city itself can be read as a text, as a festival of signs (…) in which the tensions between the globalizing and localizing displays of words and images manifest the aggressive ideology and dominance of global capitalism and often struggling, local identities of communities rooted in 'real' or 'imagined' places. As the competing voices of overlapping communities contend for visibility and for economic and political survival, the mosaic of different texts becomes commodified and objectified in creating a

> dazzling spectacle and an icon of the modern city scrutinized and consumed by the gaze of the international tourist. It is in this way that the topic of semiotic landscapes is not only timely but also politically relevant (pp. 31-32).

Lyons (2018) provides readers with new insights into LL, which are associated to previous notions of social interactions and spaces such as those advanced by Landry & Bourhis (1997). She defines LL as "networks of signs and inscriptions" or "networks of recontextualized images of place" and states her objective as follows: "this is a study of how displayed texts and accompanying semiotics (color, image, size) shape place; a study of the expression of place through language" (Lyons, 2018, p. 1). Lyons mentions that 54% of the world's population lives in urban areas (p. 2) and refers to creators of public signage as "display-*ers*", a notion that could be adopted when referring to the creators of billboards in Puerto Rico. She describes the discursive interactions between public signs and individuals or groups of people as "publics in progress" (p. 6).

When elaborating on her semiotic approach to LL, Lyons introduces a "semiotics of gentrification" in her diachronic study of the Mission neighborhood in San Francisco that reflects "how language choice is a frequent and salient way to achieve specific effects", where "images, colors, sizes, shapes and construction, also play a significant role in what signs 'do'" (p. 63). Drawing upon Thurlow & Jaworski (2010), she comments on both space and silence, and adds that those authors make

> frequent implicit and explicit references to isolation and quiet. While silence is more atmospheric (…), the underlying idea of silence as a "power-filled communicative resource" (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010) illuminates why and how 'quieter' displays of gentrified/gentrifying places occur (Lyons, 2018, p. 72).

One of her conclusions is about "how gentrification happens in a community. Who can afford to move, who can afford to stay, who can afford to not sell out" (p. 73). She provides an example that concerns the name of a place and its hidden meaning. She describes this as a manifestation of how

> the silent semiotics of gentrification are different in that such a significant part of the meaning of the display is inaccessible unless you know it already. Through this inaccessibility, these types of displays also produce privilege by requiring it to comprehend them. The semiotics of gentrification are not side effects, but active participants in driving up the amount of money and knowledge required to live and participate in the area (p. 73).

These ideas are particularly relevant to one of the linguistic landscapes studied in the present work, that is, the LL located in Guaynabo, a city that recently, acquired a new name that straddles two linguistic varieties: "Guaynabo City".

As a final preliminary reflection on the LL concept, I refer to Van Mensel, Vandenbroucke, & Blackwood (2016) who situate their work within

> the (…) interdisciplinary field of linguistic landscapes (LL), which focuses on the visual representations of language(s) in the public space, (…) [and which] can be a prime research locus to explore new phenomena and interdisciplinary methodological paths. Furthermore, this interdisciplinary potential of the field is arguably its most valuable contribution to future research on language in society (p. 423).

From a sociolinguistic research perspective, they are interested in the "visibility" associated with LL and they suggest that the use of "a particular language is taken to be indicative of the vitality of the language and its group of users" (p. 425).

In this dissertation, billboards displayed in Carolina, Guaynabo and San Juan are the focus of attention. The use of written and visual texts in public -my adapted conceptualization of LL- is observed to gain an understanding of potential semiotic readings. Roland Barthes (1977) refers to "the photographic message" to explain how

> the emission and the reception of the message both lie within the field of a sociology: it is a matter of studying human groups, of defining motives and attitudes, and of trying to link the behaviour of these groups to the social totality of which they are a part (p. 15).

He then, adds that "(…) here (in the text) the substance of the message is made up of words; there (in the photograph) of lines, surfaces, shades" (p. 16).

Barthes (1977) describes the use of photography as a "paradox", where the image constitutes an "analogon" that resembles reality, and as such, Barthes argues, "is a message without a code". Therefore, for Barthes "the photographic message is a continuous message" (p. 17). Regarding what he means by "message without a code", Barthes notes that the "signifier is a certain 'treatment' of the image (result of the action of its creator) and whose signified, whether aesthetic or ideological, refers to a certain 'culture' of the society receiving the message" (p. 17). According to Barthes, there are "two messages: a denoted message, which is the analogon itself, and a connoted message, which is the manner in which the society to a certain extent communicates what it thinks of it" (p. 17). The "photographic paradox" then, "is that (…) the connoted (or coded) message develops on the basis of a message without a code" (p. 19). Various levels of production will be considered in the critical multimodal discourse analysis of

the photographic images that appear on the billboards selected as the data set for the current study.

When theorizing text and image, Barthes (1977) sustains that connotative texts "patheticize or rationalize the image" (p. 25), and concludes that "the closer the text to the image, the less it seems to connote it" (p. 26). Barthes contrasts such connotative text with elements such as "the caption, [which] on the contrary, by its very disposition, by its average measure of reading, appears to duplicate the image, that is, to be included in its denotation" (p. 26). He also underlines the "cultural" element in both denotation and connotation by referring to how horizons of mutual intelligibility are socially and historically conditioned, when he states that "the link between the signifier and the signified remains if not unmotivated, at least entirely historical". Barthes concludes that "signification, in short, is the dialectical movement which resolves the contradiction between cultural and natural man" (pp. 27-28). In this dissertation, I associate Barthes' understanding of the photograph with Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996, 2006) visual grammar, especially Barthes' assertion that "the reading of the photograph is thus always historical; it depends on the reader's 'knowledge' just as though it were a matter of a real language [langue]" (Barthes, 1977, p. 28).

Barthes (1977) asks "How do we read a photograph? What do we perceive? In what order, according to what progression?" (p. 28). In his preliminary answers to these questions, especially with regard to connotation, he cites Jerome Bruner and Jean Piaget, whose hypotheses are based on the assumption that "[there is] no perception without immediate categorization, (…) [so that] the photograph is verbalized in the very moment it is perceived; better, it is only perceived verbalized" (p. 28). For Barthes, the image and its

> inner metalanguage (…) in actual fact has no denoted state, is immersed for its very social existence in at least an initial layer of connotation, that of the categories of language. We know that every language takes up a position with regard to things, that it connotes reality, if only in dividing it up; the connotations of the photograph would thus coincide, grosso modo, with the overall connotative planes of language" (pp. 28-29).

Barthes (1977) suggests that the word image "should be linked to the Latin root *imitari*" (p. 32) and affirms that: the image is re-presentation, which is to say ultimately resurrection, and, as we know, the intelligible is reputed [to be] antipathetic to lived experience (p. 32). In his treatment of the kinds of photographic images that are included on billboards and considered in this dissertation, Barthes observes that "in advertising the signification of the image is undoubtedly intentional; (….) If the image contains signs, we can be sure that in advertising these signs are full, formed with a view to the optimum reading" (p. 35). When discussing images, Barthes (1977) enumerates "three messages: a linguistic message, a coded iconic message, and a non-coded iconic message" (p. 36).

Images displayed on billboards may be reproduced at multiple sites, from different areas of the same community to throughout the entire world. When referring to this phenomenon, Barthes (1977) uses the term '*lexia*', where "the variation in readings is not, however, anarchic; it depends on the different kinds of knowledge - practical, national, cultural, aesthetic" invoked by any given text. According to him, "Text [which he spells with a capital T] is a methodological field" (p. 157) because Text is "Text for the very reason that it knows itself as text." He contends that "Text is not the decomposition of the work, it is the work that is the imaginary tail of the Text; (….) The Text is always *paradoxical*" (pp. 157-158). The research that follows this introductory chapter on LL and concepts associated to this field, contains evidence of advertising

as active production where various agents are in constant engagement. Barthes expands his definition of Text as it relates to images, potential readers, and its ludic or playful characteristics in creative endeavors such as music. All of these characteristics apply to the analysis of the linguistic landscapes under study in this dissertation, which also make use of images, are constructed to address potential audiences, and often use language and image to resonate with those audiences in a playful way.

Barthes eventually links all of the above-mentioned ideas to his well-known formulation of the concept of myth. Barthes sees the "mythical (…) as present everywhere sentences are turned, stories told (…) from inner speech to conversation, (…) to *advertising image* [my italics] - all utterances which could be brought together under the Lacanian concept of the *imaginary* [Barthes' italics]" (p. 169). Barthes mentions that myth "can be read in the anonymous utterances of the press, *advertising*, mass consumer goods; it is something socially determined, …. a type of speech … [with] two semantic systems: a connoted (…) and a denoted" (pp. 165-166, my italics). For the purposes of this dissertation, it is significant not only that Barthes includes advertising (and thus billboards) as a form of myth making, but also that he includes both image (photographic, drawn by hand, computer generated, etc.) and written text in the substance of what must be studied as myth. He further argues that the analysis of writing and other forms of myth-making require the deployment of "an idiolectology (…) whose operational concepts would no longer be sign, signifier, signified and connotation but citation, reference, stereotype" (p. 168).

Although this dissertation is not strictly ethnographic in nature, one of its goals is to explore identities and ideologies as expressed through linguistic varieties and images present on billboards. Garrett (2010) sees language as a personal identity designator, and considers identity

to be both individual and social, with identities embedded at an early age being more inflexible than those acquired later in life. Another author that conducts research associated to identities is James Paul Gee (2011). From a social perspective, he states that identities are associated to language use and they can be implicit or explicit (2011, p. 2). Even though linguistic identities and social ideologies in Puerto Rico have been the topics of research in the past (e.g., Clachar, 2007; Domínguez-Rosado, 2015; Mazak, 2012; Pérez Casas, 2008, 2016), few of these studies have involved LL. In the study of LL in Puerto Rico, one question that arises is whether the language variety used is a group identifier within the community.

Stating that language "allows us to take on different socially significant identities" (p. 2), Gee (2011) uses the term 'discourse' without a capital letter for casual conversations and uses discourse with capital D for "language plus 'other stuff'" (p. 34) including social debates and the ideologically charged language of economy, politics, religion, etc. He makes this distinction in order to propose a methodology of discourse analysis based on such variables as text and context, social language, the local meaning of words and world recreation. Gee likens Discourse to "a dance that exists in the abstract as a coordinated pattern of words, deeds, values, beliefs, symbols, tools, objects, times, and places and in the here and the now, a performance" (p. 36). His definition extends from human interactions to non-verbal expressions, specifying that "certain identities and associated activities … are also the maps in our heads by which we understand society. Discourses, then, are social practices and mental entities, as well as material reality" (p. 39).

Gee discusses two kinds of identity: 1) socially situated identity, which manifests itself during a certain period with the potential for change (for example, in the praxis of a schoolteacher working with different approaches for students); and 2) core identity, which relates

to attributes that remain relatively constant. Gee also discusses different types of meaning, including situated meaning or contextualized meaning, which is of particular relevance to this dissertation project. Additionally, Gee asserts that "when we speak or write we use social languages and Discourses to signal (…) different identities and practices. When we listen or read, we use the social languages and Discourses (…) to guide us in construing what identities and practices are being enacted" (p. 107).

In the preface to their collection of essays that emerged from a workshop on LL in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in November of 2012, Blackwood et al. (2016) provide the following concise definition of LL: the "study of language in the public space" (p. xvi). They see the relationship between the identities of social actors and linguistic landscapes as "culturally and historically situated and (…) negotiated in interaction with other individuals, collectivities and institutional structures [as well as] …. in and through LLs" (p. xvii). One of their conclusions is that "language, culture and identity are inevitably interwoven in the study of LL of a given space" (p. xvii). They also sustain that because of the vast array of factors that contribute to meaning in LL "a multimodal approach has proved to be necessary" (p. xvii; here they refer to Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010). Of specific relevance to the topic of this dissertation, these researchers argue that "the LL provides an excellent arena for investigating multilingualism and identity (…) to address various modalities in the investigation of meaning-making and identity constructions in the public space." (p. xviii).

Francesca Gallina (2016) is another researcher whose methods and findings will be considered in our discussions of billboards in Puerto Rico. By using photographs of urban spaces and a beach, she demonstrates the use of varieties of Italian in the touristic context of Tanzania. She argues that, in the urban spaces of Dar es Salaam, such varieties seem on the surface to have

"the function of symbolizing the positive values of Italian culture and of the Italian (…) cultural identity" (p. 49, here she cites Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). In the final analysis, however, Gallina concludes that the basic reason why varieties of Italian are used in this context has less to do with the valorization of Italian culture and identity and more to do with the simple fact that in Tanzania, many tourists use varieties of Italian rather than varieties of KiSwahili. She cites Boudon's (1990) understanding of language in terms of "its power of attraction on users and clients" (Gallina, 2016, p. 39) and concludes that in the tourism sector, Tanzanians "select a language on the basis of how much it can attract clients in order to gain more customers, and not for some non-specific cultural or identity motivation" (p. 39).

J. L. Golden (2017) conducted a study designed "to examine the linguistic landscape of Koreatown and Japantown in Manhattan, focusing on the representation of culture and identity in the landscape" (p. 2). Golden was interested in "how a visual border can be created between the minority language representation in the linguistic landscape and the English-speaking community's linguistic landscape" (p. 3). Two of her research questions are of particular relevance to this dissertation: "1) To what extent do the signs in the linguistic landscape of Japantown and Koreatown represent the languages of those communities?" and "2) How does the linguistic landscape reflect the identity and cultural representation of the Japanese and Korean people within the communities?" (p. 5) Golden sees the signage present in any particular LL as having "informative functions that provide directions or information and symbolic functions in which something ideological is represented" (p. 5).

A theme that Golden (2017) addresses, which is closely related to the topic of this dissertation is the use of English in linguistic landscapes, specifically "the effects of English as a globalized language and how some view it as a sign of trade and prestige" (p. 6). According to

her, “researchers can learn about the culture, identity, minority and majority languages, ideologies, and linguistic boundaries of an area through studying the linguistic landscape of a community” (p. 7). She sees signage as “representative of the culture and identity of communities in an area, providing an additional support system to these groups” (p. 8). Also, she points out the fact that “besides having words on a sign, there are pictures, logos, and icons. These will have a symbolic representation for the language group it is targeting” (p. 9). For example, she notes how in Japan “they incorporated English into government street and tourist signs as a means of practicality” (p. 10).

Golden (2017) also refers to Huebner’s (2009) association of signage to affective factors. She summarizes Huebner’s taxonomy in this way:

> expressive signs that convey emotions; directive signs that offer recommendations, advice, or persuasion; informational signs that report, inform or describe something; interactional signs that involve creating, maintaining, and ending contact between two people; and poetic signs that function by using a code to create meanings that normally would not be communicated (here she makes reference to Dixon, 2015). (p. 11)

She also defines the concept of linguistic boundaries and associates their significance to marginalized language groups and their quest for higher economic status in another country (p. 22).

Golden’s research project is somewhat similar to the one upon which this dissertation is based. Her discussion of advertising includes: “signs used to sell something by private actors, which can take the form of billboards, electronic displays or marquees, and banners advertising products, services or events geared toward consumers” (p. 33). This observation is important, since it recognizes the transformation that is happening in billboard advertising, which

increasingly employs electronic displays that cycle through a series of advertisements, instead of the single non-electronic billboard advertisements of the past. The majority of the billboards considered in my study are in fact electronic. She also defines informative signs as signs which "provide information on a type of goods, a government service, or the name of a store or street" (p. 38).

Golden carries out her quantitative and qualitative study based on the images of grocery store signage in multiple languages, using "185 photographs (…) labeled based on location, language(s) displayed, informational function, and symbolic function" (p. 35). My research also involves signage in more than one language, but it also goes beyond the usual assumption echoed in Golden's definition that billboards only function to sell particular products. While my data sample consists of more than 185 photographs of billboards, some of the subcategories that she used have proven useful to classify them, such as: location, languages used, and their respective functions. Golden notes that "signs consisting of Korean, Japanese or multiple languages were considered informative and symbolic due to not only providing information, but also representing language and culture." (p. 38). In my study the cultural implications of the use any given language on a billboard is also highlighted.

One study that underscores the complex relationships between identities, ideologies, Gee's D/discourse distinction and language use in linguistic landscapes in a similar manner to how these relationships are treated in my research is that of Moriarty (2014), who uses a multimodal discourse approach to examine the use of Irish and English in the touristic zone of Dingle in Kerry County in Ireland, just as I use a critical multimodal discourse approach in my study that focuses on the use of Spanish and English in the touristic zones of Condado, Isla

Verde, (and to a lesser extent Guaynabo) in Puerto Rico. In discussing her findings, Moriarty states that her

> study uncovers a number of contesting language ideologies that circulate in the LL of Dingle (….) [where] the State promotes an Andersonesque (Anderson, 1983) modernist ideology of 'one Nation one language', (…) [while] local people promote a postmodernist ideology of multilingualism, in which the value of the Irish language is part of a wider bi/multilingual repertoire, (….) [so that] the LL can be viewed as a dynamic space that is significant in indexing and performing language ideologies that are continually being contested and renegotiated" (2014, 464).

Observing that "the LL can also be described as an ideologically charged construction of space and place where various linguistic and other semiotic resources may carry differing degrees of indexical value" Moriarty encourages others to adopt a multimodal discourse approach in their work on LL, arguing that such an approach redirects research "to move beyond the descriptive and distributional approaches favored in earlier work and to consider the nuances of the given context, where local historical and symbolic processes are at play" (p. 467). In this context, Moriarty mentions Irvine's (1989) definition of language ideologies as "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (p. 467) in such dynamic and fluid spaces as those from which advertising discourse emerges.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) or Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)

Teun Van Dijk's (2004) multidisciplinary Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA (later referred to as Critical Discourse Studies or CDS) approach "is about power and power abuse" (p. 3). Van Dijk (2004) observes that "modern power is essentially discursive" (p. 4). To him, "CDA

must… provide very detailed insights into this relationship between discourse structures and their social and political context" (p. 5) and there is a need for "sophisticated theories about the relations between text and social and political context" for CDA not to be marginalized (p. 6). He considers discursive power from different points of view, one of which is the degree of access to and control over public discourse. The more access one has to platforms of public discourse, the more power or control one has over it. Another aspect of discursive power discussed by van Dijk is the effect that a given discourse is likely to have on its recipients.

Van Dijk (1997) defines discourse in terms of action, context, power, and ideology. He affirms that "people do many social and political things while engaging in text and talk" (van Dijk, 1997, p. 2), arguing that concepts like local and global label discourse which, to him, "should be studied (…) as complex structures and hierarchies of interaction and social practice and their functions in context, society and culture" (p. 6). When he elaborates on discourses, he asserts that they "ascribe intentions to other people" and "define them as social actors" (p. 9).

Van Dijk sees discourse as a form of social power, symbolic power or hegemony over everyday people's lives. He sustains that "hegemonic power makes people act [in the interests of dominant classes] as if it were natural, normal or simply a consensus (. . .) [thereby] manipulat[ing] people into doing what the powerful group prefers" (p. 19). Van Dijk (2004, p. 10) introduces the concept of manipulation by forming t mental models, social representations and ideologies based on abusive discourse practices. According to van Dijk, words and images contribute in a semiotic or symbolic way to discursive control. He adds that "it is especially through public discourse that we can control the formation of representation models" (p. 11). He associates manipulation to the idea of persuasion, as put forward in Gramsci's ([1935]; 1971) theory of hegemony.

Van Dijk (1997) contends that one important factor that helps to determine whose interests are served by any given discourse has to do with access to discourse itself. Access to any public discourse that reaches large audiences (the media, the education system, etc.) is therefore usually reserved for "powerful social groups" or for the symbolic elites that serve the interests of those dominant groups (1997, p. 21). Those in control of discourse, sustains van Dijk, will acknowledge and focus on any positive characteristics of the dominant group while hiding or downplaying any of their negative characteristics. Similarly, they will acknowledge and focus on any negative characteristics of the dominated group, while hiding or downplaying any of their positive characteristics. In this dissertation, the notion of access to discourse will be expanded upon, incorporating relevant insights from Michel Foucault (1972). Van Dijk also lists several pragmatic, semantic, morphosyntactic, lexical and phonological devices utilized in articulating hegemonic discourse, along with other strategies, such as the choice of a specific language or genre, and typographic devices found in publications such as newspapers (headlines, placement of articles, etc.). This reference to newspapers resonates with Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) "visual grammar", where the arrangement, display and meaning of a given discourse involve interaction between written text and image.

Another concept associated to discourse in van Dijk's work is ideology. A distinction made by van Dijk that is especially pertinent to the research upon which this dissertation is based is that which differentiates implicit ideologies from explicit ideologies. Van Dijk (1993) conceptualizes ideologies as "the fundamental social cognitions that reflect the basic aims, interests and values of groups" (van Dijk, 1993, p. 258). Van Dijk states that hegemonic ideologies "are developed by dominant groups in order to reproduce and legitimate their domination" (p. 25). From this perspective, discourse "serves as a medium by which ideologies

are persuasively communicated in society, and thereby helps reproduce power and domination of specific groups or classes" (p. 25). Hegemonic ideologies are formulated and articulated by social actors whose social practices emulate the dominant ideologies of inequality. "[I]deologies", continues van Dijk, "are inherently social", as are discourse and "self-definition or social identity" (p. 26). In van Dijk's words: "ideologies function primarily to serve as an interface between collective group interests and individual social practices" (p. 27).

Hegemonic ideologies emerge through a process that begins with the selection by the symbolic elites who serve the dominant classes of a set of preferred mental models, the consolidation of those preferred mental models into social representations, and finally, the consolidation of those social representations into attitudes and ideologies. Thus, mental representations are an important component of ideology. These representations are cognitive models that "form the basis of knowledge, attitudes and other, more specific beliefs shared by a group" (p. 28). In this context, van Dijk explains how group ideologies also control beliefs that have an impact on people's attitudes or evaluation systems. Van Dijk also highlights that mental representations construct knowledge and attitudes in such a way as to "tell people what their 'position' is, and what to think about social issues" (p. 29).

According to van Dijk (1997), hegemonic ideologies commonly make use of a strategy that positions people as part of two mutually exclusive, conjunctively exhaustive oppositional groups: "us" or an in-group versus "them" or an out-group. These two terms are then used to construct an 'ideological square', whereby the in-group will project a "positive self-representation", while projecting a "negative other-presentation" on the out group (p. 33). He also asserts that the text and talk in hegemonic discourse have as their "implicit goal (…) to

express and persuasively convey group impressions [selected by the symbolic elites, and as such] we may generally assume these are ideological" (p. 33).

In the present study, special attention will be paid to self-representation versus other-representation, as key mechanisms identified by van Dijk (2004) in the abuse of power through discursive domination. This will be done by making reference to what he calls "local meaning" a concept similar to Gee's situated meaning. Van Dijk insists that "CDA should spell out which discourse structures are most likely to affect mental representations as intended by the power elites" (p. 18). In his later work, van Dijk (2012) introduces a theory of knowledge for language and text analysis, whereby he identifies mental models and shared social knowledge as community constructs, specifying the mental model as the place where the communicative event is realized ("internal context") and as the matrix for communication roles, social identities and categories, personal relations and situational knowledge management.

Van Dijk (2015) sustains that "*una síntesis totalizadora de(…) nuevos desarrollos hacia un análisis integral, semiótico (multimodal), sociocognitivo e interaccional del discurso no ha sido realizada hasta la fecha*" [A comprehensive synthesis of new developments toward integral, semiotic (multimodal), sociocognitive and interactional discourse analysis has not yet been realized] (Van Dijk, 2015, p. 18) (all translations are by the author of this dissertation, unless specified otherwise). To begin to accomplish this task, he proposes a mix of components that include discourse structures, social and individual attitudes and ideologies, social structures, cognition and social context (p. 24).

In this dissertation, the traditional understanding of Critical Discourse Analysis is expanded upon to incorporate a multimodal perspective. In adopting a multimodal approach, Malinowski (2009) poses the following question: "What is the symbolic and political

significance of a particular linguistic code's appearance with other codes in bilingual signs?" (Malinowski, 2009, p. 107). Malinowski adapts Scollon and Scollon's (2003) model to analyze codes and quotes them in this way: "the preferred code is on the top, on the left, or in the center and the marginalized code is on the bottom, on the right, or on the margins" (p. 108). Through interviews of Korean Americans in Oakland, California, Malinowski distinguishes two uses of *hangul* (the standardized orthography of Korean), observing how each serves as an identification marker for those who pass by and how each reproduces in them a sense of affinity to the orthography. Among his conclusions is the realization of the two distinguishable categories of authors and actors in the LL.

Even though LL is a recent field of academic inquiry, there have been a few studies where multimodality is evident in the integration of different disciplines, such as sociolinguistics, anthropology, sociology, and education (Carr, 2019). For instance, Mirtha Morales (2015) presents some findings regarding the linguistic landscape of Guaynabo, one of the cities selected for my research on billboards. Morales investigates signage around the municipal headquarters and associates this signage to language and education policy. I find some of her assertions to be somewhat ambiguous, especially when she sustains that Guaynabo is an English-speaking community. While a variety of English is commonly used on public and private signage in Guaynabo, ostensibly to differentiate it from other communities in Puerto Rico in terms of the greater extent to which its population supposedly utilizes English in daily life, to characterize the city's 65,000 inhabitants as English-speaking is exaggerated at best, and as deceptive as the elitist political line taken by the city's pro-English administration at worst.

Morales' findings are worth considering in my research on billboards in Guaynabo. She sustains that "there is a strong presence of English in the public spaces in the city" (p. 100) while

pointing out that "the use of the Standard English and Spanish as codes of choice in the signage posted by the municipality is reflecting a more symbolic rather than a communicative function" (p. 101). From a multimodal perspective, Morales provides some historical background to Guaynabo and its linguistic landscapes. For instance, she affirms that the people of Guaynabo and the rest of Puerto Rico exhibit a "cultural and racial hybridity that still exists in the island from Spanish, Taino, and African descent. However, the Spanish culture, language, and Catholic religion (…) [have become] the most prominent in Puerto Rican culture to this day" (p. 29). Although it continues to be a subject of extensive debate, she observes that: "the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico remains today the political status of the island as a U.S. territory" (pp. 29-30). Then, she turns to the topic of English and Spanish use on the island, where, according to her "[while] both languages are the *de jure* official languages, Spanish remains the *de facto* language spoken by all Puerto Ricans (….) [with] Spanish-English bilingualism (…) [limited to] a minority" (p. 31).

Morales recounts her experiences as a Puerto Rican to foreground the use of English in the island, particularly in the schools. It should be noted that there is a high percentage of Puerto Ricans who attend schools where English is a mandatory second language subject at every level. Though partially true, her statements about the use of English in Guaynabo are in need of empirical verification. She argues that "English becomes a way to assign who gets access and who does not" (p. 60) and states that:

> Guaynabo City is the first and only city that has adopted English as the primary language used in the municipal signage. In addition, people in this city usually pride themselves on the fast economic progress it has undergone, which is connected to its community members' ability to use the English language, not only in the academic and job

> marketability sense, but also recently as part of the local culture and as indexical of the local identity as *Guaynabitos* (p. 34, my italics)

Guaynabito is a trendy, but very problematic term, especially as it relates to other terms such as *jíbaro*/*jibarito*. Morales sometimes sees the term *Guaynabito* as being synonymous with English speakers. Perhaps time restrictions did not allow her to verify this assertion. It only takes one walk around the Paseo Tablado, a public off-street walking lane for eating and leisure in Guaynabo, to realize that, as a demonym, *Guaynabito* is embraced by both English and Spanish speaking people, even though they might not tend to mix with one another, making the use of the term ripe for further research.

In the data collection section of her study, Morales provides some statistics regarding publicity linking the use of English to the notion of progress. If we incorporate more historical elements into our multimodal analysis, however, we find that, as Villaronga (2007) observes, in the 1940s, when Guaynabo was already distinguishing itself from the rest of the island in terms of its self-proclaimed embrace of progress, its embrace of English in its LL was only beginning. It should be noted that in this same section, Morales repeats that she has as evidence that Puerto Rico is an "English speaking society". (p. 42).

As part of her research on language distribution in Guaynabo, Morales identifies "Spanish as the predominant language in the public spaces that surround Guaynabo City" (p. 56). On the basis of the interviews she conducted, she explains how "most of the participants believed English to be an indexical marker of American culture and identity" with the majority of the respondents viewing the use of English on the signs of Guaynabo City as an attempt "to become and be seen as Americans" (p. 58). While she observes that "17 Guaynabo City residents that talked positively about the increase of English visibility agreed when discussing English as a

way to achieve progress and social mobility" (p. 61), she also notes that: "English is seen by some of the participants in Guaynabo as a political strategy and propaganda takes away the practical value of English as a social tool of communication" (p. 73).

It should be noted that in one of the interview transcripts included in Morales' thesis, a participant alludes to the *jibarito* figure as one that, allegedly, knows only Spanish, and no English. Morales' interpretation of this particular interview is also ambiguous, in part because she relies on dictionary definitions to define what *jíbaros* are, thus adopting the colonial gaze of the Eurocentric symbolic elites. Referring to the Spanish dictionary of the Royal Academy, for example, Morales mentions how:

> jíbaros are usually uneducated and economically challenged [people] whose most salient characteristics are humility and loyalty to traditions and culture. Therefore, the idea of the "jíbaro" being excluded from the signs can also be thought of as the exclusion of Puerto Rican culture (….) [and] this Guaynabo Resident's response also exposes that el jibarito is not only the romantic Puerto Rican peasant but also those who still have not acquired or learned English. (…) In other words, language becomes accessible to those of the dominant class (p. 60).

Morales states that "having English visible in the signage of Guaynabo City is an indirect way to model the trajectory of where language should go, be used and exist" (p. 101). This idea seems decontextualized, given the fact that in other official agencies, such as post offices in Puerto Rico, the use of varieties of English on their premises does not necessarily carry with it any substantial message concerning the advisability of using any particular linguistic variety such as English over any other variety, such as Spanish. She not only too often assumes that US statehood is what most Puerto Ricans aspire to, but also sets up a zero-sum game scenario where

English and Spanish are part of a mutually exclusive binary. For example, she discusses "building an ideology towards English that is going against the hegemony of the monolinguist perspective in Puerto Rico and [the hegemony of] Spanish" (p. 102). Regarding language ideologies, Morales states that:

> Guaynabo City residents utilize the linguistic landscape of the city as a mechanism through which ideologies about English and Spanish are revisited and rearranged (….) as a city that distinguishes itself through their eager attitude to move forward, and their incisive will to be known as the city who embraces the possibility of becoming something other than what has already been instilled into the concept of "Puerto Rican life". They are known as trend setters, as a mirage of what the new breed of Puerto Ricans (…) covet by first appropriating and cultivating the dominant language, in this case English within the context of the US as the mainland, as a righteous sense of sensibility, pride, and a new sense of what it means to be an American living in a city in Puerto Rico" (p. 103).

Morales concludes that:

> it is almost as if the Guaynabo City's municipality is allowing English to have a physical representation in the spaces that surround the city in order to create an environment where English visibility is synonymous to statehood (….) Guaynabo City engages in the social practice of reconstructing their space into a place that can be transversely described as a linguistic spatial community (….) [so that] Guaynabo City itself serves as a niche where both English and Spanish co-exist in what it seems to be a harmonious relationship" (p. 107-108).

Nearly a decade later, years a governmental statehood committee is advocating for just such an ideal in Washington D. C., but its efforts appear to be going nowhere.

Chapter Two:

Reading and Observing Public Discourses through Postcolonial Linguistic Lenses

While some have studied patterns of Spanish and English use in Puerto Rico (Carroll & Mari 2017, Mazak 2008, Pousada 2008), others have investigated the use of these two varieties as indicators of a Puerto Rican linguistic identity (Guzzardo Tamargo et al., 2018). As mentioned in the previous chapter, Morales (2015) has addressed language use in a Puerto Rican linguistic landscape in Guaynabo, as has Müller (2019), but neither of these two authors has done extensive or in-depth study of public language use in general, or that of language use on billboards in particular.

Throughout this dissertation intersections among text, image, identity, ideology, and discourse are studied as semiotic events where linguistic acts recreate a linguistic landscape in part defined by billboards. When observing billboards in Puerto Rico, these and other semiotic components are interwoven. As presented in Kress (2012), language is not the only carrier of discursive meaning, therefore, in the research that forms the basis for this dissertation, the linguistic variety or varieties displayed on the billboards selected are studied as complex configurations of written text intertwined with other semiotic modes, such as image, layout, and color. This chapter includes a discussion of notions about discourse, and how these notions have recently been reformulated to constitute new approaches which center previously marginalized factors, including multimodality, power, race, and gender.

‘Postcolonial/Decolonial Linguistics’

Faraclas and Delgado (2021b) introduce efforts to imagine a postcolonial/decolonial linguistics:

> as works in progress, emerging from the praxis of all who have not allowed the discipline of modern linguistics to extinguish their sense of astonishment and fascination with what Foucault (1972, 1980: 231) calls the 'awesome materiality' of physically and socially embodied human language practices, and from the praxis of all who have resisted the Saussurean (1916)/Chomskian (1966) trivialization, erasure and/or domestication of the dialectal/heteroglossic variability, the dialogical/interactive performativity and the dialectical/intentional agency of those practices (Bakhtin [1935]; Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985)" (p. 1).

Faraclas and Delgado critique the colonial construction and imposition of unitary monolithic understandings of 'language', 'culture' and 'identity' in favor of new pluralistic and multiplex understandings of 'linguistic repertoires', 'cultural repertoires', and 'identificational repertoires' (p. 6). When citing Faraclas (2020), Faraclas and Delgado (2021b) point out how he:

> asserts that (…) post-colonial (…) praxis should at the very least incorporate the following insights:
>
> > Linguistic contact and restructuring are the norm [rather than the exception]
> >
> > Marginalized peoples (…) have played and continue to play a significant role in the emergence of [linguistic repertoires/varieties, even though their role has been systematically erased and trivialized in linguistic theory;]
> >
> > The family tree model is grossly inadequate to represent the relationships among languages [even though its erroneous underlying assumptions saturate modern linguistic thinking;]

> Pluri-lingualism, pluri-culturalism and pluri-identification are the norm [rather than the exception;]
>
> Performance, in both the Chomskian and theatrical senses, plays a central role [in all language practices, and therefore needs to play a central role in linguistic theory; and]
>
> The use of binary features in linguistics [is] suspect [given its roots in hegemonic binary thinking based on normative, mutually exclusive, and conjunctively exhaustive artificial oppositions]. (pp. 9-10)

The Afro-Atlantic in general and the Caribbean in particular are identified by Faraclas and Delgado (2021a) as key venues for the study of linguistic practices that contradict, complicate, upend and challenge the smug colonial ways of thinking and understanding the world that permeate what we have come to accept as linguistic theory and linguistic science. When addressing the issue of marginalized peoples in the Afro-Atlantic, Faraclas (2021) not only focuses on marginalized people of African and Indigenous descent but also on marginalized peoples of European descent. For example, he pays particular attention to how the Spanish colonial enterprise can be seen as an extension of both the *Reconquista* and the Inquisition and how Iberian Muslims and Jews played important, yet largely unacknowledged roles in European maritime expansion. For example, from its very beginnings in the 15th century under the Portuguese:

> their *marronage* from bondage and genocide in Iberia explains, in part, the significant role that the Sephardim and New Christians were to play in shaping the Afro-Atlantic (….) the Portuguese routinely used their expeditions overseas as an opportunity to expel their marginalized populations, such as Sephardim, New Christians, Romanies,

> vagabonds, criminals and LGBTQI+ people, and these exiles were collectively referred to as *degredados*" or "*'lançados'*" (2021a, p. 20).

Faraclas and Delgado (2021c) remind us that up until 1800, over 70% of the land mass of the Americas still remained under Indigenous control, while over 80% of the arrivals to the Americas were from Africa, not from Europe, and, of those relatively few arrivals from Europe, the great majority were male and from the most marginalized groups and classes (p. 37-38). Thus, Faraclas and Viada (2012, p. 14) conclude that "the majority of the first colonizers were therefore not likely to be very reliable agents in the perpetuation of colonial rule and metropolitan language and culture".

Faraclas (2021) demonstrates how many of these marginalized peoples of European descent opted out of the European colonial enterprise by going renegade, that is, by finding refuge and integrating themselves in autochthonous communities, first in West Africa beginning in the 15th century, then in the Americas beginning in the 16th century:

> the main presence and impact of Sephardim, New Christians and other Sephardic-descended peoples in West Africa, the first arena of European Invasion of the Atlantic and the rest of the world, was not that of relatively wealthy and loyal subjects of the imperial powers, but instead as marginalized exiles (*degredados*) who were sent to Africa by the Christian authorities with the expectation that they would quickly succumb to malaria and other diseases and never be heard from again. As marginalized peoples, however, they found ways to assert their agency, thus establishing a pattern of resistance to the colonial enterprise by 'going renegade' which would be repeated with different nuances over and over again during the centuries that followed and under all of the

> Western European imperial powers, with significant impact on the emergence of Afro-Atlantic colonial era linguistic contact repertoires/varieties. (p. 22)

Faraclas (2021) argues that the widespread phenomenon of going renegade, coupled with the fact that virtually all of the Iberian-descended men (except for those of the most privileged classes) who arrived in the Americas from 1500 to 1800 could only establish families with women of Indigenous and/or African descent, resulted in the ethnic, linguistic, cultural and economic subversion of the Iberian colonial projects. Meanwhile, Faraclas sustains that "during the course of the 1500s, increasing numbers of enslaved Indigenous people and Africans were escaping to the mountains and forests to become maroons, with some of the *quilombos* (maroon settlements) of Brazil having populations numbering in the tens of thousands, rivalling the biggest urban centers in the Americas at the time" (2021, p. 26).

This female- and maroon-led subversion forced the ruling classes of Europe to reconfigure their entire imperial paradigm, replacing the pre-capitalist, pre-racialized, and male-conscripted European *conquistador* model established by the Spanish and the Portuguese from the 1400s to the 1600s with a new capitalist, racialized and European male- and female-conscripted settler model established by the Dutch and the English from the 1600s onward. Before this transition, renegade societies of cohabitation among peoples of Indigenous, European and African descent were the norm in the colonial Americas. However, after this transition, the European colonies came to be characterized by a strict *apartheid* under which non-propertied people of European descent were increasingly co-opted into a more active role in the colonial enterprise, while people of non-European descent were subject to the unprecedented plunder of their labor and land.

Faraclas (2021) explains how, under the Dutch as well as in the Dutch-influenced and protected colonies of the English (such as Barbados) and the French (such as Martinique and Guadeloupe), the "new model of capitalistic production of sugar as a world commodity depended crucially on the transformation of Afro-Atlantic societies from 'colorist'/pre-racialized societies with *castas* to completely racialized societies (…) to ensure much higher levels of labor exploitation" (p. 25). He points out that the success of the implementation of this new paradigm in Barbados in the mid-1600s was preceded by a series of miserable failures over the preceding century. For example, "from the 1580s to the 1620s, the English were experiencing major difficulties trying to establish permanent settlements in which capitalist production of cash crops might prevail in the Americas, failing first in Roanoke and then trying again in Jamestown". Faraclas singles out Barbados as the first successful experiment in the imposition of these new relations of production:

> Because of its relatively small size and flat land [Barbados] was the ideal place to experiment with the new racialized, capitalist model of sugar production, where enslaved people could be closely monitored, controlled and exploited more completely than in West Africa, Hispaniola, São Tomé or Brazil, and where the likelihood of successful *marronage* was significantly reduced, because there were no forested or mountainous regions to escape to" (p. 27).

Faraclas (2021) contends that the unprecedented rates of control, coercion and exploitation of labor in the Americas in general and the Caribbean in particular resulted not only in unprecedented rates of accumulation of wealth for the metropoles, but also in unprecedented levels of resistance, which eventually led to the overthrow of the entire system of chattel enslavement by alliances of the maroons and the enslaved in the late 1700s and 1800s. He

observes that: “the key role played by maroons in the collapse of the slave regimes in the Americas is more often than not minimalized or completely ignored” concluding that:

> it was largely through the sustained and effective resistance of maroons alongside enslaved women and men throughout the Americas that businessmen in Europe, the US and elsewhere were eventually forced to replace it with other more classically capitalist forms of labor discipline, control and exploitation, such as ‘apprenticeship’ and wage-slavery (pp. 29-30).

These strong, persistent and successful traditions of resistance in the Caribbean have fostered the configuration of a fertile matrix for the emergence of strongly resistive linguistic repertoires, such as those conventionally labeled as ‘creole languages’ (Haitian, Jamaican, Papiamentu, etc.) and ‘Caribbean dialects of European languages’ (such as Caribbean Spanish). Thus, among all of the linguistic repertoires to be found in the world today, those of the Caribbean are among the least amenable to domestication under the colonizing gaze of Western Saussurean-Chomskian linguistic ‘science’, which makes the study of Caribbean linguistic varieties of particular value in both the critique of colonial linguistics as well as in the process of imagining and designing frameworks for post-/de-colonial linguistics.

Visual Grammar and Semiotic Landscapes

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) note how globalized public communication requires that authors act as promoters of new modes of representation of societies and cultures. They present globalization as a paradox because it “demands that the cultural specificities of semiotic, social, epistemological and rhetorical effects of visual communications must be understood everywhere” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 14). Images play a key role in meeting this demand, so that mass-produced publicity and advertisement can become sign-makers or

producers of "text-objects" within a specific social and cultural context. They insist that the realization of visual representation is a coded mode, and that verbal language is another mode.

Using a range of theories including Barthes' (1977) conception of second order signification and Halliday's (1978) multimodal text and its implications for the study of image, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) research meaning in the visual mode. They consider visual representations, to be "openly structured, rather than viewed as more or less faithful duplicates of reality" (p. 23). When contrasting older and newer approaches to visual literacy, these researchers propose a new way to see the creation and understanding of meaning. For them, both verbal and visual representations are modes through which meanings in any given semiotic landscape can be constituted, expressed and propagated.

But an image, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) postulate, "must be readable as a coherent sequence" (p. 27). Using the reading of illustrated books designed for children by parents, they describe a few issues that arise as such texts are being read. The visual and verbal aspects of this text reproduction activity can be seen as an attempt at creativity and the inclusion of the other. Still, these authors question how plausible it is to sustain the supremacy of visual representation. When Kress and van Leeuwen study mass media (magazines), they notice differences between public communication and verbal language, and observe transformations of the former over time. In their study, they also demonstrate how children recreate meaning through signs devoid of verbal language.

Scollon and Scollon (2003) demonstrate how signs obtain their meaning from "time, space and the social worlds indexed by language" (p. 98). Adopting a broad approach to linguistic and visual representations, they introduce "visual semiotics" as a continuum from spoken discourse and what they refer to as the "interaction order" to "representations of that

interaction order in images and signs" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 82). Their goal is to investigate which signs or texts are used in public and how they represent real world actions; how public images index the actual context where they are located; and, how social actors index the world and recreate social performances through such images (p. 84). In dialogue with Kress and Van Leeuwen's visual grammar, Scollon and Scollon make reference to the intellectual properties of advertising in order to infer "how visual images do their semiotic work" (p. 84).

In this process, Scollon and Scollon make use of four semiotic systems identified by Kress and van Leeuwen: "represented participants, modality, composition and interactive participants" (p. 86). In relation to represented participants they focus on narratives or conceptual images (texts) within a picture or sign. In terms of modality, Scollon and Scollon mention some aspects of imagery such as color saturation, color differentiation, color modulation, contextualization, representation, depth, illumination, brightness, contact, social distance and attitude (p. 90-96). For instance, they reflect on how viewers or readers typically react to the participants depicted in a public image, arguing that these participants are often seen as carrying out acts of offering something to their audiences, and, if they are represented in such a way that there is direct eye contact between them and their spectators, these acts of offering can be intensified and transformed into acts of demanding. Scollon and Scollon explain how a closeup image constitutes the saturation of a complete social space while an entire body image establishes public distance (p. 96). For the purposes of the present study, it is important to highlight here how the angle from which participant images are shot or depicted are connected to factors such as "power and involvement" (p. 96). They observe that when a picture is taken from below, the image and the message it carries is imposed, whereas when taken from above, the viewer is invited to consider the image and its message.

When addressing meaning, Scollon and Scollon (2003) provide an introduction to "geosemiotics". Again, they refer to Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) previous work on visual semiotics, and ask themselves the following questions: (p. 108)

- How are social relationships in the world represented in images?
- How are social relationships between the world and the image constructed?
- What are the concrete relationships between image representations and textual representations?
- How do social actors in the world make use of pictures (images and texts) in taking social actions?

In brief, Scollon and Scollon conclude that social identities can be contextualized as "discourses in place" (p. 109) and sustain that what is typically on display in advertising includes an image that is presented as an ideal and a text that is presented as real.

In dialogue with the perspectives outlined above, Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) introduce the concept of semiotic landscape as an additional approach to LL studies, which takes into account the "(colonial) appropriation of territory and of the production of (private) property" (p. 3). From a human geography perspective, these sociolinguists refer to "text and spectacle" as characteristic of LL. Jaworski and Thurlow's research follows that of Daniels and Cosgrove (1993), in which the latter visualize such landscapes as '"discursive terrain across which the struggle between the different, often hostile, codes of meaning construction has been engaged (…) and [which] is only one step away from forging links between landscape and identity, social order and power" (p. 5).

When elaborating on the concept of space, Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) introduce the idea of "conceived space" which "corresponds to mental or represented images of space (…)" which they juxtapose with, "perceived space" which is

> equivalent to material or physical space responsible for economic production and social reproduction, while lived space is produced through the experiential intersection and/or interaction of both conceived and perceived space. (…) all interact with one another, with the spaces of their emplacement, and with the social actors inhabiting these spaces in creating complex networks of meaning, or [using a term coined by Scollon and Scollon (2003)] 'semiotic aggregates'" (pp. 7-8).

In 2015, Gorter and Cenoz adopted a translanguaging perspective on LL, by proposing a framework which involves "translanguaging in relation to a holistic view of linguistic landscapes that goes beyond the analysis of individual signs" (Gorter & Cenoz, 2015, p. 54). These authors argue that "through translanguaging we foreground the co-occurrence of different linguistic forms, signs and modalities", and thus advocate for "an approach to linguistic landscapes that takes the study of multilingualism forward" (p. 54). In accordance with Jaworski and Thurlow's (2010) ideas about city scapes, Gorter and Cenoz sustain that:

> The words on the street come to us from signage that we consciously read, fleetingly notice or ignore when we walk or drive through urban linguistic landscapes. City streets develop into spaces where a growing multitude of languages has a presence because processes of globalization leave traces of other languages in almost any linguistic landscape. This includes the spread of English, global brand names and the use of migrant and minority languages, among others. The dimensions of the local and the global combine in dynamic and complex ways influenced by rules and regulations, by

> creative sign designers, by technology and in interaction with the passers-by, who are the readers of the linguistic landscapes. (2015, p. 54)

In dialogue with Jaworski and Thurlow (2010), Mark Sebba (2010) proposes that "the publicly displayed texts (…) may provide evidence – to be understood only in context – of power relationships between languages (or rather, the groups who "own" those languages) and policies designed to manage and control just those relationships" (Sebba, 2010, p. 62). Sebba's study of the public signage on the Isle of Man focuses on the public use of English and Manx. One of his conclusions is:

> that public texts (…) have to be read in the context of all other public texts which participate in the same discourse(s) and which impinge or may impinge on the consciousness of readers. I use 'discourses' here to mean both the main or overt discourse of the text (for example, healthcare discourse or transport discourse) as well as others (such as the discourse of language difference, the discourse of power relations between languages and their speech communities, and many other possible discourses). (2010, p. 74).

Discourse and Discourse Studies

Michel Foucault (1972) defines discourse as "a thing pronounced or written" (p. 52) and contextualizes the use of discourse in Western societies where systems of discursive domination prevail as being typified by what he calls procedures of exclusion, prohibitions, the "will to truth" and oppositions such as reason vs. insanity (pp. 52-53). In an archaeology of the hegemonic use of language in Western society, he identifies a key historical turn in Greece during the 6th century BC which resulted in the elevation of "true discourse" above all other discursive forms. As a result, priority was no longer placed on "the discourse that answers to the

demands of desire, or the discourse which exercises power," but instead on what he calls the "will to truth" which is linked to the truth value of what is said or written as determined by formal logic. But, in the final analysis, Foucault demonstrates that this shift is at the same time more and less fundamental than it is made out to be in the dominant discourses of Western philosophy, by pointing out, for example, that "what is a stake in the will to truth, in the will to utter this 'true' discourse, if not desire and power?" (p. 56).

In reference to how power relations have an impact on access to discourse and how certain discourse is valued and propagated while other discourse is not, Foucault states that there is "a gradation among discourses: those which are said in the ordinary course of days and exchanges, (…) and those which give raise to certain number of speech acts which take them up, transform them or speak of them" (pp. 56-57). He concludes this is the result of socio-historical processes that limit powers over discourse by "determining the condition of their application, of imposing a certain number of rules on the individuals who hold them, and thus of not permitting everyone to have access to them" (p. 61).

Discourse theorist Norman Fairclough points out the dialectical relations embedded in discourse. Also, he highlights the trans-disciplinary character of critical social analysis, which along with language studies constitute the key components of critical discourse analysis or CDA (Fairclough, 2012, p. 9). According to him, discourse can be considered from various points of view, including the "meaning-making (…) element of the social process, (…) the language associated with a particular social field or practice, [and, as] (…) a way of construing aspects of the world associated with a particular social perspective". He therefore underscores the centrality of semiosis and suggests "that discourse analysis is concerned with various 'semiotic modalities'" (p. 11).

As expressed in Foucault's groundbreaking work, discourse has a co-constitutive relationship with asymmetries of power in hegemonic societies. This relationship has served to define the route of investigation taken by a number of subsequent researchers, such as Adrian Blackledge (2012). Although Blackledge focuses on discourse in the classroom, some of his arguments and findings are pertinent to my research on billboards in the present dissertation. This is the case with his general approach to CDA, which he introduces with a quote from Titscher et al. (2000) where they explain that critical discourse analysis "is concerned with social problems. It is not concerned with language or language use per se, but with the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures" (p. 616). Blackledge then adds that "CDA sees language as social practice", in which discourse is embedded (p. 617).

"CDA", Blackledge continues, "is centrally interested in language and power because it is usually in language that discriminatory practices are constituted and reproduced, and in language that social asymmetries may be challenged and transformed". He argues that "language is not powerful on its own, but gains power through the use powerful people make of it", highlighting that it takes more than one person to produce a text (617). In a similar vein, he mentions Bakhtin's notion of intertextuality and associates it to the dialectical characteristic of language as it relates to "relations of power within society" (617).

From a cognitive perspective, Teun Van Dijk (2012) mentions text and talk as different modalities that are equally important in conducting research on discourse and knowledge. By introducing the concept of mental models, Van Dijk provides important new insights that expand dominant notions of the context in which discourse functions from the external environment in which speakers and listeners find themselves to the internal environment that allows both speakers and listeners to establish horizons of intelligibility. According to him, mental models

"are subjective representations of events or situations in which a person participates at a certain moment of time, at a certain place, with other participants (with variable identities and social roles), engaged in a specific action and with specific goals" (Van Dijk, 2012, pp. 587-588). Van Dijk adds that the construction of mental models involves complex interactions among our emotions, knowledge and lived experience. When considering how discourse is manipulated in cases of the abuse of power, he points out that "people may construe mental models that do not correspond to reality" (p. 588).

A key link between Van Dijk's approach and the present research on billboards is evident when he sustains that "mental models play a central role in the understanding and production of discourse" (p. 588). He describes how this occurs through the activation of a "situation model" which is constructed every time someone interacts with a given discourse (p. 588), followed by the construction of "context models", that "represent the way language users interpret their current environment as relevant for the current discourse" (p. 589). As the formation/ selection of a situation model occurs, van Dijk continues, "if knowledge about an event is to be communicated", as is the case with billboards, "the (…) situation model of that event is activated and the context model will strategically select the information that is (…) important, relevant and appropriate (…) in the (…) communicative situation" (p. 590). The resulting dynamic whereby context models are re-produced to invoke preferred inferences and comprehension which leads him to conclude that "a mental model is much richer than the text itself" (p. 592).

Mental models are invoked through a variety of means, such as: 1) focus, or what is presented as new or the most relevant information; 2) othering through positive self-representation and negative representation of the "other" in which "the ideological strategy (…) is to emphasize *our* good things and *their* bad things" (p. 594); and 3) the use of implications

including “explicit propositions” vs. “implied propositions of discourse” (p. 596), notions that dialogue with Barthes’ concepts of “denoted context” vs. “connoted text”.

The work on advertisements by Elsa Simoe Lucas Freitas (2012) is also of relevance to the present study on billboards, since much of the discourse found on billboards may be a kind of advertising discourse. Freitas (2012) contends that

> advertising is one of the most representative forms of discourse when it comes to displaying its own inner functioning (…) as a linguistic form of communication (….) [and that] ads are wonderful examples of the diverse roles discourse can fulfill in society (….) [and of how] people communicate and relate to each other” (p. 427).

Freitas cites Cook (1992) who sees

> ads as a rewarding object of study for the discipline of discourse analysis, taking in consideration the special characteristics of advertising discourse and their great relevance as an ever-changing, perpetually dynamic and continuously updated source of information as to past and present prevalent social values and beliefs (in Freitas, 2012, p. 428).

Freitas cites Goddard (1998) who highlights the capacity of ads to “strongly influence the construction of the viewers’ social and cultural identities” (in Freitas, 2012, p. 428). Freitas also cites Yuen (2004), who identifies advertising as “a multi-semiotic process of communication” (in Freitas, 2012, p. 428) .

Although she cites Myers (1999) who observes that “the values added by advertising can be real values’” (in Freitas, 2012, p. 430), Freitas also warns her readers of contemporary trends

in advertisement toward ever-greater degrees of discursive manipulation and power abuse, in which an

> apparently faithful depiction is nothing of the kind, since what is being shown has previously undergone a careful process of selection and transformation, whereby scenes are refined, relationships are stylized, people and sets are beautified and perfected - thus becoming versions of everyday reality in disguise (….) [so that] very often (…) the explicit message of the ad seems to be totally unrelated to whatever is being promoted (….) [thus establishing a] "dialogic relationship with the ad's message, its surroundings and the role the ads ask us to assume as viewers, whether or not we are members of their intended target audience" (pp. 429-430).

Providing an example from an advertising campaign for a language school, Freitas (2012) focuses on three main components: "the linguistic part", "the images", and "the layout and the old-fashioned drawings" (p. 434). Then she mentions the "use of websites as an extension to the campaign", which highlights "interactivity" between the ad and viewers (p. 436). She cites Myers (1999) to conclude that "advertising is a pervasive and omnipresent cultural form (….) [and that] ads are indeed valuable documents on how society evolves and what we, as viewers, tolerate as acceptable" (pp. 437-438).

The complex relationships between discourses, place and meaning are encapsulated in Scollon and Scollon's (2003) notion of perceptual spaces, whose boundaries, they assert, are established by the visual, the auditory, the olfactory, the thermal and the haptic spaces. They state that "our actions are inherently productive of identity because they index the discourses in place" (p. 204). Their discussion of interpersonal distances is of particular importance to the study of billboards in the LL, where the optimal public distance between the billboard and its

intended audience normally ranges from 12 to 25 feet (p. 53), although the recent tendency to replace more conventional front-lit printed billboards with high intensity back-lit mega-screens may have increased the maximum value of this optimal range. Based on their understanding of Goffman's (1959) ideas about a sign and its potential both to give and to give off meaning, Scollon and Scollon (2003) describe discourses in place as "positioned in relationships, both social and physical, to the other humans who are also in those spaces" (p. 57). When discussing discourses in time and space, they use the term "semiotic aggregates" which they relate to "a dynamic tension between the centrifugal forces by which discourses distribute themselves across time and space and the centripetal forces by which discourses converge in time and space" (p. 168).

Multimodal Discourse Analysis/Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

In terms of images and their meaning, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) adopt Halliday's (1978) interactive perspective and thought processes for developing meanings. For them, being "visually literate" is a crucial skill set. They define grammar as "an inventory of elements and rules underlying culture-specific forms of verbal communication" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 3). Like Halliday, their approach is functional, defining visual grammar as providing "an account of the explicit and implicit knowledge and practices around a resource, consisting of the elements and rules underlying a culture-specific form of visual communication" (p. 3).

These authors portray images as matrices of signs in societies and cultures. For them, "previously produced signs become the signifier-material to be transformed into new signs" (p. 12). Contrary to Ferdinand de Saussure and his idea of an arbitrary and conventional sign, they demonstrate the sign to be "motivated and conventional" (p. 12). Sign makers, then, present how they see an object in what they consider to be the most plausible form of representation, and

conclude that there is "something like a Western 'Grammar of three-dimensional visual design', a set of forms and meanings (…) and a Western 'grammar of the moving image" (p. 15). Kress and van Leeuwen note that globalized public communication demands that authors act as promoters of new modes of representation of societies and cultures.

In 2012, Gunther Kress formulated a framework for Multimodal Discourse Analysis, (MMDA) as well as for a text linguistics which incorporates ideas from Teun van Dijk, Ruth Wodak and Michel Foucault. Regarding MMDA, Kress explains how his own interest "in the expression of power 'knowledge' in and through language (…) [or what Foucault calls 'discourse'], provided an important means of extending the investigation of the relation of 'social givens' and language" (Kress, 2012, p. 35). From this perspective, he elaborates on two concepts: ideology and text. He defines ideology "as the name for the specific configuration of discourses present in any one text," and text as "the material *site of emergence* of immaterial *discourse(s)*" (p. 36). He adds that when engaging in MMDA, who creates any given text and what modes are used to construct it become "a significant issue at all times" (36).

After defining text as a "multimodal semiotic entity," Kress also affirms that it "realize[s] the interests of [its] makers. A text is (made) coherent through the use of semiotic resources that establish cohesion both internally (…) and externally" acknowledging the role of "power in the making, recognition and attribution" of coherent text (p. 36). Multimodal Discourse Analysis, he continues, "can provide insight into the relation of the meanings of a community and its semiotic manifestations" (p. 37). Within this alternative approach to the analysis of discourse, written or spoken language is just part of the meaning in a text, which "as a whole reside[s] in the meanings made jointly by all the modes in a text" (p. 37). In other words, Kress explains how MMDA

describes and analyzes "what 'goes on' in a text, including the working of power in social interaction" (p. 37).

According to Kress, multimodality "names the field in which semiotic work takes place, a domain of enquiry, a description of the space and of the resources that enter into *meaning* in some way or another." In his discussion of social semiotics, he argues that

> 'language' is just one among the many resources for making meaning (…) [that] all modes are framed as one field (….) [and that] multimodality and social semiotics, together, make it possible to ask questions around meaning, and meaning making, about the agency of meaning makers, the constitution of identity in sign - and meaning-making - (…) [and around] how 'knowledge' appears differently in different modes (p. 38).

Kress concludes that MMDA addresses issues that are not clearly dealt with in the field of Discourse Analysis, such as: "partiality of language", "modes", "implicit meanings" and "recognition of semiotic work" (p. 38). In terms of language and its partiality, he establishes that writing and speech ought to be considered as different linguistic modes, alongside other modes with similar potential to convey meaning. Contrary to traditional approaches, he also asserts that all meanings are explicit, saying that modes "are distinct of the basis of the material characteristics and of the social shaping of the social-semiotic affordances of that material" (p. 39). Thus, when conducting MMDA, he states that the acknowledgement of elements such as semiotic work, agency and mode is essential. For example, in his study of two grocery store signs, he concludes that signs have an informative value and a semantic value but that "entities of writing (…) are entirely different from those of image" (p. 46).

Acknowledging how work such as Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) has become foundational in multimodal discourse investigations, Emilia Djonov and Zumin Zhao (2017)

utilize the framework of social semiotics to offer insights into MMDA. According to these authors multimodality was founded "as a transdisciplinary field of research concerned with the meaning-making potential, use, and development of different semiotic resources" (Djonov & Zhao, 2017, p. 3). When discussing visual grammar, they explain how "modality relies on several cues such as color saturation, color differentiation, brightness, and detail, and their interaction may lead viewers to 'read' a picture as more or less naturalistic, abstract, sensory, or technical" (p. 4).

Djanov and Zhao also argue that "multimodal analysis must always consider semiotic resources in relation to specific, situated social practices, and should engage with each of four layers, or strata, of communication" (p. 5) namely: discourse, design, production and distribution. These authors also highlight van Leeuwen's (2013) contention that

> the discourses that need the scrutiny of a critical eye are now overwhelmingly multimodal and mediated by digital systems that take multimodality entirely for granted (….) [For example] racist [and other] stereotypes persist in visual rather than verbal texts, and in comic strips, advertisements and other forms of popular culture rather than in more factual and 'highbrow' texts (p. 9).

Other authors in dialogue with Gunther Kress (2012) are David Machin and Andrea Mayr. Machin and Mayr (2012) argue that "a 'multimodal analysis' [where] language, image and other modes of communication [are considered] may reveal buried ideology" (p.1). Also, they emphasize how "CDA assumes that power relations are discursive" (p. 4). To make this point Machin and Mayr use an image from a magazine intended for women, where the woman depicted seems to be at work in an office. After considering the image from what they refer to as a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) approach, they sustain that the image

"*symbolizes* a particular kind of lifestyle" (p. 9). They reach this conclusion by "describing the intricate details of features such as color, lighting, articulation of detail, 'rhyming' in the image, where colors, shapes and forms repeat within the composition, positioning of elements, etc." (p. 8).

According to Machin and Mayr, "images can be used to say things that we cannot say in language" (p. 9). These researchers contend that MCDA considers images and

> other modes of communication as a means of social construction [adding that] visual communication, as well as language, both *shapes* and is *shaped* by society (….) [Therefore MCDA concerns itself with] visual semiotic choices (…) [and the] way that they play a part in the communication of power relations" (….) [In other words,] *how* they make meaning as well as *what* they mean (p. 10).

In their discussion of visual choices in the construction of discourse, they comment on how such choices may be considered to be of either an iconographical or iconological nature, a distinction which allows them to "explore the way that individual elements in images, such as objects and settings, are able to signify discourses [and to] ask which visual features and elements are foregrounded and which are backgrounded or excluded" (p. 31). When considering lexical choices, they include elements such as word connotation, overlexicalization, suppression or lexical absence, structural opposition, and genre communication.

Using advertisements for cosmetics as an example, Machin and Mayr observe that "technical-sounding terms are used to connote 'science' and 'specialist knowledge' when in fact there might be none" (p. 42). They also invoke Fairclough (1984) and his concept of "'simulated equalization' – whereby the text producer appears to be on an equal footing with the reader through choices of expressions readers may make themselves'" (p. 45) when discussing

examples taken from magazines published for women, in order to conclude that "their role is (…) to signify a discourse where women can be in control of themselves and be fashionable through the way they dress and speak" (p. 47).

In their treatment of visual choices, Machin and Mayr associate iconography to Barthes' (1973) "semiotic theory (…) and his account on how images can denote or connote" (p. 49). They elaborate on how both denotation and connotation can be used as tools for assessing what they call the meaning potential of any given visual choice. Other important factors that they identify include what they classify as attributes, settings, and salience. Salience "is where certain features in compositions are made to stand out, to draw our attention to foreground certain meanings" (p. 54), using such devices as potent cultural symbols, size, color, tone, focus, foregrounding, and overlapping. Foregrounding, for example, signifies importance, while backgrounding signifies subordination (p. 56).

Making reference to visual representational strategies that may be realized in advertising discourse, Machin and Mayr explain various ways of "positioning the viewer in relation to people inside the image" (p. 97). For instance, engagement with the viewer is correlated to the degree of proximity to the actor in the image as well as to the degree to which the actor appears to be directing their attention to the viewer. In contrast, images that depict the actor looking away from the viewer invite the viewer to consider what the actor may be thinking. Close shots of actors tend to convey intimacy and identification to the viewer, while longer shots tend to convey messages of solitude and social distance. The angle of depiction is also significant, with side shots implying that the viewer shares the physical, social or attitudinal positioning of the actor, while back shots can sometimes denote a coincidence between the points of view of the actor and the viewer. If the image positions the viewer as looking down on the actor, this can make the

viewer feel more powerful, while images depicting the actor looking down at the viewer can evoke a sense of the viewer's vulnerability.

Individualization and collectivization are other important visual strategies mentioned by Machin and Mayr (2012). In this connection, they cite Machin and van Leeuwen (2007), who state that in magazine advertisements directed at women, female figures are "depicted as always acting alone and strategically (…) [as if there were] no collective and no society (….) to] fit with the idea of individualism that lies at the root of Western consumerism and corporate capitalism" (p. 101). On the other hand, when actors are depicted as part of a group, homogeneity is often conveyed.

When discussing modality in language, Machin and Mayr mention the three conventional categories of epistemic (realis) modality, deontic (imperative) modality, and dynamic (potential) modality, highlighting that "modals also have a function in concealing power relations" and their use "tells us something about the author's identity (…) [and] how much power they have over others and over knowledge" (p. 190). They then link these concepts of modality to how notions such as reality and certainty are addressed in visual communication. Returning to the advertisements found in women's magazines, they find that the images depicted often serve to transport the viewer from the everyday challenges that she faces as a woman in a patriarchal society to an artificial world of otherwise unattainable possibilities. This, they contend, is sometimes achieved "not so much through describing product details, but through loading the product with certain values (…) [thus loading] the magazine with particular sets of values, ideas and identities which can signify women's agency, glamour and fun" (p. 201).

According to Machin and Mayr, the degree of detail and sharpness given to each component of an image is an important signifier of visual modality. While conformity to norms

that are attached to the values attributed to the commodities being advertised can be put into sharp focus and "specified by a number of deliberate features such as dress, hairstyle, make-up and posture" (p. 202), the fact that these norms and values are completely artificial, addictive and unattainable can be obscured by a lack of detail and sharpness in the background imagery, so that "the consequent removal of time and space discourages the viewer from placing (…) events in actual socio-economic-political contexts and rather indexes typical (…) frames or discourses" (p. 204). Other factors identified by Machin and Mayr that impact visual modality in advertisement include degree of articulation of tone, color modulation, and color saturation (p. 205). They note that in Western cultures, brightness is associated to "transparency and truth", and darkness is associated to "lack of clarity and the unknown", and that saturated colors are used "to bring a sensory and more emotionally intense view of the world" (p. 205).

When reviewing multimodality studies, Ledin and Machin (2018) include work done by Kress and van Leeuwen and Halliday and Matthiesen, and highlight that "there has been a lack of consideration as to whether such models are appropriate for the work done in CDS" (p. 2). They sustain that "in Critical Discourse Studies (….) much of multimodality is itself based closely on one theory of language called Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)" which according to them "has a narrow notion of 'texts' and a weak notion of context." (Ledin & Machin, 2018, p. 1). Regarding MMDA from an SFL perspective, they argue that "it is not so clear whether what gets done is actually a process of analysis or purely one of labelling things through set of pre-established categories" (p. 2). Also, they agree that "SFL offers some highly valuable tools and concepts, but we need to carefully consider how we apply these, and we need a model of analysis that can deal with the material, and social practice based, nature of the forms of communication that we want to critically analyze" (p. 2). Instead, they advocate for

approaches that are more thoroughly contextualized than SFL, that take into account the specific canons of use that prevail in any given situation, the specific ideologies and worldviews of targeted audiences, etc. Beside criticizing SFL for its unnecessarily narrow definition of what constitutes a text, they argue for more holistic approaches that incorporate such macro-level factors as culture, such meso-level factors as canons of use and such micro-level factors as technologies and writing systems.

Globalization and Colonization

As part of their critique of corporate globalization, Benholdt-Thomsen, Faraclas and Von Werlhof (2001) state that "*there is an alternative* (…) to the version of corporate domination over our lives that is usually referred to as 'globalization'" (Benholdt-Thomsen, Faraclas & Von Werlhof, Eds., 2001, p. x). They suggest that the number of alternatives are at least as numerous as the number of human cultures, each with its own set of knowledges about how to sustain societies where inequalities, conflict and ecocide have been successfully kept at bay over thousands of years. Invoking the "subsistence perspective" (Mies & Benholdt-Thomsen, 1999), they also identify the rich and unique sets of knowledge and practices that are embodied in each of us as human beings who have managed to survive and even thrive in the midst of death-seeking systems of domination, such as plunder, patriarchy, ethnocentrism and anthropocentrism. They suggest that once we begin to acknowledge and value these sets of knowledge and practices, we can bring about

> the re-establishment of our sense of individual and collective power over our bodies, beliefs, communities, land, food, markets (…) to redirect our labour towards the creation of use of value, abundance, fertility and life away from the production of exchange value, scarcity, violence and death (p. x).

Considering corporate globalization from an eco-feminist point of view, this latest stage of capitalism can be seen as just the most recent wave in a long process of intensification of systems of domination, which they conceptualize as part of the expanded understanding of colonization elaborated by Mies, Benholdt-Thomsen, and Von Werlhof in *Woman, the Last Colony* (1987). In this work, the authors add two more dimensions, namely, patriarchy and anthropocentrism, to the other two more traditionally recognized dimensions of colonization, namely, plunder and ethnocentrism.

Faraclas and Delgado (2021b) take this expanded understanding of colonization and assert that, contrary to the traditional doctrines of Marxist movements (which prioritize plunder), feminist movements (which prioritize patriarchy), anti-racist movements (which prioritize ethnocentrism) or environmental movements (which prioritize anthropocentrism), none of these systems of domination can be said to have preceded or to be more "basic" than any of the others. Instead, they argue that these systems are co-substantial and inextricably intertwined like the monstruous heads of a hydra, and that the intensification of any one of these systems of domination is impossible without the concurrent intensification of all of the others. Thus corporate globalization does not only represent an unprecedented intensification in the rate of plunder through capitalism, but also an unprecedented intensification in ethnocentrism through racism and anti-immigrant hysteria, an unprecedented intensification in patriarchy through violence against the bodies and lives of non-cis-hetero-normative people, and an unprecedented intensification in anthropocentrism through the ever-accelerating devastation of our ecosphere.

Von Werlhof (2001) interprets the operation of these systems of domination as conforming to a methodology that can be usefully compared to alchemy, as the precursor to what has become not only Western science and the Western worldview, but also to Western

Abrahamic religions, especially Christianity, which she sees as being in deep collusion with "the destruction of earth by modern economic and technological systems" (p. 17). She begins by tracing the etymology of the word "alchemy" to the Arabic term for "mud," making reference to how the peoples along the Nile River in Egypt initially accumulated sets of knowledges and practices that allowed them to work with nature, in the form of the annual floods of the river and the nutrient-rich mud that they brought with them, to ensure a stable and sustainable subsistence. With the intensification of systems of domination, however, this original interpretation of alchemy was eventually hijacked by a death-seeking understanding that works against nature.

It is this death-seeking form of alchemy that has served as the model for Western science, religion and worldview, as well as for the implementation of systems of domination. The goal of this death-seeking form of alchemy is the replacement of nature with a new "improved" form of "nature", first by "burning" and killing nature so that it can be broken down into its pure (read "dead") component elements, then by recombining these dead elements into a "better" version of the original, and in the process, creating the "philosopher's stone" which has the capacity to turn all that it touches into gold. While this conventional understanding of alchemy has been officially disowned by the Western scientific establishment, feminist critics have demonstrated quite effectively that the actual approaches and practices of theoretical Western Science are still saturated with alchemical thinking (Merchant, 1980). The technologies that have resulted in the proliferation of both the electronic billboards and the fast food discussed in this dissertation are the result of this death-seeking understanding of science.

The most obvious examples that are used to show the persistence of alchemical methodologies make reference to the disastrous effects that Western scientific endeavor has had on the environment. But, as noted above, Faraclas and Delgado (2021b. p. 3) maintain that any

escalation of anthropocentric violence inflicted on the environment is also necessarily accompanied by an escalation of ethnocentric violence inflicted on peoples raced as non-white, by an escalation of patriarchal violence inflicted on peoples raced as non-cis-hetero-male, and by an escalation of plundering violence inflicted on peoples classed as non-rich or non-propertied. It is becoming less and less controversial to assert that under the Western gaze the immense amount of "work" performed every day by the planet to sustain us as living beings remains virtually unacknowledged, unvalued and uncompensated, with the planet being reduced instead to a dumping ground for the toxic waste produced by the colonial system. The same can also be said, however, for the other colonies: 1) under the Western gaze the immense amount of work performed every day by women to sustain us as living beings remains virtually unacknowledged, unvalued and uncompensated, with women being reduced instead to a disposal site for the toxic waste produced by the colonial system; 2) under the Western gaze the immense amount of work performed every day by peoples of non-European descent to sustain us as living beings remains virtually unacknowledged, unvalued and uncompensated, with peoples of non-European descent being reduced instead to a disposal site for the toxic waste produced by the colonial system; and 3) under the Western gaze the immense amount of work performed every day by 'poor' (i.e., non-propertied) people to sustain us as living beings remains virtually unacknowledged, unvalued and uncompensated, with the poor being reduced instead to a disposal site for the toxic waste produced by the colonial system. In this way, not only our environment, but also women, people of non-European descent and poor people are subject to operation of ever more deadly and monstruous forms of alchemy whereby they are "burned" and broken down into their "basic" elements (labor power, consumer profiles, ideological allegiances, individualism, etc.) then recombined to serve as optimally insecure, submissive, manipulable, and enslavable objects.

According to von Werlhof (2001), patriarchy has as its ultimate goal a motherless society by undertaking a project that seeks "to replace the concrete mother with the abstract father. (….) patriarchy begins with matricide (…) with the subjugation of maternal culture and ends by trying to replace it with an artificial social 'design'" (p. 19). She contends that the conceptualization of the one and only Father-God in Abrahamic religions is accompanied by a "dulling of the senses and the replacement of the sensual world, of sense itself, with an unusual, sense(s)less, nonsensical world" (p. 22). This is how technology and economics, von Werlhof adds, become "the secular arm of the patriarchal project" (p. 23).

Von Werlhof adds that this patriarchal project reproduces an individual identity in all of us that is created through our "separation from land and other means of production" (p. 31) in a way that reduces our "hopes and desires to the goal of making money like a modern alchemist" "p. 31). We thus inhabit a world where faith in God equals faith in money, where religion assumes "the task of calming the poor and the losers while at the same time motivating them to continue doing exactly that which caused their misery in the first place" (p. 31). It is in this "landscape of capital" (Goldman & Papson, 2011) where, von Werlhof (2001) warns, "the modern person continually alchemizes himself (sic) by transforming his (sic) 'passions' into 'interests'" (p. 33) to the point where we are forced to alchemically separate our labor power from the rest of our being in order to convert it into a "pure" elemental substance to be commodified and sold on the labor market. In this way, we have traveled far along a path on which we are destined to be converted into machines and other cyborg monstrosities.

Mies (2001) underscores the intersectionality between systems of plunder (whose latest manifestation is corporate globalization and fast capitalism) and patriarchy (whose latest manifestation is cis-hetero-male sexism) by critiquing traditional Marxist approaches to social

change that focus almost exclusively on plunder, while not just ignoring, but also in a real sense exacerbating the effects of other systems of domination, such as patriarchy, ethnocentrism, and anthropocentrism. She argues that "under Capitalism, there emerges not only a sexual division of labour, but also a particular social division between private and public and an international division of labour" (Mies, 2001, p. 3). She then demonstrates how much of the resistance to capitalism replicates patriarchy, stating that "Marx stresses that the concept of 'productive labour' means (…) surplus-producing labour (…) [and in the process] women's labour henceforth disappears from the social or human sphere and becomes invisible" (p. 4). As a result, what she calls "capitalist patriarchal society (…) defines femaleness as devoid of productivity, activity, subjectivity, humanity, historicity" (p. 5). Thus, the 20th century Marxist movements that challenged capitalism did little to prevent a situation whereby the "western working class (…) [became] opposed to the ecology movement and also to the women's movement" (pp. 8-9).

As a way to move forward, Mies proposes the dissolution of several key binaries/ oppositions constructed by systems of domination, such as the opposition between work and play and between theory and practice. While advocating subsistence as a viable alternative to corporate globalization, she explains that her understanding of subsistence includes such elements as the "maintenance of self-sustaining survival systems" and "a moral economy, based on principle, not merely on supply and demand" (p. 9). To challenge the growth model of corporate globalization, she advocates "a strategy combining the goal of the ecology movement, anti-colonialism and women's liberation simultaneously" (p. 10).

In addition to Von Werlhof and Mies, the other contributors to Benholdt-Thomsen, Faraclas and Von Werlhof (2001) elaborate on different aspects of this expanded understanding of colonization and corporate globalization, as well as on the multitude of ways and means

available to resist and subvert it. Vandana Shiva (2001, p.58) makes reference to the apocalyptic effects that agribusiness has had on farmers worldwide and on subsistence farmers in India in particular. Observing that life-seeking subsistence multi-crop farming that works with nature instead of against it, which is typically carried out by non-propertied ('poor') women and people of non-European descent is what really feeds the majority of the world's population, rather than the capital-, fertilizer-, pesticide- and herbicide-intensive monocultures of corporate agribusiness, which has "created scarcity, hunger and poverty" (p. xii). According to her, "in the Third World (…) biodiversity-based small farm systems are more productive than industrial monocultures" (p. 58) which she associates with a "Monoculture of the Mind". The 500 billion dollar fast food industry discussed in this dissertation depends crucially on such monocultures.

Shiva (2001) also notes that the companion planting of a diversity of crops has proven over thousands of years to be "the best strategy for preventing drought and desertification" (p. 59), giving several examples, including one from Bengal, where women use the limited plots of land at their disposal to plant more than 150 crops that protect them from hunger and lack of vitamins. She contrasts the traditional cultivation by Bengali women of greens between rows of other crops in order to provide everyone in the community with a free, nutritious and easily accessible source of Vitamin A on the hand, with the expensive and inefficient efforts of Western agribusiness and pharmaceutical companies to sell Vitamin A "enriched" rice and Vitamin A pills to the government and people of Bengal on the other. Behaving as the alchemists described by Von Werlhof (2001) these companies propagate "the myth (…) [that] presents bio-technologists as the creators of vitamin A" (p. 60). In the process, she continues, the "globalization of the food system is destroying the diversity of local food cultures and the local food economies" (p. 62).

Shiva (2001) illustrates how multinational corporations and the multilateral agencies that promote their interests have enlisted national governments in a "war against nature and the poor" (p. 65) that has redefined nutritious greens as weeds that must be eliminated by herbicides, that has redefined pollinating bees as criminal "usurpers" of intellectual property rights over seed, that has redefined human hands as dangerous sources of "contamination" that must be replaced by chemicals and machines, and that has redefined the sharing of seeds among women farmers as theft. A death-seeking set of trade rules, technologies and governmental policies have thus unleashed unprecedented levels of violence against the people, plants and animals that give us life.

To begin to resolve these problems, Shiva proposes that we insist on consuming goods that are produced directly by human hands and that we avoid consuming goods, such as fast food, that are produced through the use of "machines and chemicals bought from global corporations" (p. 62). Shiva concludes that sharing and exchange are "the basis of our humanity and our ecological survival" (p. 64) and that we need "to bring the planet and the people back into the picture (….) to move from market totalitarianism to an earth democracy" (p. 65). In the introduction to Benholdt-Thomsen et al. (2001, p. x-xv), the editors reaffirm Shiva's observations from South Asia by attesting to the "existence of thousands of viable indigenous subsistence-oriented societies in Melanesia (…) as living proof (…) that there is nothing normal, natural and inevitable or progressive about corporate globalization" (p. xii), urging us "to reject (…) our misguided belief in the ideology, science and technology of patriarchal 'experts' and leaders" (p. xv).

Expanding this discussion about Melanesia, Faraclas (2001) uses his contribution to the volume to present some of the alternatives to corporate globalization that have emerged in the

South Pacific. He identifies multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, the International Money Fund, and the World Trade Organization, as well as the Big International Non-Governmental Organizations as neo-colonial institutions that have effectively re-colonized the entire world with ideologies and practices "that serve profits, not people" (Faraclas, 2001, p. 67). He contrasts the death-seeking impacts of these colonizing institutions to the life-seeking impacts of Melanesian approaches to indigenous sovereignty and subsistence, which according to him, have guaranteed that the great majority of the peoples of Melanesia have "enjoy[ed] full food, housing, employment and land security" for thousands of years (p. 68). Faraclas sustains that Melanesia is a place where "missionary preaching and company advertising that have invaded even the most remote villages are preparing yet another indigenous nation for submission to a patriarchal God who demands blind obedience, addiction to substances that require wage slavery to obtain, and the expropriation and exploitation that inevitably follow" (p. 68). He sees the more than 1,500 indigenous traditions in Melanesia as representing more than 1,500 different and unique ways of claiming sovereignty over our lives, any of which can be used as both an inspiration and a model for reclaiming control over our bodies, minds, and labor in the face of corporate globalization and for "the reinterpretation of the present (…) [as] the foundation for building a future for people, not for profit" (p. 76)..

In her contribution to the volume Veronica Benholdt-Thomsen (2001) moves the focus from the rural to the urban context, which is the focus of this dissertation, where she contends that many of the same principles apply. For example, she stresses the importance of an urban "economy of daily well-being" and dynamic interaction (Benholdt-Thomsen, 2001, p. 217). In her discussion of money, Benholdt-Thomsen contrasts life seeking use value and natural growth on the one hand with death seeking value in itself and economic growth on the other (p. 217).

Benholdt-Thomsen exhorts readers to "shift from money orientation to a subsistence orientation" (p. 223). The latter, she continues, "is not a model, or a Utopia, or a dream of a golden age, but a concept of action aimed at setting new and different processes in motion" (p. 224) which would conform to principles such as the following:

- Priority is given to the useful, to what is needed.
- Small has priority over big.
- Personal relationships are better than anonymous ones.
- Decentralized solutions are better than centralized ones.
- The local takes precedence over the international. (p. 224)

She contrasts this approach that promotes the acknowledgement and valorization of urban subsistence strategies, the democratization of urban networks of exchange, and the resuscitation of linkages between urban areas and the surrounding countrysides, with the approach of corporate globalization that saturates the linguistic landscapes of the 21st century, whereby the "necessities of daily life – food, services, labour power, communication and even social contacts – are transformed into commodities marketed and sold to us by the big corporations" (p. 225).

In her contribution to the Benholdt-Thomsen et al. (2001) volume Renate Klein (2001) reconsiders the feminist slogan 'Our Bodies – Ourselves' that encapsulated the movement for women's emancipation in the 1960s and 1970s. While acknowledging the real gains made in terms of women's control over their bodies as a result of feminist activism before the 1980s, Klein demonstrates how globalization and the use of biotechnology are poised to reverse some of these gains, for example, in areas such as cyborg implants and in-vitro fertilization along with other new reproductive technologies. Through the propagation on billboards and the rest of the media of what she calls a "repro-business gospel", these technologies are marketed to women as

solutions to the problem of their "infertility", but in fact they are predominantly designed to benefit men and their obsession with "their biological linage" (Klein, 2001, p. 93-94).

Klein advises us to step back and think about contemporary theories and technologies that are supposedly in the interest of women. With great relevance to the research upon which this dissertation is based, her questions as a woman include the following: "have we become texts without contexts"? (p. 95). It is because of globalization, she argues, that nowadays we have "'gods' in the labs" (p. 96). The "techno world", she continues, is filled with "medical violence against women, and will, (…) remove the decision-making power of whether to have children or not – and how many and what sex – from women" (p. 96). We are confronted with a new normal where "only the perfect child will be allowed to be 'born'". This is what she presents as "the dissociation of people from 'real' life", in a "cyberdream" which in reality is a nightmare for women (p. 97) because it ushers in an era where a new "cybermatricide" threatens a "final patriarchal takeover" of human reproduction (p. 98). The alternative, she asserts, is "a grounded whole/self, resisting fragmentation and dissociation (…) [for the sake of the] "dignity of mind/soul/self" (pp. 99-100).

Challenging such common misconceptions of the Caribbean as a predominantly English-speaking region (Oostindie & Klinkers, 2003) and the tendency, even among academics, to underestimate the impact of the *Maafa* (the African Holocaust, see Nehusi, 2000), Allahar (2005) describes and unpacks the advantages and disadvantages of living in the Caribbean in general, and in Puerto Rico in particular, where:

> non-sovereign Caribbean states [such as Puerto Rico] (…) have a higher standard of living than the independent states, which leads some to make the perverse claim for continued colonization (…) [and where] local or indigenous economic development is

> virtually nonexistent. The higher standards of living are thus quite precarious and artificial and could crash any time the colonial power decided to withdraw (….) [T]he Caribbean (…) is a political project (…) of entrenched interests, whether of a class, race or gendered nature (…) [consisting of societies] constructed on the politics of social inequality that are directly tied their statuses as dependent capitalist satellites of imperialist centres in an increasingly globalized world (pp. 132-133).

In terms of how this plays out in Puerto Rico, Allahar (2005, p. 132) observes that the island's population seems to be fairly equally divided between those who favor full integration into the US and those who favor maintaining their present colonial status, with a small percentage voting for outright independence.

In his discussion of linguistic, cultural and identificational erasure, Allahar (2005) stresses t that the rhizomatic linguistic, cultural and identificational repertoires are fluently deployed by people in the Caribbean, which makes it very difficult to pretend that there are monolithic categories of language, culture and identification, not only in the region, but also anywhere else in the world. Because of this, the erasures that result when people are misled into believing in and adhering to false notions such as "pure" languages, "pure' cultures" and "pure" identities are perhaps more difficult to achieve in the Caribbean than elsewhere:

> [E]nriched by the process of creolization, the cosmopolitanism of the average Caribbean person is also well recognized: 'No Indian from India, no European, no African can adjust with greater ease and naturalness to new situations' (Lamming, 1960, p. 34) (…) as a concept or notion 'the Caribbean' can also be seen to have a marvellous elasticity that defies the imposition of clear geographic boundaries, has no distinct religious

tradition, no agreed-upon set of political values, and no single cultural orientation" (Allahar, 2005, p. 125).

Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Socioeconomic Class, and Intersectionality

The past decade has witnessed a rapidly growing body of scholarly work focused on the dialectical and mutually co-constitutive relationship between discourse on the one hand and the categories that enable systems of domination such as race and gender on the other. It has been convincingly demonstrated that while racism racializes people and their discourse, people and their discourse also "language" (discursively generate) race, and that where one process begins and the other ends is an impossible question to answer. This means that not only does racism perpetuate the racialization of language and the racing of people (for example, by assigning them to categories such as "black" and "white"), but also that racialized language perpetuates racism and the racing of people (for example, by creating and perpetuating linguistic categories such as "black" and "white"). The same processes can be said to be at work where gender is concerned, so that while patriarchy genders people and their discourse, people and their discourse also "language" (discursively generate) gender.

Some of the most recent work on the complicated relationships between race and discourse can be found in Alim et al. (2020), who demonstrate the need for linguists and others to question and upend existing understandings of the intersectionalities among categories such as language, identity, ethnicity and race. Within a 'raciolinguistics' framework, one strategy that they recommend for doing this is:

viewing race through the lens of language and language through the lens of race to better understand them as co-constitutive processes (…) [because race] is created out of

> continuous and repeated discourses emerging from individuals and institutions within political economic systems and everyday interactions (p. 2).

This new approach has particular relevance for the Caribbean in general and Puerto Rico in particular, because, as Faraclas and Delgado (2021) point out, the Caribbean played a central role in the emergence of the racialization of modern Western societies and its "histories of genocide, enslavement, apartheid, occupation, dispossession, nationalism, capitalism and various forms of colonialism, as well as (…) [their] contemporary manifestations" (Alim et al., 2020, p. 2). Faraclas and Delgado (2021) demonstrate how, for Europe, the first successful transition to capitalism took place on the sugar plantations in the Caribbean. They also show how this transition would have been impossible without the transformation of Caribbean societies from pluriethnic, plurilingual, pluricultural pre-colonial societies, first to "societies with race" under the pre-capitalist colonial paradigm of the Spanish, and then to completely "racialized societies" under the capitalist colonial regimes of the Dutch and the English, in which chattel enslavement was determined by African ancestry.

Alim et al. (2020) incorporate various key insights from the pioneering work on decolonial linguistics carried out by Severo and Makoni (2015), including the following:

- languages are historically and politically invented by a complex colonial apparatus that overlaid language, race, power and religion in specific ways
- the metalanguage used to frame communicative practices is historically invented and cannot be considered separately from the "objects" they describe and invent
- the colonial linguistics that helped to shape languages had material effects on language policies adopted by colonial powers, as in the role of education in the institutionalization

and systematization of languages, mainly by inserting literacy as a powerful representation of what counts as language

- the concepts of language should be submitted to continuous revision so that we avoid using colonial frameworks to describe and problematize historical power relations (pp. 4-5)

Alim et al.'s embodied understanding of intersectionality centers on the "need to analyze discourse and interaction as sites of formation of the harmful, intersecting ideologies of language, race, class, gender, sexuality, citizenship and religion" (p. 12). In his individual contribution to the Alim et al. volume Kroskrity (2020) presents language ideologies as "beliefs, feelings, and conceptions about language structure and use which often index the political economic interests of individual speakers, ethnic and other interest groups, and nation-states" (p. 69). Kroskrity also mentions cases of ideological erasure under the colonial gaze, such as in Whorf's (1940) treatment of Native Americans as a race, whereby "languages and cultures are mocked, appropriated, or otherwise denigrated. Is racist language only a matter of the speaker's intent, or is it also—and perhaps more importantly—a matter of its social consequences?" (p. 82). Here the question of overt versus covert racism is highlighted. Kroskrity deepens our understanding of covert racism by going beyond the question of whether harm is inflicted consciously or unconsciously to more systematic levels of bias, stating that the term "covert" must take on "an additional meaning apart from its normal meaning in linguistic research of presupposed, or taken-for-granted (….) [because] not all forms of 'covert' linguistic racism are necessarily attributable to the unthinking, habitual response of speakers" (p. 83).

In their chapter in the same volume, Rosa and Flores (2020), promote a "raciolinguistic perspective which interrogates the historical and contemporary co-naturalization of language and

race" (p. 90), by highlighting how "raciolinguistic ideologies that organized (…) colonial relations continue to shape the world order in the postcolonial era by framing racialized subjects' language practices as inadequate for complex thinking processes needed to navigate the global economy on the one hand, and as targets of anxieties about authenticity and purity on the other" (p. 93). In her contribution, Urcioli (2020) argues that "racialization as it now exists spread throughout the world over the last two to three centuries as a modernity project" (Urcioli, 2020, p. 109). This has particular repercussions in relation to the research upon which this dissertation is based, because, one of the key effects of this project is that "racializing discourses … emerge in popular media (…) [such] as advertising" (p. 115).

In the same volume, Smalls (2020) explains what she conceptualizes as 'raciosemiotics'. In her view, this constitutes a new semiological approach to raciolinguistics which explores "the ways race, signs, and the body co-construct one another" (Smalls, 2020, p. 233). She provides an example of this approach from work that she published in 2018, in which she demonstrated the ways by which the semiotic perpetuation of Whiteness takes place. While acknowledging and incorporating Crenshaw's (1989) intersectionality perspective, Smalls also considers Fanon and Bakhtin, who perceived that "the body and its parts serve as imperative signifiers for categorization and also as diacritics of any sign that passes through or near the body (especially embodied qualities)" (p. 243). Some of her insights that are most relevant to the theme of this dissertation have to do with switching our focus from the production of discourse to the perception of discourse:

> Raciolinguistic ideology allows us to apply Butler's warning that "The visual field is not neutral to the question of race; it is itself a racial formation, an episteme, hegemonic and forceful" (1993:17) to our understandings of listening subjects and encourages us to treat

> them as historically, politically, and culturally situated interpretants who consciously or unconsciously attend to "speakers'" bodies (as interpretants). Just as we are taught how to speak and are inculcated with culturally mediated ideologies that frame 'ways of speaking,' we are taught how to listen and the same ideologies of speaking condition our 'ways of listening.' Butler's examination of the epistemes that provided the ideological infrastructure for a semiosis of King's beaten Black masculine body as 'imminently (and immanently) violent', where 'raised vocal volume, flared nostrils, exposed breast cleavage, etc. easily become qualia of abstract, culturally-construed phenomena like 'dangerousness,' 'primitivity,' or 'hypersexuality.'" (p. 252)

West et al. (1997) elaborate on the theme of intersectionality and discourse, stating, for example, that "gender is accomplished *in* discourse" (West et al., 1997, p. 119). They focus on the gendering of discourses and bodies over the course of a young woman's experiences with the dominant discourses in education and the media, in particular, those media most heavily impacted by advertising. Teachers are singled out as instrumental in the gendering process by their selection of texts that propagate cis-hetero-normative models for their students who are gendered as female. This prepares these same students to accept and perpetuate the gendering discourses that the symbolic elites who control the advertising industry generate to guarantee that these young women are sufficiently programmed to perceive commercial discourse aimed at them in such a way that they feel compelled to purchase and consume the promoted products. West et al. provide evidence for their arguments from magazines and television shows that demonstrate "how economic relations work together with other social relations in capitalist societies to define women and men in particular ways and to shape their identities and practices" (p. 123). They demonstrate how "discourse focuses readers' or viewers' reading or viewing in

specific ways (….) the genre determines what those who look through it will see and the angle from which they will see it" (p. 126). They also assert that electronic communications are an indicator of how "traditional power relations between women and men are being quickly established in cyberspace" (p. 137).

After noting how queer linguistics goes beyond concepts like sexuality and gender and intersects with other categories such as race, Leap (2012) argues that non-hetero-normative desires, practices and identities are related to public discourse. One of the interviews that Leap carried out in Cape Town, South Africa, involved a man who self-identified as "coloured" and "same-sex". The interviewee interpreted his being rejected from a men's private club as a "race thing". Connecting this to a "refused subject formation" (p. 561), Leap hypothesizes that had the man admitted to being "gay" in response to a question to that effect posed by a bartender at the club, he would not have been thrown out. Leap continues to unpack this intersectional conundrum, by also hypothesizing that, for the interviewee, answering in the affirmative was problematic, because "saying 'yes' to the barman's question would also admit that sexual sameness erases racial differences" (561), which is not true, since people raced as "white" are not usually asked such questions when they enter the same club. Not only had his refusal to answer the question kept him and his companion out of the club, but it also "underscored the ideological stance expressed in the door man's act of refusal: gay is implicitly a white person's status" (561).

Alim et al. (2016) define raciolinguistics as "an umbrella term [used] to refer to an emerging field dedicated to bringing to bear the diverse methods of linguistic analysis (….) to ask and answer critical questions about the relations between language, race, and power across diverse ethnoracial contexts and societies" (Alim et al., 2016 in Alim et al., 2020, p. 291). They

define the term cisheteropatriarchy as “an ideological system that naturalizes normative views of what it means to “look” and “act” like a “straight” man and marginalizes women, femininity, and all gender non-conforming bodies that challenge the gender binary; it is a system based on the exploitation and oppression of women and sexual minorities” (p. 293). In their work, these authors study the complex trans-performances of young people that in one way or another both challenge and reinforce racial and gender norms. For example, Alim et al. (2020) are interested in “how Hip Hop emcees creatively perform and are performed into racialized, gendered and sexualized identities in freestyle rap ciphers in strikingly similar ways across the Atlantic (….) [whereby] these youth challenge (and sometimes reproduce) racist discourses but also (…) [perpetuate] racialized masculinities (…) [and] reproduce other forms of oppression” (p. 292). In the process they mention the work of Butler (1990) as they ‘highlight “the power of language in interaction to (trans)form dominant ideologies or race, gender, sexuality, and the body” (p. 293).

The **‘Jíbarx***’ and Identificational Repertoires in Puerto Rico*

Traditionally, linguistic varieties have been studied within a binary perspective highlighting so-called standardized languages and marginalizing other linguistic varieties (Faraclas & Delgado, 2021). When observing the Linguistic Landscape (LL), a term coined by Landry and Bourhis (1997), one often notices the use of language with implicit discursive (or hegemonic) power, and the use of images often complements such language. In this section, I examine such phenomena in Puerto Rico, specifically in literary texts and on billboards in cities like Carolina, Guaynabo and San Juan, paying particular attention to language and images associated with the rural lifestyles that have become a thing of the past for the great majority of the population of the island.

Historically, the intellectual elites in Puerto Rico have introduced and deployed the figure of the *jíbarx* to represent an almost mythical version of Puerto Rican identity (Scarano, 1996). I intend to demonstrate how the *jíbarx* is constantly re-created by the local symbolic elites in both paper and digital media as a "context model" (van Dijk, 2012). From a post-colonial linguistics and post-creole creolistics perspective (Faraclas & Delgado, 2021) and through Multimodal Discourse Analysis (Kress, 2012), my observations suggest how language and image are used as hegemonic tools to maintain the wealth and domination of a few people through ethnocentric, patriarchal and economic exploitation of the island's inhabitants.

Some Puerto Ricans may recall the use of the expression "*El jíbaro es cosa mala*" from the past century. Even today there are Puerto Ricans who use it to "other" anyone, or anything associated with the countryside and its lifestyles. Raised in one of the many *barriadas* in Guaynabo ("City"), I spent my younger years constantly looking forward to becoming a man of "progress", which is the opposite of the *jíbarx*. Indeed, this was presented to me as one of the main purposes of my academic studies. School was seen as the tool that I could use to wash away the brown and black dust left on me by my ancestors. While in secondary school, some teachers warned me about hegemonic abuses of power in the education system in general and in textbooks in particular. Although those warnings remained in the back of my mind, I decided to study the physical sciences, where I learned the patriarchal alchemical methods of Western science that work against nature instead of with nature, that poison our biosphere, and that devalue women's work and knowledge. As the years have gone by, I have decided that it is time to move in a different direction, one in which I might actually self-identify as a *jíbaro*. But to do so, I have found it necessary to do some linguistic archeology.

I start this study with some introductory approaches to Caribbean identificational repertoires as outlined by Peter A. Roberts (2008) in his book about race, power and language and the effects of colonial era contact on "Caribbean identity", in which he recounts a general "New World" history that includes a colonization process involving two major population groups: "outsider/newcomer" and "resident" (Roberts, 2008, p. vii-viii). Roberts points out that the first group "was more driven and quickly overpowered" the other (p. viii). "People of the islands", he continues, "did not dominate the media that broadcast their identity" (p. viii) and their notions of language, culture and identity did not correspond to those of the European conquerors.

Referring to European norms, Roberts (2008) affirms that "in the modern, political world human beings are automatically identified with a country, and national identity is generally established by place of birth or place of residence" (p. 1). Language, he continues, "can sharply distinguish between insider and outsider through difference in accent, idiom, structure and word" (p. 1). When addressing Caribbean identity, Roberts is aware of how imposed or distorted identities have impacted the peoples of the region, whereby, for example, "the economic view and the exotic view of the islands complemented each other throughout the colonial period, thereby maintaining an external viewpoint as the wellspring of their identity" (p. 2).

Roberts (2008) also highlights how the term 'creole' was adopted during the colonial period in order to summarize how concepts "such as 'mixed', 'hybrid', 'mutated', 'syncretic', 'blends', 'remodelling', 'corruptions', 'borrowings', 'imitations', 'fragmented', and 'plural' have been applied to Caribbean societies" (p. 3). Elaborating on the concept of identity itself, he contends that identity "is based on two fundamental factors – the perception of sameness/difference and the instinctiveness of man [sic] to be a social being" (p. 3). In cases

where a group feels sameness (especially linguistic sameness) among themselves, he sustains, there can be perceptions of "others" as being "abnormal/ strange/ foreign" (p. 4).

Roberts (2008) then explains how the formation of communities (mainly of a linguistic nature), can be accompanied by notions of inferiority and superiority. "What language or variety of language they speak (…) links them to a community and separates them from others" (p. 5). Then, he states that is not so much a behavioral attitude that leads to group "sameness", but "the senses of sight (colour/ race) and sound (language) that provide the initial and usually most deep-seated conclusions about (…) identity" (p. 5), which he asserts become the main basis for assigning a name to a nation or "civilization."

Pointing out that "new identities" arise from "genetic change" and "ecological change" (10), Roberts (2008) singles out three theories of identity that had been associated with people in the Caribbean before the 20th century: 1) transmission theory; 2) contrastive theory; and 3) environmental theory. He presents transmission theory as being "part of the consciousness of the colonists (…) used with both negative and positive intent" (p. 12), which operated by "creating another identity in one's own image either by transfer of characteristics, by edict or by model" (10), to which adhered "those who aspired or presumed to be Spanish or came under Spanish control" (pp. 13-14).

Contrastive theory is interpreted by Roberts (2008) as "creating 'otherness' either for others or for oneself" (pp. 13). For example, Roberts cites Elliot's (1998) notion of the power of a "European imprint" that "renders non-European groups (…) and their culture, ineffective and marginal" (p. 11), so that "the general identity *Indian* was thus accepted by Europeans as a label for all the indigenous peoples of the New World" (p. 11). By citing Adorno (1988), he elaborates on "otherness" and potential *fronteras de la identidad* (p. 13). Adorno's point of view about "the

other" in the Spanish colonies is similar to the one prevalent in Puerto Rico under the colonial power of the United States of America. "The other version of contrastive theory (…) [which is] defined as alterity by Gikandi (1996) highlights the colonized" (p. 14), with "the coloniser creating otherness and the colonised reacting against the coloniser" (p. 14). In Puerto Rico today, such labels as *gringo* and *boricua* seem to reflect this type of dynamic.

Environmental theory "sees group and national identity as fashioned by local circumstances" and, in its most extreme form, becomes ecological determinism (p. 14). Roberts (2008) cites Elliott (1998) as mentioning cases where identity in the Americas has been defined in terms of a monolithic American environment, as well as citing Diop (1981, 1991), who quotes a Greek physician who believed that the sun was the main reason for some stereotypical attributions of good humor or "rhythm" to all of the peoples of Africa (p. 15). Roberts sums up this theory by stressing that: "as the elements of environments change, identities change" (p. 15).

In terms of "cultural identity", Roberts (2008) returns to Diop, who "identifies *historical continuity* as one of the factors that contribute to (…) [its] formation" and who sees historical factors as '"the cultural cement that unifies the disparate elements of a people to make them into a whole'" (pp. 18-19). Roberts agrees with Diop, who considers language to be one "of the major elements of cultural identity" (p. 19), which can be seen as being established and maintained by mechanisms of "memorization" and "accumulation" in people's consciousness" (p. 22). He concludes that oral and written historical records "can be used, abused, manipulated and rejected" for the purpose of constructing identities (p. 23). Also, Roberts makes reference to Bourdieu (1991) and some of his ideas on "symbolic power" specifically in relation to the notion that "what creates the power of words and slogans, a power capable of maintaining or subverting the social order, is the belief in the legitimacy of words and of those who utter them" (p. 21).

This is related to van Dijk's (2012, 2015) notion of "access to discourse", which will become an important consideration in the present study.

Puerto Rican Literature: "*La Juega de Gallos o El Negro Bozal*" and "*La Carreta*"

In the following section, I review material from two Puerto Rican theatrical works, some reviews of those same plays, and some academic essays, highlighting the use of words like *criollx*, *jíbarx* and *boricua*. The two plays selected illustrate how the identity-related tropes connected with those terms have been constantly re-created from at least the 18th century up until the present day. In one play, "*La juega de gallos o el negro bozal*" (Caballero Requena, 2015, [1852]), the focal identity is performed by the character Seño Epifanio. The other play, which is titled "*La carreta*" (Marqués, 2013, [1951]) presents "*tres estampas boricuas*" depicting the lives of a migratory family of *jíbarxs*. *Boricua* may be seen as a transgressive identity in public discourse today (e.g., on billboards), and can refer to and be related to a particular mix of races and cultures, including those referred to by the terms *criollx* and *jíbarx*. Of course, this hasn't prevented the symbolic elites from co-opting the term *boricua* to advance their own hegemonic agendas.

Francisco Scarano (1996) is one of the academic researchers whose ideas have informed my understanding of the social connotation of the word *jíbarx* today. Though Scarano's perspective is historical, his study contains facts about the original use of the word in the Puerto Rican context. What he denotes as a "*jíbaro* masquerade", is presented as an "identity dialectic" which in turn reproduces "a common language of identity between elites and plebeians [sic]" (Scarano, 1996, p. 1423). He argues how the discursive interactions between the elite population and the other inhabitants of the island before the beginning of the 19th century led to a (re-

)construction of subaltern self-identification as *jíbarx*, and how both groups eventually embraced that identity.

Newspaper records from the beginning of the 19th century are the sources used by Scarano (1996) to illustrate the *jíbaro* masquerade, as represented by the authors of three poems, which were written in a linguistic variety that was supposed to resemble the peasants' ways of speaking. These poems articulated a mode of elite resistance on the part of those who sympathized with the liberal party that was emerging on the island at the time. Scarano sees the use of such masquerade language by the creole elites as a strategy to reposition themselves in society, while maintaining the island's colonial status under the Spanish. Nonetheless, Scarano also presents evidence for interracial gatherings where the collective acceptance and embrace of *jíbarx* self-identification took place.

Even though some Puerto Rican communities could still have been characterized at the turn of the 19th century as what González-López (2013), Faraclas and Delgado (2021b) and others refer to as "cohabitation societies" out of colonial control, Spanish colonial rule had been in a process of relatively rapid extension and consolidation since the mid-1700s. Therefore, it is no accident that by the 1850s, when Caballero's (2015, [1852]) "*La juega de gallos o el negro bozal*" appears, social divisions are one of its main topics. Some academics visualize this play within a "silencing" frame where African ancestry and lifeways are dismissed (Villagómez, 2005; Girón, 2006). When reading/ viewing the play, questions such as these may arise: 1) Who is the mother of Rosita, the daughter of a *hacendado* from Arecibo? 2) Was Rosita's *crianza* by Nazaria, an enslaved woman of African descent, compensated by a wage? 3) How can all of the other characters in the play understand the variety used by the *negro bozal* José? 4) If Nazaria is an enslaved woman of African descent, but speaks what seems to be the same variety as Rosita,

could she be considered *criolla* or *jíbara* by a 21st century reader/ viewer? and 5) Since the play only refers to a man as a *jíbaro*, is the term also being used to advance the patriarchal agenda of many of the intellectuals at the time it was written?

Skipping over one hundred years of literary production, I now mention a particular feature of René Marqués' "*La carreta. Tres estampas boricuas*." (Marqués, 2013, [1951]) which has been considered to be a Puerto Rican national play per excellence (Fiet, 2004). I pay particular attention to t how Marqués uses the term *boricua* in the sub-title. Over the past three decades, I have hypothesized that at least some identificational concepts associated with the term today were initially used/ imposed to categorize Puerto Ricans who migrated to the United States from the mid-20th century onward, and from there this expression was eventually brought back to Puerto Rico. I do not have detailed evidence of how exactly the term was used at the time this play was written, nor do I believe it was just beginning to be used then. It should be noted that this playwright underwent a considerable part of his formal education in the city of New York. In any case, apart from in the subtitle, the word *boricua* is only used during the third act, while the family is in New York City.

Tato Laviera (Laviera, 1979, p. 2) asserts that "*en el fondo del newyorican definitivamente hay un puertorriqueño*." Without paying attention to his non-inclusive language, I in some sense agree with Laviera to the extent that I consider 'Newyoricans' to be the *jíbarxs* that migrated from Puerto Rico to the United States after World War II, and for decades have kept on doing so. These are the same *jíbarxs* that Marqués put in the spotlight in "*La carreta*" and its "*estampas boricuas*". Now, it is fitting to ask how different the linguistic varieties used by most Puerto Ricans today actually are from those recreated in the plays mentioned in this study. Does Caribbean Spanish, as most linguists claim, include the varieties spoken in Puerto

Rico, or is this just a misleading label for at least some repertoires used on the island resemble Iberian lexifier Creoles such as Papiamentu more than they resemble Standard Castilian Spanish? Are linguists foregrounding the language of the island's elites, while erasing those of the rest of the population? When observing billboards in Puerto Rico, how are these different lenses on the varieties used in Puerto Rico deployed to point out and impose identificational constructs pertaining to Puerto Rico as a nation? In the present study, I contend that the creole connotation of words such as *jíbarx* and *boricua* has been systematically bleached and erased in the hegemonic project of reconstructing 21st century Puerto Rico as a society which can be raced as [plus white] (von Werlhof, 2001; Alim et al., 2020).

Although *jíbarxs* are prototypically associated with the rural zones of Puerto Rico, Scarano (1996) shows that their image has been appropriated and reformulated by those in socially privileged positions in a move that exemplifies coloniality in action. In his article, discusses the etymology of the term *jíbarx* and its negative connotations in Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Mexico. His approach is like that of Peter Roberts (2008), who also mentions its associations with the negatively stereotyped "*shuar*" or indigenous peoples of Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela. Through a translanguaged lens, I explore new alternatives to approach the concept of *jíbarx* from a postcolonial perspective that includes pluri-lingualism, pluri-culturalism and pluri-identification. Scholars like Scarano seem to fall back on the binary, mutually exclusive and conjunctively exhaustive dichotomies of systems of patriarchal, ethnocentric and plundering domination, such as "civilized vs. uncivilized", "city vs. country", "Spanish vs. Criollo", "free black people vs. enslaved black people", "White vs. Taíno", etc. When such historically-charged expressions as *jíbarx* are used in the ways prescribed by the symbolic elites, marginalized peoples' and women's historical, linguistic, cultural and

identificational agency are normally erased (Benholdt-Thomsen et al., 2001; Faraclas & Delgado, 2021).

Scarano's arguments describe the linguistic variety put into the mouths of *jíbarxs* by the symbolic elites in terms of "a disdained and difficult peasant vernacular" (1996: 1400). I interpret this position as reflecting a binary approach that juxtaposes a normative standardized "correct" Spanish to a "peasant vernacular." Another area that he explores is the relationship between the *jíbarxs* and the indigenous peoples of Puerto Rico, asserting that when the elites began to redefine *jíbarx*, a shift occurred away from any African influence and toward indigenous influence (p. 1402). He mentions Manuel Alonso's recreation of the *jíbaro* trope and how it became convenient to embrace it towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Alonso's text "*El gibaro*" (1971, [1849]) incorporated an idealized Puerto Rican national trope to be deployed by the elites in resisting both Spanish and North American domination over the island. The trope of the *jibarx* was relegitimized in 20th - century Puerto Rican society, first by CHAPTER (Cotto, 2020) and then through the media and the system of formal education. In my research, I aim to demonstrate how such an image has become a recurrent theme in the LL of the 21st century, specifically on billboards.

Later on in the same text, Scarano (1996) mentions African descended peoples on the island, but almost as if they were foreigners. When reading the following verses that supposedly typified their speech centuries ago, one is struck by how similar they are to varieties still in use by people of European, Indigenous and/or African descent in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Cuba today:

Vamos Suidadanos	Let's go citizens
jasta ei pueblo oi	to town today

poique tio Juan Congo	because Uncle John Congo
tocara ei tamboi.	will play the drums (1409)

African ancestry and customs are invoked here with the mention of "*tio Juan Congo*" and his "*tamboi*". Such images will be readdressed in my study of billboards today in Puerto Rico, context models (van Dijk, 2012) and the hegemonic tools of coloniality.

There are two other aspects of Scarano (1996) that I am interested in: what I call "*jíbarx* drag" and festivities associated with *jíbarxs*. When doing random internet searches related to the term *jíbaro*, one may encounter a pair of self-portraits by European descended Luis Paret y Alcazar in 1775-1776. Of the two pieces, Scarano (1996) includes one with lots of white color and drag-like attire in it, and refers to it as an example of the classical *jíbarx.* Today, this image and similarly Eurocentric depictions are common in many contexts: schools, festivities, official events, as well as on billboards and in the rest of the media. Scarano subsumes this *jíbarx* drag under his concept of "*jíbaro* masquerade" as a possible starting point for the construction of a proto-national icon, which includes long skirts and *vejigantes*. The first, worn by women to dance; and the other, a grotesque character associated with country people. Over the centuries, the *jíbarx* image has been laundered for acceptability, from being presented as a grotesque figure to being depicted a cheerful and sociable person, and bleached to erase all but European descent. That said, the *jíbarx,* even in this domesticated form, retains gender ambiguous clothing and remains transgressive in his/her own ways.

Martí Carvajal (2006) offers another perspective on *jíbarxs*. Though his observations dialogue with those of Scarano, he researches the concept from the 16th century to the third quarter of the 17th century. The terms *jíbaro* and *criollo* are used throughout his article, even in the title. Taking the Abbad y Lasierra (1866) chronicles as evidence of the lack of

communication between Puerto Rico and Spain, Martí Carvajal discusses the coincidence of the notion of *contrabando* with that of *criollo*. This marginalization parallels that of *jíbarxs* who were mainly engaged in subsistence economies of abundance, outside of the formal economy. One observation by Alexander O'Reylly during the last decades of the 18th century cited by Martí Carvajal states that "*con cinco días de trabajo, tiene una familia plátanos para todo el año*" (2006: 35). Today, at the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century, Puerto Ricans fantasize about winning the lottery and living like the ruling classes. This is articulated nicely in the advertising for the national lottery on the billboard depicted in Figure 1, that features a bunch of plantains with dollar bills coming out from its stems.

Figure 1 Billboard Advertising the Lottery (Source: Photograph taken by the author in San Juan, January 2019)

Martí Carvajal (2006, p. 35) also cites Jopling and his description of *jíbaro* houses, translating them as *casas de los criollos*. Here we find once again the (perhaps) unintentional association of the words *jíbarx* and *criollx*. But of even greater importance are: 1) the link made between *jíbarxs* and subsistence (Mies, 2001; Benholdt-Thomsen et al., 2001); and 2) the link made between pluri-ethnicity and *jíbarxs* who are said in the same passage to have been of "*ascendencia india, negra y blanca.*" This portrayal is different from that of Manuel Alonso's (1971, [1849]) portrayal of the *gibaro*.

One of Martí Carvajal's final statements demonstrates how, even in relatively well-informed narratives such as his, the prosperous subsistence economies and the subversive pluri-ethnic bloodlines of the *jibarxs* of Puerto Rico are glibly erased, misinterpreted and reduced under the colonial gaze to the catch phrases that pervade the discourse of even the most 'enlightened' scholars who write about the colonial Caribbean, such as: "*isla pobre*;" "*condiciones muy adversas*," and a lack of "*una creciente multitud Africana"*:

> *Puerto Rico no era un gigantesco cañaveral, salpicado de un sinnúmero de haciendas e ingenios dedicados al cultivo y procesamiento de la caña de azúcar, ni estaba poblado por una creciente multitud africana. Tampoco hemos visto evidencia de la tan mencionada dependencia en la que, supuestamente, España mantuvo encadenada a la Isla. Puerto Rico que surge de estas relaciones es una isla marginada y pobre. Una isla en la cual su exigua población se vió obligada a ingeniárselas a adaptarse a condiciones muy adversas, para lograr subsistir.* (p. 42)

While it is true that during the first few centuries of its colonial history, Puerto Rico's involvement in the production of sugar and in the massive enslavement of people of African descent was not as great as in other islands of the Caribbean, most census evidence suggests that

well into the 1800s, the majority of Puerto Ricans were of African descent (Girón, 2006). But the posture that has been normalized when speaking about the ethnic make-up of Puerto Rico from the 1500s to the 1700s, which is also unfortunately to some extent adopted by Martí Carvajal in this passage, not only minimalizes the African input into the bloodlines of Puerto Rico, but also juxtaposes the situation of Puerto Rico to neighboring islands, which are depicted in typically colonial mono-ethnic and Euro-centric terms as being somehow overrun with "*una creciente multitud Africana.*" But perhaps even more serious is the extent to which Martí Carvajal completely invisibilizes the ethnic, linguistic and cultural agency of marginalized peoples of African, Indigenous and European descent in creating the bloodlines and linguistic and cultural repertoires that would eventually be appropriated by the ruling classes of the island under the figure of the *jibarx*, whose African and Indigenous roots are more often than not denied, trivialized, or folklorized to the point of becoming museum pieces, as if they were extinct exotic animals.

As mentioned earlier, there are other demonyms that refer to a particular person or group of people in Puerto Rico and its diaspora. In her thesis, Feliciano-Santos (2011, pp. 43-44) includes almost five hundred interviews conducted in Puerto Rico and New York City about people's self-identifications and lists some of the terms used, including *Taino*, *Indio*, *Boricua*, *Jíbaro*, and *Caribe*. Feliciano-Santos introduces an approach worth mentioning here, namely, "the ways in which social actors manage, transform, and challenge normative social categories and identities through their linguistic practices" (47). This relates to my initial observation about Puerto Ricans and the academics interested in their identificational repertoires, when they self-identify as *criollx*, *jíbarx* or *boricua*. In this dissertation, I focus on the second term, but from a

postcolonial creolistic perspective that includes women, people of African descent, and other marginalized groups to the pluri-lingual varieties expressed in public in the Puerto Rico LL.

One of Feliciano-Santos' research objectives is to elucidate:

> the image of the Jíbaro, (…) [and] illustrate how attempts to absorb Puerto Rico's rural populations have served to discursively erase the Island's indigenous population. Furthermore, (…) ideologies of racial democracy, as circulated within particular political campaigns around the mid-twentieth century, precluded claims to being indio while making banal any African contribution to Puerto Rican culture. (Feliciano-Santos, 2011, p. 55).

These ideas are upended by Scarano (1996), when he assigns the following features to '*jíbaros*': "*son blancos, negros, mulatos, o mestizos*" (p. 60). Feliciano-Santos uses the other 1777 self-portrait of Luis Paret Alcazar to confirm the stereotype already established in the 18th century about '*jíbarxs*'. After including descriptions such as "uneducated" and "rustic," Feliciano-Santos mentions their typical clothes, hats, machetes, etc. (p. 61). Mention of women's clothing, however, is notably absent. The wearing of the *pava* hat is sensible in a tropical climate, and also fashionable. It is therefore no accident that the *pava* appears in the above-mentioned self-portrait.

Feliciano-Santos also critiques DIVEDCO and its re-invention of *jíbarxs* as pale-skinned males who wore such *pavas*. Today private schools on the island celebrate a Puerto Rican Week that culminates with simplistic personifications of *jíbarxs*, a practice shared by public schools as well. What is being projected on huge electronic screens in San Juan and cities around it relates to the 'context models' already learned or assumed in the minds of the general Puerto Rican population today. For instance, the advertisement on the billboard in Figure 2 features a grain of white rice dressed up in white, including a white *pava*.

Figure 2 Billboard Advertising Rice (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Guaynabo, March 2019)

From a literary angle, Villagómez (2005) refers to "*La juega de gallos o el negro bozal*" to indicate the extent to which there has been "*silenciamiento del sujeto de origen africano en las letras puertorriqueñas del siglo XIX*" (7). I find this to be paradoxical. When reading or viewing this play, it is the secondary characters (who are raced as black) who start and end the drama. The play's title may allude to texts being written in Spain at the time, usually double tittles conjoined by *o*, such as "*Don Álvaro o la fuerza del sino*" by Ángel Saavedra (1835). Caballero's play has an explicit African element in its title, which describes one of the characters as the '*negro Jose*'. Falling into a colonial epistemic trap, Villagómez begins her thesis with the verses of Mario Benedetti, and when introducing this play, her words are at best non-committal regarding the social divisions that she claims silence African origins in Puerto Rican literature. According to her, the play "*presenta las imágenes de la vida del jíbaro puertorriqueño, el criollo adinerado, la mulata y del esclavo negro*" (Villagómez, 2005, p. 76). When one reviews the introduction to the characters by the playwright, after the name "Nazaria" the description is not *mulata* but *negrita*.

Angelina Morfi (1993) also reviews "*La juega de gallos o el negro bozal*" without coherent reference to social divisions. My objective here is not to deny such divisions, but instead to question how they are presented by scholars and possibly repeated in other contexts, like secondary school classrooms. Morfi describes some of the characters with the following epithets: "*el hacendado, el jíbaro inculto y el padre autoritario*" and: "*el tipo don juanesco, el esclavo y la niña enamorada*" (Morfi, 1993, p. 87). Though the *jíbaro*, is included, what is reinforced is the notion that somehow the *jíbaro* lacks "culture." Another paradox. José has a solo and sings about his reality. Music is an element of any country's culture. Also, in her introductory paragraphs, Morfi does not mention the other enslaved character: Nazaria. Instead,

Manuel Alonso's *gibaro* is her foundational reference when she observes that: "*en el gallero se puede ver la intención de reproducir el habla campesina con sus rasgos fonéticos, tal como lo hizo antes Alonso*" (p. 88).

From a contemporary perspective, Faraclas and Delgado (2021) review the exchanges - linguistic, cultural and identificational - that have occurred in what they call the Afro-Atlantic over the past five hundred years. They highlight how indigenous peoples from both sides of the Atlantic have come together in the Caribbean through "cohabitation" and have been able to communicate and share different ways of life. Lowell Fiet (2004) states that, "*en el caso del Caribe, el teatro es un tipo de cimarronaje especializado*" (Fiet, 2004, p. 44). The term *cimarronaje* can be related in interesting ways to the term "renegade." I am interested in considering how the initial *jíbarxs* could have been considered to be renegades, and how hegemonic discourses have been created by the symbolic elites to reshape the *jíbarx* in the interests of dominant classes, starting by assigning a particular linguistic variety to them. That said, there are still people today who self-identify as *jíbarxs* as part of their resistance to capitalism. The latter is evident when it comes to billboards, as a result of what Lyons calls the absent element in the LL. It is almost impossible to encounter a depiction of a *jíbarx* on Puerto Rican billboards which in any way reflects the subsistence sovereignty of this renegade *jíbarx* population, that could arguably have constituted the majority of the island's colonial era inhabitants until the 19th century.

When Fiet sheds light on the initial dramatic production on the island, he includes census data from places such as Loíza, a town whose inhabitants have traditionally included a high percentage of people of African ancestry. Referring to the beginning of the 18th century, he affirms that: "*la población siguió creciendo como resultado de los negros bozales importados de*

Africa [sic] o del Caribe no hispano, y de africanos criollos que llegaron para cumplir con la demanda de labor agrícola y doméstica dentro de la creciente y renovada economía y sociedad colonial." (2004, p. 87). There are two important things to note here. First, the mention of *negros bozales* and then, the mention of *africanos criollos*. This mention of *criollos* differs from most of the readings that one may find regarding the Spanish colonies in the Caribbean, where the norm is a European descended *criollo* who was born and/ or raised in the colonies. Fiet considers "*La juega de gallos o el negro bozal*" to be "*un estudio cultural muy importante*." He repositions some of the characters who are raced as black in the play as "*prominentes*," and focuses on Jose with his "*habla distinta y especifica*" (2004, p. 100). He also uses some ideas proposed by Peter Roberts at a conference in Puerto Rico in 1997 about artificial divisions among linguistic varieties attributed to *criollxs*, *jíbarxs* and *bozales.*

Using a linguistic approach, John Lipski (2001) discusses repertoires associated with *bozales* using the following argument: "Only a handful of texts (little more than a dozen) represent the Afro-Hispanic speech of Puerto Rican *bozales*, and only three are long enough to allow even a glimpse into what Africanized Spanish might actually have sounded like" (Lipski, 2001, p. 850). He also states that in the 19th century "the vast majority of black slaves in Puerto Rico were island-born and speaking Spanish with no second-language traits, although some ethnolinguistic markers such as key words or pronunciation variants may have remained" (p. 851).

When referring to "*La juega de gallos o el negro bozal*", Lipski affirms that it "combines scattered structures reminiscent of other Afro-Iberian creoles, set against a generally unremarkable bozal pidgin or learners' variety" (2001, p. 852). He exemplifies the latter with some dialog from the drama. After a few grammatical observations, he compares such

expressions to structures that could be encountered in "any foreign language classroom" (p. 853). After reviewing a few other texts, mainly poems, which I am not taking into consideration at this point, one of Lipski's conclusions is that "most cases point to authentic interference from one or more African languages, or - in a few texts -. of other Creole languages such as Papiamentu" (854).

Lipski focusses on the possibility of an "Afro Puerto Rican Spanish" as "part of a larger Caribbean Spanish Creole" (2001, pp. 856-857). One of his conclusions is that "Afro-Puerto Rican bozal language outlasted and outgrew slavery and oppression, to add its subtle touch to the life, literature, and language of all Boricuas" (p. 857). This directs me to associations between the terms *criollxs*, *jíbarxs* and now *boricuxs* in the contemporary Puerto Rico of the past six or seven decades. Lipski explicitly includes the "black" element in the lives of those who consider themselves *boricuas*, especially, as I have noted previously, those in the diaspora in the United States.

I cite here two brief exchanges from "*La juega de gallos o el negro bozal*," in order to raise questions such as: 1) How different are the linguistic repertoires of the enslaved from those of the *hacendadxs* or the *jíbarxs*? 2) Had it changed some one hundred years later when René Marqués wrote "*La carreta*" with his presentation of *jíbarxs* through "*estampas boricuas*"? and 3) Are there Puerto Rican linguistic varieties that have emerged from a constant mix of other Caribbean and North American varieties to become a Puerto Rican creole?

José: *Yo ba liberta a tí, Nazaria* (….) *Yo ta trabajando, y tajuntando dinero pa ti* (…)

Nazaria: *La paciencia me vas a acabar* (…) *si no te vas, se lo digo a la señorita en cuanto se levante.*

And in another scene:

Antolín: *Síño Epifanio. ¿Ya se han pesado los gallos?*

S. Epifanio: *Sí, señoi, y ejtan toj en su peso; ejcaibando ejtan poy salir a la gallera.*

Traditionally, cockfights have been associated with predominantly male gatherings. In "*La juega de gallos o el negro bozal*," this is also the case. The cockfight is the province of *bozal* men, while dancing is the province of *bozal* women. Although I do not address the legal controversies about cockfights in Puerto Rico today in this work, it is interesting to note that for some time the billboard in Figure 3 appeared on the island featuring a multi-colored rooster and the words "*PELEA POR MI*" [fight for me] which mirror the chants and prayers of Santería and other Afro-Indigenous spiritual traditions in Puerto Rico, in which the African Orishas in the garb of Catholic Santos are implored for aid in dealing with the battles and challenges of daily life.

This billboard shows how entrepreneurs get richer by manipulating the deepest emotional and spiritual needs of cock-fight enthusiasts, many of whom are of more African and/ or Indigenous descent than European descent. This manipulation has resulted in the destitution of many families on the island through game addiction. The hopes of people who are raced as [minus white] to somehow access the opportunities reserved for people raced as [plus white] through winning the lottery, winning a bet on a cockfight, or some other miraculous divine intervention is reflected in the billboard in Figure 3. It is also reflected in the text of "*La juega de gallos o el negro bozal"* cited above, in which all of the problems that emerge over the course of the play seem to be solved with the money that Francisco - an immigrant from Spain who is raced as white and gendered as male- has acquired through cockfighting.

Figure 3 Billboard Advertising Cock Fighting (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Guaynabo, March 2019)

In the 2013 edition of René Marqués' "*La carreta*" which was edited and annotated by Marithelma Costa, there are a great number of quotations that shed light on the topics covered in this dissertation, especially in relation to Lipski's association between Afro Puerto Rican *bozal* and *boricua*, and the black *criollo* mentioned by Fiet. Towards the end of the introduction, Costa quotes from an interview with Miriam Colon, who played one of the characters in the English version of the play produced in New York City (Costa in Marqués, 2013, [1951], p. 12). In other editorial notes, Costa includes another interview with the playwright and Francisco Arrivi (if the reference is correct), where Marqués' reference to the chronotopical frame for the three acts of the play as "*el campo boricua*" (Costa in Marqués, 2013, p. 21) is mentioned. Costa enumerates the first three editions of the play, and then shows that it is the first one, published in three volumes of the magazine *Asomante* from October 1951 to March 1952, that the author subtitled as "*Tres estampas boricuas*". She highlights the critique of this work by another Puerto Rican playwright, Enrique Laguerre, who did not agree with the notion of "*niño campesino*" and his language, describing the *jíbaros* as "*respetuosos*" when they speak. According to Costa, Miriam Colón thought that such linguistic varieties were a main source for artistic expression in the New York of the 1960s. While Nicolas Kanellos asserts that "*La Carreta Made a U Turn*" is the fourth act from the original play, Costa believes that it is written in "*una nueva lengua coloquial: el espanglish*" (Costa in Marqués, 2013, p. 41).

I focus on the third *estampa* of the play, when the characters have moved to the Bronx. Though they have kept the same *jíbarx* ways of speaking, they have added English varieties to their linguistic repertoires. Was this what the *negro bozal* from "*La juega de gallos o el negro bozal*" had to do when in the Spanish-speaking context of the Americas? Is it a *jíbarx* or *criollx* or *boricua* set of linguistic varieties deployed by those trying to resist the "capitalist machines"

mentioned in "*La carreta*"? I may not have the answers, but what it is clear is the association between such self-identifications and how they are still alive in the general epistemologies of those that claim to be Puerto Rican, on and off the island.

"*La carreta*" gives some voice to women who question patriarchy. One of them is Juanita, the daughter that undergoes a metamorphosis from a timid adolescent to a fierce woman. Faraclas and Viada (2012) substantiate such female agency during the 19th and 20th centuries in the Caribbean:

> in spite of conscious efforts to 'whiten' Latin American populations through massive and sustained government sponsored immigration from Europe, (…) the *campesinos*, *jíbaros*, and *ladinos* that still make up the overwhelming majority of Latin Americans are the biological, social, cultural and linguistic descendants of (…) Indigenous-Afro-European renegade cohabitation, where Indigenous and African descended women played a leading role (Faraclas & Viada, 2012, p.18).

At the end of the play, the reader/viewer understands the physical and mental transformation in Juanita. She replies to her mother, Doña Gabriela, while alluding to the *carreta*:

> *Porque la guío pa donde yo quiero.* (…) *Porque no eh cosa de volver a la tierra pa vivir como muertoh.* (…) *Y mishihoj aprenderán cosah que yo no aprendí, cosah que no enseñan en la escuela. ¡Así volveremoh al barrio! ¡Uhteh y yo, mama, firmeh como ausuboh sobre la tierra nuehtra* (…)*!* (Marqués, 2013, p. 322)

My objective here is not to problematize René Marqués' work at DIVEDCO. Though his *jíbarxs* are somehow bleached, the female characters are outside of the discourse condoned by the Division of Education on the island. Juanita, a *jíbarx*, left the mountains of Puerto Rico to

live in one of the *arrabales* in San Juan where she was first raped and then tried to commit suicide. When the family moves into diaspora in New York City, she eventually lives by herself, and works double shifts. One of these 'shifts' could be prostitution. From a traditional perspective, Costa's opinion about Juanita's linguistic reprertoire, as well as that of the rest of her family in the city, is characterized as "*corrupciones del inglés*" or a "*deformación*" of English (p. 233):

> Doña Gabriela: *Si, voy a la "marqueta".* (…) *Oye, ¿y que te jisihte en el pelo?*
>
> Juanita: *Una permanén. Mire, aquí le traigo argo que compré ayer en la "grosería".* (p. 238)

Up until today, at the end of syllables, many people in the Caribbean and in Puerto Rico aspirate and/or delete [s] and interchange [l] and [r]. In February 2021 on Radio Universidad, I heard a female judge say: "*ar Sistema de Justicia*." Was that a *jíbara* or *boricua* speaking? In this connection, I need to emphasize the first quotations from the playwright as a prelude to the last *estampa*: "*Un año despues*. (…) *zona boricua del distrito de Bronx en Nueva York*" (p. 235). It may be smoother and more musical to identify oneself as *boricua* rather than Puerto Rican. Both *distrito* and *boricua* contain an accented [ri] syllable, but it is the former that relates to the Bronx, which itself is probably a Swedish/Dutch term, rather than an English word.

Juanita and her discourse are complemented by the presence of Paco, a *jíbaro* in the city who has had access to some academic education. In an avantgarde dialogue with theorists like Renata Klein (2001) who critiques the "cyberdream" that now predominates among "Gods in laboratories" who look forward to ending women's power to give life, Juanita tells her brother Luis: "*No hay dinero sucio ni dinero limpio. Hay dinero. Y yo gano apenah en un taller lo*

suficiente pa vivir malamente. El rehto que yo consiga pa ayudar a la vieja y pal ah cosah que quiro no le importa a nadie la clase de dinero que sea." (p. 249)

Marqués introduces Paco in this way: "*como la mayoría de los literatos frustrados en la colonia puertorriqueña en Nueva York. Es el tipo de jíbaro rubio de ascendencia canaria. Su voz tiene la inconfundible metalización y atildamiento de los locutores de radio*" (p. 251). Indeed, Marqués does try to explore alternatives to the construction of the *jíbarx* that historically occurred on the island, even though he himself may have something to do with that construction, but Paco breaks with the idea of uneducated or 'uncultured' people from the country. Though a *rubio* man, he answers Luis' questions about his origins: "*yo no nací en el pueblo. Nací en el campo de Morovis. El hablar fino, como dice usted, es un medio de ganarme la vida.*" (p. 261)

Doña Gabriela, the mother of the non-nuclear family, is also an example of partial and sometimes contradictory breaks with patriarchal and capitalist domination. She is a widow who in the past remained in silence about becoming the mother of Luis, who happened to be some other man's son, not her husband's, who believed he had one. She even goes through the gestures of following the lead of Luis, because he is the man of the house. In the third act, another side of her character comes to the fore, as she becomes more and more in tune with the Indigenous and African subsistence knowledges passed on to her through her mother and grandmothers. At some point she advises a neighbor about how to heal illness using home-made remedies. When she is visited by Mr. Parkington, a protestant in charge of a fundamentalist Christian organization which is actively colonizing Puerto Rican families in the city, she finds out that Luis has probably died in the accident that her visitor had mentioned to her. In response to this news, she speaks about *tierra* in ways that echo Shiva (2001): "*La tierra es sagrá. La tierra no se abandona.* (…) *Y hundiré mih manoh en la tierra colora de mi barrio como lah*

hundía el abuelo pa sembrah la semillah. (…) *Y volverá a oler mi casa a pacholí y yerbabuena. Y habrá tierra afuera*. (…) *Eh tierra que da via.*" (p. 321)

"Pluri-identification" is one of the major themes of this research. As such, it is important to make a break with monolithic notions of a neat singular identity, in favor of messy, intersecting and overlapping identificational repertoires. An interesting definition of identity is that put forward by Garrett (2010), who sees language as a personal identity designator, and who considers identity to be both individual and social, with identities embedded at an early age being more inflexible than those acquired later in life.

Chapter Three:

Methodology

Throughout the literature review in Chapter two above, a few themes constantly emerged as being of particular relevance, including: languages and linguistic varieties (in particular, English vs. Caribbean dialects of Spanish), images (in particular, racialized images), Discourses and discourses (Gee, 2005) (in particular, discourses of US driven corporate globalization), identities (in particular, tropes such as the *jibarx*), ideologies of capitalism, racism, and patriarchy, social actors, and modes of representation. The perspectives adopted in this dissertation regarding these themes have been influenced by the work of a number of investigators, including the following: Morales' (2015) work on linguistic varieties and their role in the linguistic landscape, Scollon and Scollon's (2003) comparisons of linguistic and visual texts, Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) visual grammar reformulated in relation to billboards as part of the linguistic landscape, and Machin and Mayr's (2012) indirect dialogue with the former references incorporating a multimodal perspective. On the basis of the above considerations, the following research questions have been formulated to guide the research on billboards as part of the linguistic landscapes of Carolina, Guaynabo, and San Juan upon which this dissertation is based:

Research question 1: Which linguistic varieties are represented in the written texts on the billboards under study?

Research question 2: What are some of the more prominent mental models, social representations and ideologies activated on the billboards under study?

To conduct the fieldwork upon which this dissertation is based, I made onsite observations from 2018 until 2021 of hundreds of billboards that are part of the linguistic landscapes of Carolina, Guaynabo, and San Juan, recording over 2000 images on a mobile phone. For the present study, a total of 100 billboards from each of the three targeted cities of Carolina, Guaynabo, and San Juan were randomly selected for preliminary analysis, with the final selection being made based on the extent to which any of these 300 billboards was particularly illustrative of the themes highlighted in the literature review in Chapter two.

Some of the challenges involved in this research project became more apparent as my field work progressed. In the first place, I was constantly putting myself at risk of being accidentally hit by moving cars while trying to conduct my field work, since the primary audience for billboards in Puerto Rico are drivers and passengers in the motor vehicles that clog the island's arteries. Because of the colonial political economy of the island which is controlled by a consortium of actors from the US government, its locally born representatives, and especially US multinational corporations, public transportation on the island has been largely neglected.

For example, a railway line that formerly hugged the coastline around the periphery of the entire island, thus linking most of the major urban centers of Puerto Rico, was almost completely destroyed in order to maximize the sale of US made automobiles. This resulted in an unholy alliance between US automakers and US banks to facilitate the granting of loans to Puerto Ricans for the purchase of automobiles. The result is that there are so many vehicles on such a small island, that traffic jams and traffic slowdowns are common, especially during the peak commuting hours, where it is not uncommon for people to spend two hours to drive the few

dozen kilometers to work and then another two hours to drive back home. This provides a captive audience for billboards placed along the highways.

In the end, I abandoned any attempt to use my automobile to record my data, and instead opted to walk or ride a bike, which still did not eliminate the risks of being hit, but only lessened them. Secondly, since sunlight interferes with the functioning of most cellular phone camera lenses, I was obliged to take my pictures at night, which also increased my risks of being accidentally hit by a moving vehicle. Thirdly, since some of the highways where these billboards are found traverse areas where there are security risks, there were occasions when I was putting myself in danger of being assaulted.

Methodological Framework

In the research upon which this dissertation is based, I used a range of the most commonly deployed methodologies that have emerged over the past few decades of LL studies. Landry and Bourhis (1996) - a seminal study in the field - establish that any visible or noticeable language in public and commercial publicity constitutes a key part of most present-day linguistic landscapes. They highlight an association between linguistic varieties used in such advertisements and social power, in particular when they involve contact among linguistic varieties. In their research, they have focused on the problematic and complex relationships between English and French across linguistic landscapes of Canada. In this dissertation, I will attempt to replicate some of the work done in Canada by Landry and Bourhis in the context of Puerto Rico, where similarly problematic and complex relationships play themselves out on billboards and other salient features of the linguistic landscape. In both Canada and Puerto Rico, the linguistic landscape turns into a battleground, where different ethnolinguistic repertoires are engaged in discursive contestation.

Based largely on their work in Canada, Landry and Bourhis assert that when two or more ethnic groups interact, the one with greater number of members will impose its linguistic variety in public spaces, not only in administration, education, etc., but also in the general linguistic landscape, exerting a powerful influence over language perceptions. Their findings indicate that English, the majority language of Canada because it is spoken as a home language by some 80 per cent of the population, clearly dominates the LL in relation to French, which is spoken as a home language by some 20 per cent of Canadians. Given Landry and Bourhis' results, one would expect that Spanish, spoken by more than 90 per cent of Puerto Ricans as their home language, would completely dominate English in the LL, since English is spoken as a home language by less than 10 per cent of the island's population, and as a second language by less than 20 per cent. But because of the popularity and prestige associated with English worldwide in general, and because English is the language of colonial power in Puerto Rico in particular, Landry and Bourhis' correlation between number of speakers and use across the LL cannot be assumed to apply in the same way in Puerto Rico as it does in Canada.

LL research has been extended and deepened by a multitude of scholars across the globe, so that what counts as an LL study today may look so different from an LL study in the 1990s. Thus, we might speak of a second paradigm or second wave emerging in LL as a discipline (Canakis, 2018), just as we can speak of several successive waves in the trajectories of disciplines related to LL. For example, Penelope Eckert (2012) suggests that sociolinguistics has moved through three such waves, with the first wave being initiated by figures such as William Labov in the 1960s focusing on correlations between linguistic patterns and broad social categories, a second wave being initiated by such researchers as Allan Bell and Lesley Millroy in the 1980s focusing on audience and social networks, and Eckert and her colleagues in the 2000s

focusing on acts of identity and social meaning-making. “The third wave”, Eckert sustains, “locates ideology in language itself, in the construction of meaning, with potentially important consequences for linguistic theory more generally” (2012, p. 98). The notions of audience and agency that have propelled the emergence of new paradigms in sociolinguistics are particularly relevant to the themes of the present study.

Calvi (2018) presents a review of LL studies in which Spanish is one of the principal varieties targeted. Considering both symbolic and informational functions across the LL, she incorporates a number of concepts such as globalization (Bloommaert, 2010), geosemiotics (Scollon & Scollon, 2003) and display (Van Mensel et al., 2016) into her work, stating that

> as a concept, *landscape* signals a dynamic and interpretational vision from places, based on [their] components and social relations (…) [while] the suffix use of -*scape* underlines a change in the overview of relations according to the perspective adopted, which is a construct where geographical, historical, and cultural factors intersect (p. 7-8).

According to Calvi, not only linguistic signs should be considered in LL studies, but also their combination with iconic signs, including images (p. 10).

In addition, Calvi introduces the concept of Hispanic linguistic landscapes “in countries where Spanish is an official, co-official, or dominant language” (2018, p.11). In her framework, because Spanish is a co-official language alongside English in Puerto Rico, the island is likely to have a bilingual or multilingual LL (p. 11). Calvi observes that thus far, there has been an “absence of LL bibliography” from “Spanish America” [*América hispana*] and associates such absence to “a relative linguistic uniformity” (p. 13). That said, she affirms that “Spanish is a prestige language [*lengua*], associated to positive values, in (…) gastronomy and tourism (…) as well as products and publicity announcements, to evoke vitality, living joy, sensual pleasures,

etc." These uses are what she refers to as "cultural identity *commodification* [mercantilización] where language [*lengua*] is separated from ethnicity (Heller, 2003)" (p. 16). She concludes by demonstrating how "Spanish as a substantial language [*lengua de peso*] on the international languages 'market'" (p. 16).

In a bilingual or multilingual LL such as that found on Puerto Rico, Calvi's ideas on multilingualism and translanguaging must be considered, including "linguistic innovation (…) [which is not only about] new forms but about the implementation of new practices, where interlinguistics of hybrid nature is the norm, particularly in a more informal and spontaneous LL" (p. 25). She asserts that "the LL could be seen:

> as a repertoire of different languages and their features (…) in which its creator identity (social, collective, commercial, etc.) is manifested (….) [and that] such plurality is destined to maximize the communicative potential, and to gain the receptor's attention, as a multilingual unit and not a juxtaposition of different languages [involving] translation, mediation, translanguaging, and hybrid[ity]" (pp. 26-27).

In the multimodal critical discourse analysis LL study upon which this dissertation is based, I incorporated elements of Fairclough's (2012) trans-disciplinary research methodology, which consists of four "stages." At stage 1, Fairclough encourages researchers to "focus upon a social wrong, in its semiotic aspect" (p. 13). Of course, when observing and studying billboards, social wrongs go way beyond any messages that are written or presented on them, and extend to meta-features that have more to do with the billboards themselves, especially the damage that they do to the environment by their mere presence, which has increasingly invasive impacts on those who live nearby, especially with the advent of electronic billboards whose light pollution

threatens the physical and mental health of those who lose sleep and peace of mind through constant exposure to flashing light day and night.

Moving to the messages conveyed on the billboards themselves, in this dissertation I will concentrate on the social wrongs inflicted by colonialism in Puerto Rico, utilizing the frameworks of decolonial/ postcolonial linguistics suggested in, for example, Faraclas and Delgado (2021), the frameworks of raciolinguistics proposed in, for example, Alim, Reyes and Kroskrity (2020), and the frameworks put forward under the subsistence perspective suggested by, for example, Bennhold-Thomsen et al. (2001).

At stage 2, Fairclough (2012) advises researchers to adopt a semiotic approach to all of the genres of text and image present in the LL to "identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong" (p. 14). At stage 3, he states that one must "consider whether the social order "needs" the social wrong (…) [because] discourse is ideological in so far as it contributes to sustaining particular relations of power and domination" (p. 15). At stage 4 the task is to "identify possible ways past the obstacles" or to develop "a semiotic point of entry; that is, "ways in which the discourses (…) are being contested and replaced by others" (p. 15). In the process of describing and analyzing the billboards selected for the present study, I will use these 4 stages proposed by Fairclough as a general set of guidelines, rather than a rigidly ordered and inflexible series of methodological tasks to be strictly adhered to, as illustrated in the sample analyses presented in the section below.

From Puerto Rican Books to Puerto Rican Billboards

The following pages contain examples of my observations and analyses of billboards in Carolina, Guaynabo, and San Juan. By studying these billboards, I pay attention to written texts, images or the combination of both, in a contemporary quest for the trope discussed in Chapter

two: the *jíbarx*. As has been stated above, the present study has been undertaken from a "post-colonial linguistics" and a "post-creole creolistics" perspective (Makoni & Pennycook, 2006; Faraclas & Delgado, 2021). Under a pluri-identificational paradigm, many Puerto Ricans, on and off the Island, have either self-identified or have been identified as *jíbarxs* or *boricuas*. Also, and especially in a culinary context, these identificational repertoires coincide with the term *criollx.* I have presented some evidence about the complex relationships among these concepts in the media, as well as in academic and literary work. I now use observations from billboards to consider creole-like linguistic varieties in contact, as well as to consider what have been denoted as *criollx*, *jíbarx* or *boricua* ways of speaking. Also, such observations highlight the erasure of transgressional peoples those new *jíbarxs* or *boricuas* who still collide with the hegemonic readings imposed on them.

In the lead-up to his observations concerning "*La carreta*", Fiet (2004) provides readers with a concise summary of those members of the symbolic elites who have constructed a mythical white *jíbarx* in the interests of the ruling classes. He refers specifically to Emilio S. Belaval, a Puerto Rican playwright of the 20th century, and the list of names that Belaval recommended as representative of Puerto Rican literature. As Fiet underscores, Belaval and his recommended authors did not necessarily include in their works *jíbarxs* of the non-domesticated, non-bleached, non-transgressive types, as Luis Lloréns Torres and Eleuterio Derkes actually did. When Fiet refers to René Marqués, he argues that the playwright needed to "*catalogar y representar la experiencia puertorriqueña de tal manera que su identidad nacional - el jíbaro-hispano-criollo 'blanco' pero de etnia indeterminable - viaja*" (Fiet, 2004, p. 175). In "*La carreta*," According to Fiet (2004) "*los tres actos crean 'el habla nacional' de la experiencia geopolítica y moderna puertorriqueña*" (p. 181). He concludes that the end of the play "*puede*

ser […] un renacimiento emblemático de Puerto Rico libre de ataduras del neo/colonialismo estadounidense" (p. 182). I essentially agree with Fiet's (2004) general critique of the play.

Figure 4 Billboard Advertising a Musical Performance Tour (Source: Photograph taken by the author in San Juan, February 2020)

As shown in Figure 4, a month before many countries mandated periods of quarantine to stop the spread out of COVID-19, the popular concert singer Ricky Martin was being advertised on big billboards all around Puerto Rico. These billboards were designed to push all of the pre-installed buttons that the symbolic elites have so perniciously inculcated into the psyche of the people of the island, whose first reactions would have been any or all of the following: 1) "*Oh, Ricky, 'qué bello.'*"; 2) Wasn't he the singer who in the 1990s sang about his "*vida loca*" in New York City?; 3) Isn't it he who sang to his "*boricua, mi india*"?; 4) Doesn't Ricky Martin sing "*le-lo-lai*" to the drumbeat? Marchena (2017) highlights René Marqués' own words in "*La carreta*" when referring to Luis as a "*jíbaro transplantado*" (p. 142). Also, she points out how, in the third act, this character ought to be "*sin camisa y sin zapatos*" (p. 142). Are Ricky and his sponsors playing with that image here by removing Ricky's shirt and shoes? Of all of the many talented musicians on the island, why is a person who on first sight would be raced as white or '*rubio*' and a millionaire masquerading as a *jíbaro* like Ricky Martin selected to be its 'world class' iconic superstar?

Goldman and Papson (2011) notify us about the intentions of those that create public advertising and their presuppositions regarding potential observers. Is it an accident that Ricky is sitting on the hood of an automobile on the billboard? The name of the multinational corporation Ford appears prominently, apparently proud of its success in convincing Puerto Ricans that going into debt-slavery to purchase an automobile, impossible traffic congestion, the endless search for parking, and toxic fumes are better than living in communities with shared transport and common spaces.

This advertisement both conceals and deploys some of the most viciously death-seeking aspects of the systems of domination that underpin globalization, which have enabled the re-

colonization of the ‘poor’ countries and the re-enslavement of humanity. Most of the world’s peoples live in countries which are classed as ‘poor’ by the dominant elites, such as Bangladesh, and are working in slave-like conditions for only a few dollars a day or less producing the goods sold in ‘rich’ countries, including the parts used to manufacture the vehicles advertised on this billboard. Because the wages of these workers in ‘poor’ countries are so low, they have no access to loans, and they can never hope to buy a car. This billboard tells Puerto Ricans that if you want to graduate from the ranks of Bangladeshi “field slaves” to the ranks of Caribbean “house slaves” or “wage slaves” you need to look and act more like people who are raced as white are supposed to act, so that the master will let you into his house and give you a few crumbs off of his table (including a loan to buy a Ford).

Figure 5 Billboard Advertising a Credit Union (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Guaynabo, March 2019)

Figure 6 Billboard Advertising a Spa (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Guaynabo, March 2019)

Are any of the women, such as the *hacendada*, the *Negra*, the *criolla* or the *jíbara* which were included in the plays reviewed earlier in this article displayed on the billboards in Figures 5 and 6? In the bank advertisement in Figure 5, the symbolic elites allow for a mixed European-indigenous phenotype, as long as she is acting white and acting rich, i.e., being a dutiful debt-ridden spender and consumer with her shopping bags so full that she has to carry them over her shoulder, and smiling all the while! Even the name of the bank 'Caribe' has been co-opted by the loan-sharks and turned against the sovereign lifestyles and lifeways that sustained the peoples of the Caribbean for thousands of years before the onslaught of European and US colonization (Faraclas & Alvarado Benítez, 2021).

Meanwhile, a peaches-and-cream skinned, strawberry-blonde slim young woman is prominently featured in the beauty clinic advertisement on the billboard in Figure 6. She brashly embodies the false norms of beauty that have been systematically imposed by the symbolic elites on the people of an island whose mitochondrial DNA is about 60% Indigenous, about 30% African and only about 10% European. In any case, she is being used here in total contradiction to what she is advertising, which is the deeply parasitic and invasive industry of artificial cosmetic 'beauty' constructed in clinics, where chemicals and surgery do the work, rather than self-respect, healthy food and exercise. These female figures are nothing like Jaunita or Doña Gabriela in "*La carreta*" who, in the face of a death-seeking system, are able to reconnect with the life-seeking lifeways of the African and Indigenous mothers and grandmothers.

Figure 7 Billboard Advertising Paper Towels (Source: Photograph taken by the author in San Juan, January 2020)

The devastating effects of hurricane María in 2017 are still being felt across Puerto Rico. In 2020, when the billboard in Figure 7 was observed and some three years after María struck, hundreds of people were still living in the broken houses that the hurricane had left in its wake and many public schools were still closed without any further information about a reopening time. One of the most insulting and unforgettable acts associated with María in the minds of Puerto Ricans, is the belated appearance on the island by then US President Trump, who, after ignoring the disaster for two full weeks, finally landed on the island to make a speech to his supporters and to throw packages of the brand of paper towels depicted on the billboard into the crowd as a gesture of "support." This billboard can be seen as an attempt to take advantage of the annual carnival-like San Sebastian or "Sanse" celebrations to erase this association between this particular brand of paper towels and colonial abuse with a more positive association between the brand and traditional musical instruments associated with song and dance in Puerto Rico.

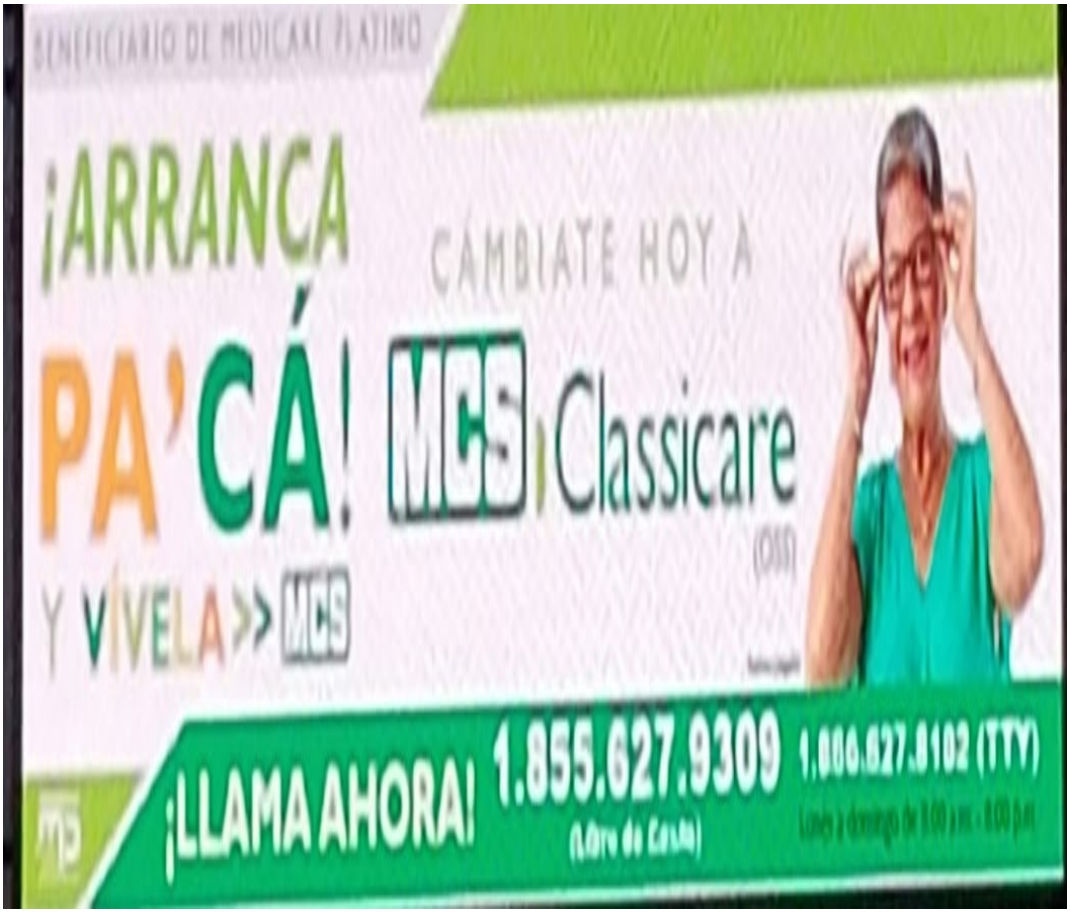

Figure 8 Billboard Advertising Medical Insurance (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Guaynabo, March 2019)

The billboard in Figure 8 is designed to immediately catch the eye of any Puerto Rican passing by, because it features the phrase PA'CÁ in giant capital letters. PA'CÁ ["over here"] is an important element in African influenced repertoires of Caribbean Spanish, which, like many other elements in these varieties, can be interpreted not only from a Eurocentric point of view as the contraction of the forms *para* + *acá* but also from Afrocentric point of view as the preposition *pa*, which is used in a range of Iberian lexifier creoles such as Papiamentu, plus the deictic marker *ka* also used in many Afro-Atlantic varieties. Of course, the zero-sum, monocausal game of trying to determine whether any African influenced form in Puerto Rican Spanish or any other African influenced item in the cultural and linguistic repertoires of the Caribbean is pointless, because the types of colonial era creolization that occurred in Puerto Rico and the rest of the Caribbean usually involved a rich matrix of converging causal factors, some more African in nature, some more European, some more Indigenous, etc. In any case, someone driving or walking by this billboard will be immediately intrigued. This is because PA'CÁ is a form of language that they were taught by their primary and secondary school teachers and other "experts" to consider as incorrect. As such, according to the authorities on language on the island, such forms have absolutely no place in formal public discourse, especially in written form. In fact, for some, this might be the very first time in their lives that they see this expression in writing, even though they may hear it all the time in their daily lives, even from the mouths of the "experts" when they relax and shift out of their authoritarian personae.

The use of this expression is therefore not only jarring (and therefore attention-grabbing), but also signals to the reader that MCS, the medical insurance company whose services are being advertised on this billboard, is somehow authentically Puerto Rican, even though, like most of the big businesses on the island, throughout its history, MCS has been owned by a series of

corporate bodies and investment firms based in the North American colonial metropole. On the MCS website (MCS, Inc.) the ownership of the company over the 40 or so years of its existence is outlined as follows:

> 1987: 100% of MCS's shares are acquired by Baxter Pharmaceutical [a US based pharmaceutical corporation]. MCS opens offices in Florida to support Baxter's operations [there] (…)
>
> 1993: (…) The Baxter division, which was offering Caremark [formerly known as US corporation Med Partners] services, breaks away from (…) [Caremark]. MCS separates from Baxter and becomes part of Caremark [still a US based corporation] (…)
>
> 1997: A new acquisition puts an end to MCS's relationship with Caremark when the latter [re-]merges with Med Partners. Six months later, Med Partners decides to sell MCS.
>
> 2004: 67% of the shares of Medical Card System, Inc., the parent company of the CS group of companies, are acquired by JLL Partners, a prestigious investment firm based in New York (…)
>
> 2021: … 100% of the shares of Medical Card System, Inc., are acquired by Kinderhook Industries, a private investment firm based in New York (…) that manages over $5 billion of committed capital. Since the beginning, Kinderhook has made in excess of 270 investments and acquisitions. (…) Kinderhook's focus is on middle market businesses with defensible niche market positioning in the healthcare services, environmental/ business services and automotive/ light manufacturing sectors.

The elderly female figure depicted on the right-hand side of the billboard is similar in a way to the expression PA'CÁ, since she, as is the case for most Puerto Ricans, could be considered to be phenotypically ambiguous in terms of the assignment of race using the dominant criteria based on the mutually exclusive and conjunctively exhaustive oppositional binary [plus white] vs. [minus white]. That said, her lighter skin tone, her hair style, her jewelry, and perhaps her mannerisms (the way she is adjusting her eyeglasses) ensure that this figure is depicted in such a way that it would be difficult to classify her, in terms of her relationship to medicinal knowledge, as being in the same league as perhaps the figure of Doña Gabriela in René Marqués' "*La carreta*" mentioned above, who might be more easily associated with African and Indigenous descended female figures on the island who promote home remedies as practitioners of centuries-old local Afro-Indigenous traditions of healing.

Instead, the woman on the billboard is positioned as advising her fellow senior viewers as to their best option for access to non-traditional Eurocentric Western medicine. She does this by implicitly urging other seniors to abandon their traditional government administered non-profit Medicare medical insurance plan for retirees in favor of the privately administered for profit so-called "Medicare Advantage" plans. Her message already takes for granted the problematic assumption that the privatization of government guaranteed healthcare for the elderly is something that all seniors should support and will supposedly benefit from over the long term. She then more explicitly targets those who have "Medicare Platinum" plans which are the privatized Medicare Advantage plans with the highest monthly premiums, advising them to *arranca pa'ca* [Get yourself unstuck from your old plan and move over here to MCS]. These Medicare Platinum plans are the most profitable of all for the health insurance corporations, who make billions in profits by deceiving the government through all types of subsidy scams and by

deceiving consumers by promising dubious advantages over the basic government administered coverage.

The general analysis of billboards in this chapter serves as a backdrop and foundation for the more focused analysis of billboards in Chapter 4 which follows. In Chapter 5, I present my general conclusions.

Chapter Four:

Results and Analysis

In this chapter, I begin with the critical description and analysis of a billboard that advertises a hair straightening product which exemplifies the colonial gaze over Puerto Rico in a very explicit and dramatic way. This billboard does so with a particular focus on some of the aspects of the island's past that, ever since the US invasion and occupation of the island in 1898, Puerto Ricans have been urged by the colonial authorities and the corporate interests that they represent to leave behind, deny and eventually forget. The rest of the chapter is devoted to the critical description and analysis of a series of billboards that advertise fast food and other food industry products and services that also exemplify the colonial gaze over Puerto Rico. But in the case of these billboards, the focus is on some of the aspects of the present and future that Puerto Ricans have been urged by the colonial authorities and the corporate interests that control them to enthusiastically embrace.

The general impulse behind the colonizing messages conveyed, mental models constructed, social representations consolidated and ideologies activated by these billboards are as old as the US presence on the island itself, and can be summarized by the following quote from Kachru (1986) who himself quotes one of the US officials who articulated the mission, vision, goals and objectives of the colonial project in Puerto Rico in this way:

> English is used as a tool of power to cultivate a group of people who will identify with the cultural and other norms [of the colonizer] (…) developing a culturally distinct group who would form "a class who may be interpreters between us [the colonizers] and those whom we govern, a class of persons (…) [local] in blood and color, [but] English [or American] in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect.

> [T]he United States "set out to Americanize Puerto Rico with a vengeance during the first 50 years of its colonization" (Zentella, 1981, p. 219). The US government's view (…) [was that, in the words of an American Commisioner of Education] "if the schools became American and the teachers and students were guided by the American spirit, then the island would be essentially American in sympathies, opinions, and attitudes toward government." (Kachru, 1986, pp. 318-9)

In summary, the overarching ideology behind the US colonial project on the island is a product of the same colonial discourse that has prevailed since the dawn of the European maritime invasion of the world beginning in the 15th century, which has always been aimed at the complete erasure of everything associated with what under the colonial gaze is considered to be the "pagan/ damned/ savage/ monstruous/ undeveloped" nature of colonized people of non-European descent in favor of the "christian/ blessed/ civilized/ normal/ developed" nature of the European descended colonizers. What is new in all of this is that, while for most of their colonial history the people of Puerto Rico were mainly exposed to these colonizing discourses only in formal situations involving the church, government, formal education, etc., over the course of the 20th century, the gradual incursion of the mass media into all of the households on the island meant that these poisonous messages became harder and harder to escape. With the addiction of virtually the entire population of the world to mobile devices since the dawn of the 21st century, it could be said that the people of Puerto Rico are now relentlessly subjected to these colonizing discourses at almost every moment of every day of their lives.

There are very few times during an average day that Puerto Ricans are not (or are not supposed to be) looking at their devices, such as the significant number of hours when they are driving their vehicles. To make sure that the colonial message comes through loud and clear even

during these moments when the personal screen is supposed to be turned off, over the past decades the roadways on the island have been increasingly enclosed by a seemingly endless sequence of gigantic public screens, in the form of one electronic billboard after the other, each using high intensity light to blast a series of one advertisement after another every few seconds. And even though the hundreds of thousands of people who travel these congested highways daily are bombarded by hundreds of different high-powered advertisements on their way to and back from their destination, the underlying message is still the same: everything associated with what under the colonial gaze is considered to be the "pagan/ damned/ savage/ monstruous/ undeveloped" nature of the island's people must be erased and replaced by everything associated with the "christian/ blessed/ civilized/ normal/ developed" nature of their European descended US colonizers.

Throughout the linguistic landscapes along the roadways and elsewhere in Carolina, Guaynabo, and San Juan, the older more traditional print-based 'static' billboards that were once the norm are now being crowded out on both the private and public land along the roadsides by a massive new wave of billboards. These newer billboards are as colossal as the older ones, measuring an average of some 14 feet by 48 feet, but they are digital, incorporating the latest technologies designed to enhance their brightness and flash a series of publicity spots in rapid succession, making them almost completely impossible to ignore. As shown in Figures 9 and 10, they are also almost indestructible, since they are usually supported by massively thick metal poles or pilons of over one meter in diameter which are anchored so firmly and so deeply in a concrete casing that penetrates the ground to a depth that is almost equal to their height above ground, so that even when Category 5 hurricane Maria struck the island in September of 2017, most of these newer billboards suffered little or no damage, while the rest of Puerto Rico was

devastated. And even though it took months to restore power to most of the island after the disaster, electricity to these high-powered electronic billboards was restored in a matter of a few weeks.

Figure 9 Billboard with the Image Taken from an Angle (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Guaynabo, March 2019)

Figure 10 Billboard Mounted on a Pilon (Source: Photograph taken by the author in San Juan, April 2020)

As if all of this were not enough, there are also a new and growing host of similarly light-enhanced, but even more enormous digital billboards that are plastered across a significant part of the facades of the biggest private and public buildings to be found anywhere in Carolina, Guaynabo, and San Juan. Some of these billboards are over a dozen stories high, as shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11 Building Façade Billboard (Source: Photograph taken by the author in San Juan, December 2021)

We begin our analysis with the following billboard advertising a hair ‘relaxing’ product on a digital billboard in Carolina in December of 2021. This particular billboard is located on public land and flashes its messages 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year through the windows of no less than 100 apartments in the 20-story building found directly opposite to it on the other side of an eight-lane highway. The intensity of the light emitted by this billboard is so great, that, when the windows are not completely covered by lightproof materials, the night-time interiors of all 100 apartments are drowned in an unending multicolored cacophony of blinding light, making any form of rest, let alone sleep, impossible.

Billboards and the Erasure of Puerto Rican Identities

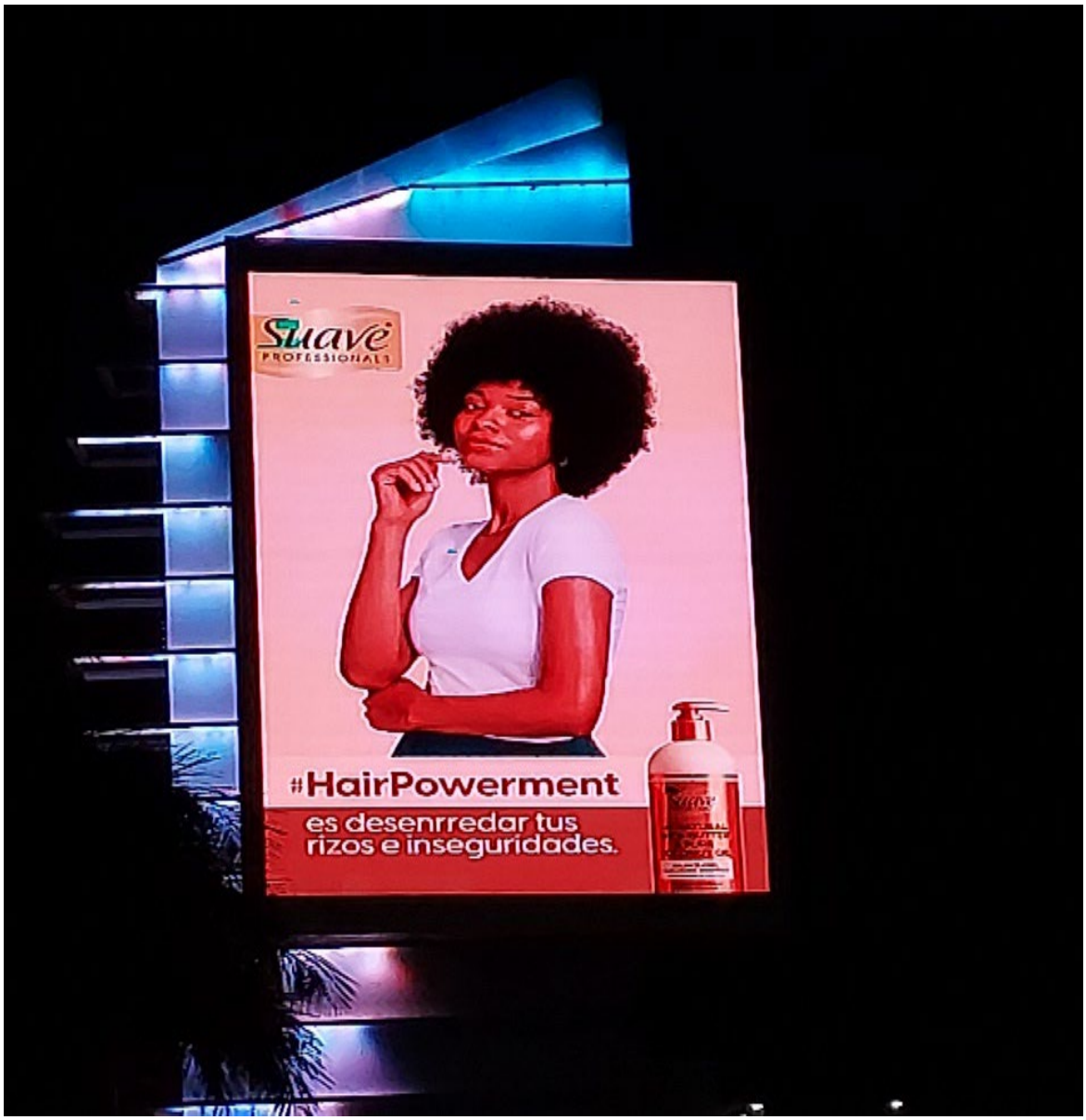

Figure 12 Billboard Advertising a Hair Straightening Product (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Carolina, December 2021)

This billboard centers on the image of a woman of Afro-Caribbean descent with an ambiguous semi-smile on her face, perhaps betraying some inner insecurities that she hopes have been addressed by her consumption of the product on sale. She appears alongside an image of the trademark for the product, which is named “Suave”, a term that is associated with words in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French for persons and hair which are both “smooth” (as opposed to “coarse”) in their presentation, and which “pass”, that is, which present themselves in such a way that they are maximally acceptable under the norms established by the dominant discourses of racialized societies. This product has been used for decades by African descended women (and to a lesser extent by African descended men) to straighten the curly hair associated with the phenotypical features stereotypically associated with people raced as “black” by the discursive binary [plus/minus white] ([±white]) around which the racialization of societies in the Americas and eventually the rest of the Afro-Atlantic has taken place.

The trademark is situated above her to the left and an image of a bottle of the actual product is to be found below her to the right, as if she is enclosed in a set of parentheses. This configuration of images suggests that the product is defending her persona and social face, not only from external threats that may be aimed at her from one side or the other, but also from internal threats and insecurities associated with being positioned as [minus white] and [minus male]. The question arises as to whether this particular product is acting as an all-encompassing shield to defend and protect her or, on the contrary, as an all-encompassing set of prison bars to entangle her ever more deeply in a destructive spiral of self-rejection and denial that fuels ever more desperate and ever more pointless attempts to conform to a set of artificial and unattainable norms that were created not in her image and interests, but instead in the image and interests of ethnocentric (racial) and patriarchal domination.

But this question is immediately answered by the slogan at the bottom of the billboard, which leads with the social media tag #HairPowerment followed by the words "[Suave] means disentangling/ relaxing your curls and disentangling/ relaxing your insecurities". The messaging on the billboard is one that stresses the possibility of relief from insecurities about hair texture experienced by people, especially women, who are raced as "black" in Puerto Rico and beyond, through processes of "disentanglement" and "relaxing" designed to assist people who are raced as "black" with relatively lighter skin in "passing for white", and those with relatively darker skin to demonstrate to the world that they are at least trying to "pass" by rejecting the stereotypical features associated with people raced as [minus white] and trying to conform to the dominant norms of beauty defined by the stereotypical features associated with people raced as [plus white].

The use of the tag #HairPowerment at the very beginning of the text gives notice to us that we can access much, much more information about the product with a few taps of our fingers on our devices, while the same tag notifies us that no more information is available regarding the woman depicted in the center of the billboard, whose personhood is effectively erased and enclosed by the seductive messaging. By incorporating the abbreviated form "powerment" from the term "empowerment", the tag itself immediately sets in motion a series of associations that rely on dominant mental models, social representations and ideologies that center around discourses of domination that involve racialization of individuals and societies, as well as discourses of resistance to domination. The irony and deception encapsulated in this slogan, where terms associated with liberation and empowerment are deployed to legitimize and celebrate the re-enslavement of the people of the Afro-Atlantic, in particular African descended women, to racially defined norms of beauty that fetishize physical features associated with

stereotypes of people who are raced as [plus white], has become the rule rather than the exception in public discourse in the present era of ascendant fascism and rabid disinformation via the social media.

Colonial hegemony has not only been formulated in such a way as to convince Puerto Ricans that, in order to live lives that conform to what is defined in dominant discourses as "normal", they have to change the way they look in such a way as to hide any of their physical features that may be associated stereotypically with being raced as [minus white] by "relaxing" their hair, etc. The colonial project in Puerto Rico has also been designed to change peoples' lifeways and their means of gaining a livelihood by convincing them that the traditional subsistence economies and the sovereignty over land and food that Puerto Ricans had maintained up until just a few generations ago need to be replaced by wage slavery in the money economy and the addictive consumption of fast food. As stated above, this process is not unique to Puerto Rico. A consistent thread that runs throughout Western colonial discourse centers around notions of "progress" and "development" that have been effectively utilized to transfer colonized peoples' sovereign power over production and consumption to the corporate interests that control colonial economies.

But the case of Puerto Rico is perhaps atypical because of the unprecedented extent to which successive colonial and neo-colonial administrations have been able to operationalize these discourses. In this respect, Puerto Rico can be considered to have been a testing ground and model for colonial and neo-colonial policy elsewhere in Latin America and beyond. The massive exodus of Puerto Ricans from their traditional rural subsistence holdings to work in factories established by US corporations in urban centers on the island under the regime of tax breaks and inexpensive labor costs guaranteed by the neo-colonial "Operation Bootstrap" policy from the

late 1940s onward was achieved through a concerted governmental campaign of "popular education" under the auspices of DIVEDCO (División de Educación para la Comunidad) which was established in 1949 by the first locally elected governor of the island, Luis Muñoz Marín, just as Operation Bootstrap was taking shape.

Cotto (2020) effectively demonstrates how tropes such as that of the *jibarx* and Puerto Rican indigeneity (see Chapters 2 and 3 above) were manipulatively reconfigured and then popularized by DIVEDCO, not to remind Puerto Ricans of the real power that they had always retained in the countryside over their means of production and modes of consumption, but instead to convince them that they needed to reject the considerable sovereignty and security in relation to work and food that they had achieved over generations of resistance to colonialism in order to serve as precarious and low paid laborers.

> *Así, el mito de identidad nacional se construyó a partir del Discurso de DIVEDCO que se basó en utilizar elementos familiares y recurrentes en la realidad del campesino puertorriqueño y en unir estas imágenes con los elementos nuevos que introducía la industrialización y la vida moderna del nuevo Estado. La DIVEDCO solo constituyó un medio dentro del complejo sistema de representaciones que permitieron afianzar los valores del nacionalismo cultural como los valores innatos y necesarios del puertorriqueño para ser parte del nuevo orden democrático [sic] y realidad industrial que se erigía en el País. Las creaciones literarias y gráficas de DIVEDCO mostraron una gran capacidad para establecer las relaciones o vínculos entre el lenguaje y las imágenes que representaban la realidad del campesino y la realidad a la que aspiraba el PPD y crear un nuevo Discurso que daría paso a la creación de un mito sobre la identidad nacional.*

> [Thus, the myth of national identity was constructed from the DIVEDCO Discourse that was based on using familiar and recurrent elements in the reality of the Puerto Rican peasant and uniting these images with the new elements introduced by industrialization and modern life of the newly established Commonwealth [status assigned to Puerto Rico]. DIVEDCO only constituted one of a number of means within the complex system of representations that allowed the strengthening of the values of cultural nationalism as the innate and necessary values to equip Puerto Ricans to be part of the new democratic [sic] order and industrial reality that was being promoted in the country. The literary and graphic creations of DIVEDCO showed a great capacity to establish the relationships or links between language and images that represented the reality of the peasant and the reality to which the PPD aspired and create a new Discourse that would give way to the creation of a myth about national identity] (Cotto, 2020, p. 39).

The popular saying in English that goes something like 'You are what you eat' may in some ways seem trivial, but, to the extent that food consumption patterns and practices reflect a broad array of linguistic, cultural and identificational repertoires, the ever more rapid and complete transformation of the Puerto Rican diet over the past several decades from a regime based on locally cultivated and relatively unprocessed tubers, meat, fish, fruits and vegetables to a regime of highly processed imported commodities and fast food can be seen as both a cause and a result of an equally rapid and complete transformation of Puerto Rican lifeways over the same period of time. That said, even though the government, the schools, the media, and the other machinery of the symbolic elites have convinced generation after generation of Puerto Ricans that consuming ever more processed and ever "faster" food is a marker of "development" and "modernity," many Puerto Ricans continue to value elements of traditional pre-colonial

island cuisine. Systems of domination such as capitalism are like cancers that must grow until they have entirely consumed their hosts. It is therefore no accident that an appreciable proportion of the messages still being projected at the people of Puerto Rico from electronic billboards today focuses on the consumption of fast food.

So, the people of Puerto Rico are still undergoing a process whereby they have been gradually alienated from a series of agentive, healthy, non-addictive, non-commodified, non-polluting and fulfilling activities such as planting, cultivating and harvesting their own healthy food and preparing, cooking and serving their own satisfying meals and induced instead to passively consume unhealthy, addictive, commodified, polluting and ultimately non-satisfying junk food. We now demonstrate how these messages are transmitted throughout the Puerto Rican linguistic landscape, specifically through the use of language and images on electronic billboards.

Billboards, Junk Food and Colonial/Neocolonial Hegemony

Figure 13 Billboard Advertising a Large Hamburger (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Carolina, January 2019)

While the written message on the billboard in Figure 13 above is in Spanish, the global commercial and discursive reach of the company sponsoring the advertisement therein is so pervasive that there is really no need for written text at all. All the average Puerto Rican needs to do is to see the corporate logo, and our brains literally replay a nearly endless cascade of expertly designed and aggressively marketed images and language that have imposed on us literally for our entire lives, to the extent that they have become part of the fabric of our earliest childhood visual, auditory and smell/taste memories, almost as primal as the faces of our mothers.

Puerto Ricans have been carefully conditioned to salivate at the image of the hamburger presented on the billboard, even though it and the other addictive products pushed by fast food corporations have a major responsibility for the current epidemics of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and cancer on the island and throughout the world, an epidemic that has resulted in the deaths of millions. The abuse of discursive power here extends beyond the fact that the actual product is not health food, but instead is an addictive poison-laced food-like product, or that what you receive at the counter looks nothing like what is represented in the photo.

While fast food may be relatively inexpensive to buy, there are many hidden costs, including: 1) the cost of medical care for the millions of diseased people who consume the products served by fast food corporations; 2) the cost of lower wages for literally billions of workers based on the model of unabashed exploitation perfected first by fast food corporations and then gradually extended to the rest of the workforce; 3) the assassination of hundreds of indigenous leaders and the removal of tens of thousands of indigenous peoples throughout Latin America from their ancestral lands to make way for agribusiness; 4) the systematic destruction of small locally owned eateries and the livelihoods of the hundreds of thousands of people who

used to own and run them; and 5) the cost to the environment by the massive destruction of rain forest and the equally massive pollution of bodies of water that result from the expansion of unsustainable cattle ranches, poultry factories, etc. which are presently threatening the very existence of all of the nearly eight billion people on the planet.

The discursive means by which the fast food addictions that feed this global system that is killing or bodies and rendering our planet uninhabitable are succinctly depicted on the billboard in Figure 14, where passersby are tempted to consider the fast food restaurant sponsor as their optimal choice for their next meal. For a population that has been devastated economically by US colonialism since 1898 and *Junta*-led neo-colonialism since 2016 on the one hand, and a series of disasters such as Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic from 2019 to 2022, etc., the possibility of purchasing a meal that will both satisfy their addictive cravings for sugars, salt, saturated fats, and chemical flavorings for only four dollars is hard to resist. For that price, the billboard offers:

> 1) a cup of Coca-Cola, which contains a high dose of the most diabetes-inducing kinds of sugars, such as High Fructose Corn Syrup laced with caffeine and a host of artificial flavorings designed to make it difficult for the consumer to accept any other liquid as an acceptable means to satisfy their thirst;
>
> 2) a packet of fried potatoes, steeped in the most artery-damaging forms of saturated fats and then completely covered with a thick layer of stroke-inducing salt;
>
> 3) a packet of 'nuggets' each of which consists of a deadly combination of mass-produced chicken paste full of cancer-causing and body-disfiguring growth hormones and immune system damaging antibiotics, covered with a crust consisting of sugars in the form of the empty carbohydrates that constitute hyper-processed white flour, another

deadly dose of almost as much saturated fat, and even more salt than in the fries; and finally,

4) the ‘choice’ of one of four sandwich/ wrap options, all of which contain various combinations of the most unhealthy forms of sugars and fats steeped in prohibitive quantities of salt and other chemicals added to ‘enhance’ the flavor, texture and color of the meal, rendering it all the more addictive to the consumer.

Figure 14 Billboard Advertising a "Combination" Meal (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Carolina, December 2021)

And who appears beside the meal combination on the billboard in Figure 14 Predictably, it is a white-raced peaches-and-cream skinned, strawberry-blonde young woman. This is just another reminder to Puerto Ricans that if they want any of the leftovers from the imperial feast, they had better be sure to deny their Afro-Indigenous bloodlines, lifeways and lifestyles, and act as "white" as possible. An important part of this process of "whitening" has been a concerted, centuries-long effort by the symbolic elites to completely excoriate any of the original renegade, maroon, Afro-Indigenous, and transgressive meanings of identificational terms which are close to the hearts of Puerto Ricans, such as *jíbarx*, *criollx* and *boricua*, and consciously replace them with meanings that reduce the people of the island and their diaspora to domesticated and indebted consumers of automobiles, "beauty" treatments, and junk food.

Over the past decades, the fast food industry, in collaboration with the American Medical Association and other organizations representing the medical profession in the US, has systematically opposed any efforts to acknowledge and deal with the public health crisis caused by the mass consumption of their products. Here we witness how the collaboration between the financial interests and plunder of the dominant socio-economic classes through corporations such as McDonalds, Burger King, Wendy's, etc. on the one hand, and the symbolic elites such as the medical establishment and the advertising agencies and their corporate-sponsored "scientific" defense and persuasive promotion of the consumption of fast food on the other, create the conditions for society wide addiction and disease, whose consequences are left to the individual and the ever more expensive and inadequate public health system to deal with.

The ageing population of Puerto Rico is now plagued by health conditions such as diabetes, heart conditions, cancers, stroke, etc., all of which can be attributed at least in part to the fact that, since their youth, the senior "citizens" of the island have been subjected to the

colonial imposition of a diet of "inexpensive" addictive fast food, which is cheap in terms of immediate cost to the consumer, but not in terms of costs related to the destruction of the consumer's body, destruction to the environment, destruction of rural subsistence livelihoods, and so on. In non-trivial ways, this can be seen as a continuation of the system under which the enslaved peoples of African descent on the plantations of the Caribbean were subjected to a diet of inexpensive and unhealthy processed flour and corn grits ('empty' sugars), salt and smoked fish (unimaginably high in sodium and other chemicals used in the curing and smoking processes), lard and rejected cuts of meat (the worst saturated fats imaginable), etc.

In any case, it is not the fast food corporations who are being held responsible for the public health crisis that they have inflicted on the world. Instead, as is the case everywhere else, the day-to-day provision of care to the senior population of Puerto Rico to counter the long-term negative effects of a life of fast food consumption is largely left to the diseased elderly individuals themselves and their immediate families, especially those of their family members who are gendered as female. Moreover, these same individuals and families are forced to cope with an ever more expensive and less adequate public health care system to deal with acute health crises that can be traced back to years of eating fast food. As the neo-colonial policies of simultaneously cutting social services and lowering the tax rates on fast food corporations and other large businesses take root in Puerto Rico and elsewhere, the availability of affordable health care has become ever more scarce.

The fast food industry has expanded to the point that at present, through the neo-liberal and neo-colonial processes of globalization and "free" trade, US based franchises are to be found literally in nearly every neighborhood of nearly every major population center of nearly every country in the world. So, what Puerto Rico has experienced for more than a century under

previous waves US colonization is now being experienced by the rest of the world under a newer wave of neo-colonization. The proliferation of fast food consumption has been accompanied by the expansion of popular opposition to the corporate colonization and neo-colonization of our diets and bodies. Global movements such as Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy and Slow Food International have mounted sustained campaigns of awareness, advocacy and action regarding the effects of addiction to fast food on our bodies, our environment, and our food security.

Popular opposition to fast food has encouraged the less co-opted elements of the symbolic elites to begin to investigate, expose and critique the unhealthy relationship between the fast food industry and the US medical establishment by analyzing the nutritional content of fast food. For example, in response to the decades long epidemic of heart disease in the US, the American Heart Association has established clear correlations between the consumption of fast food and diseases such as arterial sclerosis and stroke, while other organizations of scientists have established similar correlations between the consumption of fast food and diabetes, cancer, and other diseases. For example, in Table 1 we encounter the sugar, salt, saturated fat and chemical additive content of the meal advertised in Figure 14.

Item	Amount	Sugar/ Empty Starch	Salt	Saturated Fat	Additives
Major cause of		Diabetes	Stroke	Heart disease	Cancer, etc.
Coca-cola	1 cup	26 gm			Caffeine, artificial flavors and colors
Fried potatoes	Medium packet		311 mg	4 gm	
Nuggets	5 pieces		481 mg	3.3 gm	Growth hormones, antibiotics, artificial flavors, colors, etc.
Cheeseburger	1 serving	2 gm	1123 mg	12 gm	Growth hormones, antibiotics, artificial flavors, colors, etc.
Total		28 gm	1,635 mg	19.3 gm	Growth hormones, antibiotics, artificial flavors, colors, etc.
Recommended daily limits women		25 gm	1,500 mg	20 gm	Should never be consumed
Recommended daily limits men		36 gm	1,500 mg	30 gm	Should never be consumed

Table 1. Sources: For sugar, salt, fat and additive content: https://www.nutritionvalue.org/; For daily limits: American Heart Association https://www.heart.org/

Billboards, Addiction and Health

On its website, the World Health Organization (World Health Organization, 2021) has documented what can only be described as a worldwide health crisis related to malnutrition. They identify three types of malnutrition, which afflict nearly half of the world's eight billion people:

1) undernutrition, which includes wasting (low weight-for-height), stunting (low height-for-age) and underweight (low weight-for-age);
2) micronutrient-related malnutrition, which includes micronutrient deficiencies (a lack of important vitamins and minerals); and
3) overweight, obesity and diet-related noncommunicable diseases (such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers). (World Health Organization, 2021)

In 2021, at least one half billion people, mainly in the Global South, suffered from undernutrition worldwide and undernutrition was linked to 45% of deaths among children. In many ways, the globalized food system can be blamed for undernutrition, since most of those suffering from this type of malnutrition are living in countries where people have been coerced in one way or another to leave the land that traditionally provided them with healthy subsistence and balanced nutrition, not only in terms of calories (to avoid undernutrition and obesity), but also in terms of other nutrients (to avoid micronutrient-related malnutrition). In most of those same countries, there is enough food produced to feed the entire population, but the food produced is not affordable by most of the local population because it is produced and priced for export to countries in the Global North. The land that people of the Global South traditionally used to feed themselves is now owned by multinational corporations, who use most of it for the industrial production of meat and other cash crops for export to make the 2 billion people in the world who

suffer from overweight/obese malnutrition, mainly in the Global North, even more overweight and more obese.

Just like the hamburgers on the billboards enclosed between two halves of the same toxic breadroll, the people of Puerto Rico find themselves trapped between the opposing ends of a system that doubly exploits and poisons them in some ways as people of the Global South, and in other ways as people of the Global North.

The Tropes of Cultural 'Authenticity', Natural 'Authenticity' and Cosmopolitan 'Taste'

The fast food industry has come under increasing pressure to make its food appear to be more nutritious on the one hand, as well as to make its food appear to be more suitable to local tastes and sensibilities on the other. Bordieu's (1991) work on how the designers of menus at restaurants use language and images to project certain messages to particular audiences includes extensive discussion on and around notions of "authenticity". There are two primary ways in which this trope of authenticity is commonly deployed in relation to the marketing of food: 1) Companies promote their food as "authentic" in relation to accountability to some notion of "authentic culture"; and 2) Companies promote their food as "authentic" in relation to accountability to some notion of "authentic nature".

In Puerto Rico, for example, such constructed notions converge on the figure of the *jibarx* as discussed in Chapter 2 above. The *jibarx* has been promoted not only as the quintessential source and bearer of Puerto Rican culture and identity from the now depopulated countryside of the island to its urban areas, but also as the quintessential organic farmer who for centuries produced and consumed sustainably grown nutritious food in the mountainous interior of the island in harmony with some idyllic understanding of nature. Therefore, all an advertising agency needs to do is to mention terms like '*jibarx*' or '*boricua*' and immediately mental

models, social representations and even ideologies are automatically activated in the minds of the audience which are associated with what it means to be "authentically" Puerto Rican and what it means to produce food "authentically" in accordance with the natural environment of the island.

This means that these companies feel more and more compelled to engage in discourse which could be referred to as "brownwashing" that portrays these fast food products which were originally invented and popularized by people of Northern European descent who have been raced as [plus white] in the US as somehow authentically Puerto Rican. It also means that, while marketing products that are highly processed and damaging to the environment, these same companies feel more and more compelled to engage in discourse that has been characterized as "greenwashing" whereby these same products are portrayed as "organically," "naturally," or at least "locally" grown. This is exemplified by the billboard depicted in Figure 15, which proclaims that there is no meat that is more *boricua* than the meat used by this particular fast food franchise. This claim to both cultural and natural authenticity is in direct contradiction to the actual sandwiches depicted underneath it, which consist of the typical Northern European inspired North American fast food cocktail of highly un-natural and un-organic processed sugars/ starches, salt, saturated fats, and artificial additives and have nothing at all to do with the food produced and eaten traditionally on the island.

Instead, the marketing of fast food in Puerto Rico has everything to do with replacing the authentic traditional diet, which is based on a fusion of African, Indigenous Caribbean and Southern European Mediterranean culinary traditions, with a diet that is based on the meat, milk product and potato cuisines associated with Northern Europe. While fast food is associated in multiple ways with the North American colonization of the island, one of its most insidious associations is with the imposition of the racialized norm of [plus white] on the people of Puerto

Rico. This imposition is operationalized through various colonial institutions, including the schools, the church, the media, etc., who have programed many Puerto Ricans to aspire to look like, think like, speak like, act like, and, in this case, eat like the white-raced peaches-and-cream skinned, strawberry-blonde young woman on the billboard.

These artificial constructions of authenticity are set up as binary oppositions to equally artificial constructions such as "American-ness", and the companies cleverly use both poles of these oppositions to appeal simultaneously to different audiences. The population of the island is deeply divided in terms of its stand in relation to US colonization, with one of the major political factions advocating assimilation to US cultural norms and full integration into the US political economy, and the other major political faction advocating the preservation and strengthening of "authentically" Puerto Rican cultural norms and the island's political and economic autonomy. Both the typically Norh American meals depicted on these billboards as well as the white-raced peaches-and-cream skinned, strawberry-blonde young woman associated with this particular fast food corporation are designed to appeal directly to the former faction, while the use of the term "*boricua*" is designed to appeal directly to the latter. Subliminally, however, the use of *boricua* appeals to both factions at the same time, by appealing to a notion of a monolithic Puerto Rican identity that extends across such political divides. The same can be said for the image of the blonde girl, because even many of those who advocate for Puerto Rican economic and political autonomy typically adhere to a racialized ethnocentric binary normativity in which the plus white pole is generally positively associated with desirable things, such as "good (i.e. straight) hair", while the minus white pole is negatively associated with undesirable things, such as "bad (i.e. frizzy) hair".

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Figure 15 Billboard Advertising the Use of Puerto Rican Beef (Source: Photograph taken by the author in San Juan 2019)

Another trope identified by Bordieu (1991) which is used by restaurants on menus and, by extension, on their billboards, is that of the "civilization" and "sophistication" normally associated in dominant discourses with people who are classed socio-economically within the binaries of plunder as [plus rich] or [plus propertied]. When the trope of civilization/ sophistication is deployed to market fast food, some curious contradictions emerge. For example, the figure of the *jibarx*, which, as mentioned above, is promoted by fast food companies to manipulate the race-based ethnocentric binary associated with Puerto Rican authenticity and the nature-based anthropocentric binary associated with the Puerto Rican countryside is now rejected in order to manipulate the socio-economic class-based binary of accumulation and plunder, because the mental models, social representations and ideologies linked to the construction of the *jibarx* are associated with people who are classed [minus propertied] or [minus rich].

As exemplified by the billboards depicted in Figures 16 and 17, when the civilization/ sophistication trope is utilized, the locality and geographic and cultural specificity normally associated with the *jibarx* is repackaged and rejected as a type of insularity that must be abandoned by Puerto Ricans in favor of cosmopolitan "international taste". Of course, what is commonly packaged as international and universal "good taste" is nothing more than some idealized version of European cuisine. In the US for example, fast food is equated with unsophisticated North American mass culture, while European *haute cuisine* is associated with "international" and therefore "classical" or "universal" refined taste in food. Similarly, the organic, "natural" rurality normally associated with the *jibarx* is repackaged and rejected as a type of "backwardness" and "vulgarity" that must be abandoned by Puerto Ricans in favor of urbanity and refined "taste". So, when the civilization/ sophistication trope is deployed to sell fast food, the positive associations with the *jibarx* which are related to the history of struggle

against ethnocentrism and anthropocentrism in Puerto Rico are backgrounded while the negative associations with the *jibarx* which are related to socioeconomic class are foregrounded.

In Figure 16, we witness the extremely contradictory discursive acrobatics that must be performed to somehow equate North American quantity-focused inexpensive mass-produced fast food normally consumed by those classed as [minus rich] to the European quality-focused expensive meticulously choreographed but microscale dishes served in five-star restaurants, which are normally consumed by those who are classed as [plus rich]. Most of those who have the economic means to afford the more expensive alternatives to fast food usually avoid eating it, and even if they do consume it, they would be reluctant to admit to doing so in public, because fast food is normally associated with the diet of the working classes rather than the diet of the propertied classes.

This billboard attempts to promote the North American/ "American" fast food that it is marketing as somehow "international"/ European through the use of a few sesame seeds sprinkled on top of what is otherwise an inexpensive mass produced American white bread bun, the use of inexpensive highly processed "American cheese", the use of a slice of hydroponic greenhouse tomato, and the use of inexpensive factory farmed iceberg lettuce (referred to as *lechuga americana* [American lettuce] in the supermarkets on the island) to embellish an otherwise non-descript and banal North American hamburger. By featuring these cheap facsimiles of typically European high-end ingredients, this billboard appeals to the mental models and social representations associated with the use of expensive European hand-crafted breads, expensive European cheeses, organic European vegetables and greens in the *haute cuisine* consumed by people who are classed as [plus rich] and [plus propertied]. In the end, this masquerade of North American cheap fast food as some kind of expensive European/

international fine *cuisine* becomes so obvious that the billboard itself attempts to turn the opposition between unsophisticated North American/ American food versus sophisticated international/ European food on its head by featuring the words “Internacional” and “Americano” in a desperate attempt to equate “international” haute *cuisine* with “American” junk food.

Food preferences are thus used as a way to index class, that is, as a way to prove to the world that those who, because they own substantial amounts of property, do not have to work for a living but instead live off the hard work of everyone else, are somehow superior to people who are classed as [minus rich] and [minus propertied], and that the “sophisticated,” “cosmopolitan” and “international taste” of the propertied classes is superior to the “vulgar taste” associated with the working classes. As previously mentioned, the messaging here is aimed at several different audiences simultaneously. To those who do not have the financial means to afford what is normally considered to be “international” cuisine, it provides an opportunity to pretend that they can somehow eat like the rich do, and for those who can afford European “international” cuisine and are otherwise ashamed to consume fast food, it allows them to somehow justify their indulgence in consuming the addictive North American junk food of the poor, because it is masquerading as “international” by means of a few sesame seeds, a slice of tasteless tomato, a leaf of nutrition-less lettuce and a slice of a cheese-like product that might not even qualify to be called “cheese” in many European countries.

Figure 16 Billboard Advertising an "International" Hamburger (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Carolina, December 2021)

The billboard that appears in Figure 17 adds more dimensions to this masquerade. The American bun with sesame seeds, the American hothouse tomato, the American iceberg lettuce and the American cheese are now used to market a portion of typically North American deep-fried chicken as somehow "international". To add to this ruse, the billboard highlights the use of "spice" to lend credence to its claim that the totally bland domestic North American fast food that it is promoting is in fact "international" because it is "spicy." Traditional Northern European and North America diets which are prototypically associated with people who are raced as [plus white] are notorious for their blandness and their avoidance of spice. So, the use of the three words "internacionales", "Americano" and "spicy" as the key words on this billboard are aimed at manipulating the mental models of the audience so that the "unsophisticated" North American fast food on display not only qualifies as "sophisticated/ international" because it incorporates a few elements supposedly associated with European *haute cuisine*, but also because it goes beyond relatively bland Northern European taste to include the spicier tastes of other cuisines that are becoming more and more accepted as "international" fine food as well, such as the spicier dishes found at restaurants that feature meals based on the culinary traditions of Thailand, India, Japan, etc.

Figure 17 Billboard Advertising an "International" Chicken Sandwich (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Carolina, December 2021)

The Trope of Size/Quantity

Abandoning any pretention of cultural authenticity, natural authenticity or sophistication, other billboards, such as that depicted in Figure 18, utilize a trope of size/ quantity to market the portions of fast food as being simply of sufficient bulk, weight and volume to completely satisfy one's hunger. Of course, because of the addictive nature of the salt, the fats, the artificial additives and the processed sugars/ starches upon which fast food is based, this "satisfaction" has less to do with real nutritional fulfillment than it has to do with a momentary "alimentary fix" that gives the consumer the illusion of satisfaction, but in the end, makes the consumer ever more insatiably hungry for and dependent on repeated, regular, unhealthy doses of fast food. Moreover, this emphasis on quantity directly contradicts the emphasis on quality and small portions that has come to typify advertising associated with the international *haute cuisine* consumed in restaurants frequented by those who are classed as rich.

The name of the product advertised on the billboard in Figure 18 is the first word that hits the eye of the observer and is associated with extremely large size and quantity. The letters used to represent that name are also of larger size than the other letters on the billboard, which nevertheless denote large quantity as well: "*mas carne que nunca*" ["more meat than ever"]. The product depicted on the billboard is of such exaggerated size that it cannot be contained by the billboard itself, and instead extends beyond the left hand and upper margins of the rectangle that conventionally defines the limits of most billboards. The product is depicted as consisting of extra thick layers of ingredients, especially those containing meat, piled one on top of the other, with the two halves of the bread roll that enclose the ingredients into a sandwich constituting only about one third of the total image. This unrealistic ratio of one third bread to two thirds ingredients (especially meat) is found as well on the billboard shown in Figure 15. On the

billboards depicted in Figures 16 and 17, this deceptive representation of quantity is even more exaggerated, with the ingredients portrayed as constituting 75 per cent of the sandwich and the bread 25 per cent. In reality, the product that is delivered to the customer is usually much smaller than that shown on these billboards, and normally consists of a ratio of at least one half bread to at most one half ingredients and much smaller portions of meat.

Figure 18 Billboard Advertising a Hamburger with “More Beef” (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Carolina, December 2021)

This tendency to exaggerate quantity, especially when it comes to the ingredients between the two halves of the bread roll that enclose the sandwich is taken to its extreme on the billboards represented in Figures 18 and 19, where the layers of ingredients between the two halves of the bread bun are so numerous and so thick that one wonders how the product could avoid toppling over under its own weight and bulk, much less how anyone trying to consume the product could actually do so without the fillings falling out all over their clothes. The billboard in Figure 19 highlights the deep-fried processing undergone by several of the ingredients by visually depicting their crispiness as well as by the use of the lead word, whose chunky uneven capital lettering seems to evoke the feel and image of teeth biting into crunchy food. Deep fried foods, despite the unhealthy and addictive nature of the fats, starches and salt used to produce them, are associated as well with food that is bulky and filling (such as meat), not only because of its high caloric content, but also because it is difficult to avoid the irresistible urge to consume it in large quantities.

On the same billboard, this enormous sandwich is itself "sandwiched" to the left by an oversized beverage and to the right by a generous helping of fried potatoes. The other lead word on the billboard is "Combo" which refers to the fact one normally consumes this product in combination with other equally unhealthy and addictive complements, which are sold as a discounted package to the consumer at a price which is less than the price of purchasing the sandwich, the sugar-laden drink and the salt-laced deep fried potatoes separately. A "supersize" option is also sometimes available, whereby some of the components of the combo, such as the beverage, can be increased in size for a minimal extra charge. On the billboard in Figure 18, the trope of quantity takes on both a vertical dimension where the sheer size of the sandwich is

emphasized, as well as a horizontal dimension, where the sheer size of the ‘Combo’ on offer is emphasized.

Figure 19 Billboard Advertising a “Crunchy” Sandwich (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Carolina, January 2019)

The fact that the tropes of quantity and authenticity are not completely incompatible is evident on the billboard represented in Figure 20. For the many Puerto Ricans who have already contracted high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes from consuming products such as the sandwich shown in Figure 20, and who have been told by medical professionals that they need to limit their intake of saturated fats, highly processed starches, and salt, the billboard in Figure 20 offers an apparent alternative, that uses the tropes of cultural and natural authenticity mentioned above to market a sandwich with fewer deep fried ingredients that is supposedly prepared *a la parilla* that is, by using "authentically" Latin American culinary techniques.

The cut of poultry *pechuga* [chicken breast] is the lead word on the billboard. This allows those marketing the product to present it as somehow 'healthy' since that particular cut normally contains less saturated fat than other cuts of poultry. Since the mental models associated with 'healthy' food are also associated with food that is naturally 'authentic' (organic food, unprocessed food, etc.) the audience is led to believe that consuming the chicken in the sandwich will be somehow beneficial to their health. While it may be true that the breast meat of the free-range chicken that Puerto Ricans used to raise on their own farms was relatively low in saturated fats, all of the meat (including the breast cuts) of the factory produced chicken that is actually used in the product on display in Figure 20 is relatively high in saturated fats, due to the growth hormones and other chemicals injected into them to increase the fatty bulk of their meat. In this way, the trope of quantity (which nearly always comes at the expense of quality) extends to the production of the meat in virtually all fast food sandwiches. Meat production has become a process that has one major goal, producing a maximal amount of product in a minimal amount of time, no matter what the impact of the practices and substances used to achieve this goal on

either the animals who are subjected to its poisonous methods or the consumers who are subjected to its poisonous end product.

Just as was the case in Figure 19, the size of the product marketed in Figure 20 is also exaggerated both vertically by an impossibly overstuffed bread roll and horizontally by a "combo". But, in line with the trope of natural authenticity, the beverage portrayed to the left of the sandwich is a bottle of water instead of a sugary drink, and the portion of fried potatoes on the right is much more modest than the portion depicted in Figure 19.

Figure 20 Billboard Advertising a Chicken Breast Sandwich (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Carolina, January 2019)

The Trope of Affordability

As amply illustrated in Figure 20 above and in Figure 21 below, the trope of quantity is inextricably linked to the trope of affordability. Implicit in all of the advertising that emphasizes quantity is not just that you get more food, but also that you get it for less money. This "more for less" message is one of the most basic mental models and social representations associated with fast food by Puerto Ricans and the rest of the peoples of the world, who are experiencing unprecedented increases in the cost of living as corporations are raising prices on all of their products, especially food.

In the corporate-controlled media, these enormous so-called "post-COVID" price hikes have been justified in a number of ways. But several studies (for example, Hogg, 2023) have shown that the major component involved in the waves of inflation that have broken like a tsunami over the majority of Puerto Ricans, who were already struggling to put food on the table before the onset of the pandemic, is sheer corporate greed. In other words, the corporations raised prices mainly because people were beginning to spend more money as COVID restrictions were relaxed, which increased demand, and, instead of increasing supply to meet this demand, these same companies allowed artificial scarcities to emerge, which gave the CEOs and their shareholders a golden opportunity to raise prices. This explains the record profits and record stock prices currently being enjoyed by fast food and other corporations, while more and more of the world's population is forced to cut back on the quantity and quality of food that they consume.

The billboards in Figures 19 and 21 exemplify just one of the many "combos" that are featured as lead options by most fast food restaurants, who offer them as inexpensive ways to eat one's fill without spending too much money. On the surface, this seems to make sense. Given the

obscene rise in prices on even the most basic food items that have recently taken place, it would be extremely difficult for anyone on the island to cook a meal such as the combo on offer in Figures 19 and 21 which consists of beef, chicken, lettuce, tomato, potatoes, onions, bread, condiments and even cheese in some of the options, for only $4.00.

However, as has been previously noted, such 'savings' to consumers on the price of fast food over the short term mask the painfully high cost to these same consumers of producing and consuming fast food over the long term. Table 1 demonstrates how the consumption of fast food has been responsible for a significant part of the current epidemics of diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and cancer which, in monetary terms alone, are now costing the world economy trillions of dollars, which totally negates any savings to consumers on their fast food meals. Of course, this financial cost is accompanied by an even more painful and devastating cost counted in human lives and human suffering.

Another long term cost, in terms of both money and human life, to the production of fast food threatens to be even more devastating. The planet has just experienced its first full year of temperatures averaging 1.5 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial levels, which means that a climate crisis of unprecedented proportions is now on the horizon. The production of fast food has played a significant part in the emissions of greenhouse gasses such as the methane that is emitted from cattle in the process of the mass production of beef in Central and South America, the carbon dioxide that is emitted by the ships, trucks, and other means of transport that carry the meat to consumers in the Global North, the destruction of carbon sinks through the deforestation that turns rainforest into cattle plantations, etc. This rise in temperatures is already causing the polar ice caps to melt to the point that the inflows of fresh water into the oceans will not only cause sea level rises that will require the massive relocation of coastal populations and

infrastructure, but will also cause the currents in the Atlantic to slow down or stop altogether, completely reconfiguring the weather patterns over vast regions of the Earth in such a short amount of time that there is little possibility of adaptation before massive destruction of life and livelihood.

The Trope of Variety

Another key mental model that is activated by the depiction of the "combo" on the billboard depicted in Figure 21 has to do with the trope of variety. Because humans have been nomadic for most of their history on the Earth, and because humans are omnivores, their diet is exceptionally varied when compared to many other animals. So, humans are wired to seek variety in their consumption of food, not just for the sake of avoiding monotony, but more importantly for the sake of ensuring a diverse intake of all of the vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that are essential to optimal health outcomes.

With the increasing popularity of fast food, the traditional Puerto Rican diet of tubers, rice, wheat and other relatively unprocessed starches, a diverse array of seasonal fruits and greens, plus a rich combination of beans, milk products, meat, seafood and other sources of protein has given way to a much more restricted regimen of highly processed starches, fats, plantation raised beef and factory raised poultry, all generously saturated with highly processed sugar and salt. On the billboard in Figure 21 this very real "monoculture of the palate" promoted by the fast food industry is portrayed as the exact opposite. The "combo" being advertised is presented as incorporating sufficient heterogeneity to accommodate any need for a change of pace in our eating patterns. The written and especially the visual messages on the billboard accomplish this by notifying the audience that one of the four components of the 'combo' is variable, rather than constant. So, even though the "combo" on offer in Figure 21 always

includes a sugary drink, a packet of salty fried potatoes and a packet of equally salty chicken nuggets covered with deep fat fried processed white flour, the fourth component has four options that the consumer can choose from: 1) a regular sized hamburger (optionally with cheese); 2) a double sized hamburger (optionally with cheese); 3) a regular sized hamburger but with a deep fried chicken filet substituted for the beef component; and 4) a wrap with non-deep fried chicken in it.

It should be noted that this veneer of variety cleverly masks the fact that what is really being promoted here are essentially 4 versions of the same product, all of which use essentially the same optional condiments including a slice of onion, leaf of nutrient free pesticide coated iceberg lettuce, a slice of equally nutrient free hothouse produced tomato, a slice of saturated fat infused imitation cheese product, and sugar and salt laced mustard, ketchup and/ or mayonnaise condiments. In the first place, there is absolutely no difference between option 1 and option 2, except for the fact that option 2 has an extra helping of fatty mass produced beef on it. The difference between options 1 and 2 on the one hand, and option 3 on the other is simply the substitution of an unhealthy portion of growth hormone saturated plantation raised fried beef by an equally unhealthy portion of growth hormone saturated factory raised deep fried chicken, coated in processed starch and salt.

As was the case with the meal depicted on the billboard in Figure 19, Option 4 in Figure 21 seems to be designed for those who are concerned about their health and their consumption of fast food, first by substituting the highly processed white flour hamburger bun laced with sugar and salt in options 1, 2 and 3 for an equally highly processed white flour flatbread laced with sugar and salt. While the mental models linked to hamburger buns are not usually associated with healthy eating, the mental models linked to flatbreads have been established through the

discourses articulated by the food industry in such a way that consumers associate flatbreads to healthy diets such as the highly publicized "Mediterranean diet" where flatbreads traditionally feature prominently. The other difference is that the unhealthy portion of growth hormone saturated factory raised deep fried chicken in option 3 is replaced by an unhealthy portion of growth hormone saturated factory raised non-deep fried chicken. An added incentive to choose option 4 has to do with the fact that the mental models associated with wraps are also linked to the tropes of both natural and cultural authenticity, and by extension to *haute cuisine* and pretentious upper class food consumption patterns.

The written messages on the billboard in Figure 21 start by activating mental models associated with quantity in the minds of the reader, with "Aquí comes más" ["Here you eat more"] as the leading sentence written in capital letters. Mental models linked to affordability are then activated by the next written message "4 x $4" ["Four (items) for four dollars"]. Finally, mental models associated with variety are activated by the third written message "Tu favorito más nuggets, papas y refresco" ["Your favorite with nuggets, (French fried) potatoes, and drink"] also written in capital letters. The first two words of the third sentence describe the variable option of the combo (the sandwich or wrap), with the four possible choices depicted in the photos on the billboard which are placed alongside the company logo, while the rest of the sentence refers to the three non-variable options (the chicken nuggets, the fried potatoes and the drink). By referring to the variable option as "Your favorite" the text conveys the message that there is sufficient variety among the options to allow the reader to make a meaningful choice.

Figure 21 Billboard Advertising a “Combination” Meal (Source: Photograph taken by the author in Carolina, December 2021)

The Trope of Facility/Accessibility

Another of the most common mental models activated by the images and written messages on billboards that advertise fast food is that of facility/ accessibility. The use of this trope conditions the audience to associate fast food with a minimum expenditure of time and energy. Links between the consumption of fast food and "saving" time and energy in terms of preparing one's own food at home are cemented in the minds of the targeted audience. In practical terms, preparing one's own meals at home involves a substantial investment of time and energy, which includes, but is not limited to, meal planning, managing stocks of ingredients and shopping for them, processing and cooking the ingredients, serving the meal, and cleaning up the byproducts of preparing and consuming it.

Moreover, the fewer financial resources available to the consumer, the more and more complex and expensive in terms of time, energy and money these tasks become. While those who have more financial resources can afford to shop at "food clubs" and stock up on reserve supplies of the ingredients that they commonly use for preparing meals, thus expending less time and energy shopping for ingredients, those with fewer financial resources can only afford to purchase what is immediately necessary at the local supermarkets and thus find themselves constantly making shopping trips. Similarly, those with more financial resources can afford to shop at just one supermarket, even though they know that some of the items on their lists can be obtained for less money elsewhere, while those with fewer resources have to shop at several markets and compare pricing and weekly discounts to make sure to pay the lowest prices available for what they need. Those with more financial resources can afford to remodel their kitchens and purchase time- and energy-saving kitchen equipment for meal preparation (such as ceramic top or convection stoves, high quality cookware, food processors, etc.) and for cleaning

up (such as dishwashing machines, robotic floor sweepers, etc.). Those with fewer financial resources, however, must be content with older, more labor and time intensive methods and equipment, and often lack the ability to replace that equipment when it breaks down.

In the past, day to day food preparation in Puerto Rico was usually done by persons sexed and gendered as cis-hetero-females and was an activity which often involved women pooling their resources in terms of what they had available in their food gardens, what they might have in the way of food processing equipment (communal ovens, communal mills, food grinders) etc. The output of each instance of meal production typically fed a significant number of people in an extended family at each sitting. Over the past decades, this communal aspect of food preparation has been eroded to the point that while cooking is still most often done by persons sexed and gendered as cis-hetero-females, they as individuals can no longer rely on anyone else to help them in the complex process of putting a meal on the table. This increased isolation in terms of food preparation has been matched by a corresponding isolation in terms of consumption, with the typical daily meal now shared by at most a single nuclear family consisting of two or three people. More recently, this trend toward the breakdown of all communal structures (community, family, etc.) has become so complete that a substantial number of Puerto Ricans now prepare and consume their own individual meals in virtual solitude.

This trend toward isolation in meal production and consumption has been consciously cultivated by fast capitalism and the fast food industry. In the past, most Puerto Ricans (except for those, mostly mothers, who were saddled with the responsibility of obtaining and preparing food) were able to have access to regular meals at no individual cost to themselves in terms of time, energy and money. At present however, many, if not most, people on the island are faced with the daily challenge of budgeting enough time, energy and money to prepare and consume

their own individual meals. This means that the expenditure of money in acquiring the necessary ingredients as well as the expenditure of time and effort in meal preparation has increased exponentially, as any possibilities of savings that could be attributed to people cooking together and especially eating together have evaporated. To make things worse, while most Puerto Ricans in the past could depend on non-commodified, non-monetized family relationships to obtain the food that they needed, nowadays virtually all acts of food preparation and food consumption have been commodified and transformed into a monetized exchange from which corporations extract a hefty profit at each and every stage. Literally, as the North American saying goes: "There is no free lunch" any longer in Puerto Rico.

Against this backdrop, the fast food industry has mushroomed, growing rapidly like the cancers that its products induce. Originally marketed in the United States in the 1960s as a way for overworked housewives to liberate themselves from all of the energy and time intensive activities related to providing meals for their families, fast food is now targeted at all of us, because we are all now forced to provide these meals for ourselves and do all of the other things that our female family members used to do for us. Preparing food for a number of people at the same time is not that much different, in terms of time and energy, from preparing one's own individual meals. In this way, capitalism has created a new scarcity around the increase in time and energy needed in the process of food preparation that it pretends to solve through the availability of fast food produced by wage slaves working at minimum wages in fast food franchises. The monetary savings and financial benefits derived in the past from cooking in bulk for larger groups of people in an extended family have now been shifted from our homes to the corporations. Because they produce in quantity and employ low waged labor to do so, fast food

companies can now offer their meals to consumers at a price that, at first glance, at least, seems to be unbelievably affordable.

As demonstrated in the signage depicted in Figures 22 and 23, this trope of facility/ accessibility was in particular evidence at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the focus of the messages on fast food billboards shifted toward highlighting the drive-through and take-out facilities of their franchises. Fast food chains were quick to resume and expand their drive-through and take-out opening hours with each governmental decree that gradually lessened the duration of the curfews imposed to control the spread of COVID-19.

The message to consumers, who had been forced by the curfews to abandon their addictive dependence on fast food, was that there were once again "safe" options for reverting to their former fast food consumption patterns. It is no accident that there is substantial continuity in how the trope of facility/ accessibility has been deployed by the fast food industry from the 1960s up until the present. As noted above, the mental models established through the aggressive advertising campaigns waged by fast food corporations during the 1960s depicted their products as a form of "liberation" of women from the task of meal production. The messaging on the billboards in Figures 22 and 23, shows how these same mental models that associate fast food with "liberation" were re-activated in order to market fast food not only as a way to "liberate" the population of the island from confinement to their homes during the curfew period, but also as a way to "liberate" the population from being obliged to prepare their own meals at home, during the period when the fast food outlets along with the rest of the restaurant industry were shut down to slow the propagation of COVID-19.

One of the most contradictory aspects of the COVID-19 crisis was that the dramatic short-term increases in mortality rates due to the disease itself were accompanied by equally

dramatic decreases in many of the longer-term causes of mortality that can be attributed to the measures taken to contain COVID-19, such as the drop in carbon emissions and other forms of air pollution as the use of combustion engines lessened, and the drop in consumption of unhealthy addictive food as the fast food outlets were forced to shut their doors. During the height of the pandemic, Puerto Ricans found themselves obliged to plan and prepare their own food at home. As a consequence, Puerto Ricans were often eating healthier meals and to some extent at least, re-establishing communal systems of meal planning, production and consumption.

As soon as the curfew restrictions were relaxed, however, these temporary gains were completely reversed. Today, despite the fact that Puerto Rico has lost nearly 20 percent of its population to outmigration in recent years, the highways are more congested than ever with carbon-emitting vehicles, and the fast food industry is one of the few growth sectors on the island. So, in the name of "liberation" the people of Puerto Rico have been re-subjugated to the enslavement of fast food addiction after a brief "detox" period during the height of the pandemic.

Figures 22 and 23 Billboards Advertising Drive Through and Carry Out Service (Source: Photographs taken by the author in San Juan, March-April 2020)

Chapter Five:

Conclusions

This dissertation was researched and written using the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, as well as what can be said in one way or another to be offshoots of CDA, such as Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis and Linguistic Landscape Analysis. That said, this dissertation project gives more prominence to some of the precursors of the above-mentioned approaches, such as the work of Bakhtin and Gramsci, than most of the scholarly work done within those frameworks to date. Under Van Dijk's original formulation of CDA he also harkens back to Bakhtin and Gramsci when he insists that description and analysis, the usual minimal requirements for academic work, are not sufficient, and need to be driven by two other elements: 1) critique of power abuse and 2) commitment to addressing issues that arise from power abuse.

All too often, as a framework such as CDA becomes institutionalized and domesticated under the dominant theories and methodologies in academic disciplines such as Linguistics, Communication, Media Studies, etc., there is a tendency for it to fall back into the dominant paradigms of academic work. The scholarly literature recently generated under the rubrics of CDA, MCDA and LLA includes hundreds, if not thousands of studies. Unfortunately, but predictably, a review of these studies would reveal that the authors generally place much more emphasis on the 'safer' traditional components of description and analysis at the expense of the critical and engagement components that Van Dijk insisted upon. Also predictably, when authors do include these latter components, the 'less dangerous' critique component receives the most weight in comparison to the much more 'dangerous' engagement component. In this dissertation, a conscious decision was made to flip this scenario, so that the entire text has significant and elaborate threads of critique of the abuse of power and material that is aimed at popular

education for social action woven into it. This can be seen as one of the key contributions of the present research.

Another aspect of the present study that distinguishes it from most other research carried out under the rubrics of CDA, MCDA and LL studies has to do with the ways in which it crosses disciplinary boundaries. Van Dijk and many others who work within fields related to CDA invite those who are interested in such studies to carry out their work in an interdisciplinary manner, pointing out that it is very difficult for truly critical and engaged work to be done without integrating approaches and insights from beyond the field of linguistics. While it can be said that many, if not most of the work that has been carried out under the umbrellas of CDA, MCDA and LL does in fact cross disciplinary boundaries, this tends to be done only where completely necessary and only within the confines of other disciplines in the social sciences, such as history, sociology, psychology, etc. In this dissertation, a conscious effort has been made, not only to devote substantial sections to material beyond the disciplinary confines of linguistics, but also to venture into disciplines beyond the scope of the social sciences. So, while ample material is integrated into the text from other social sciences such as political science, sociology, history, anthropology, etc., there is also substantial material to be found as well from the physical sciences (especially the health sciences) as well as from literature. Therefore, the extent to which Van Dijk's recommendations in terms of interdisciplinarity have actually been implemented in this dissertation goes far beyond what is normally found in any traditional CDA-related study, in terms of both quantity of material from outside of linguistics and range of disciplines included.

The inclusion of discussion of themes that are not normally discussed in more than a superficial way in a dissertation on Linguistic Landscapes, for example, issues less traditionally associated with linguistics, and more traditionally associated to the disciplines of economics,

political science and the health sciences, is key in making the present dissertation a document that might be useful to more than just a select audience of academics. By not shying away from delving very deeply into the profound impacts and deep entanglements between the linguistic landscape of Puerto Rico and the economic, political and wellness landscapes on the island, the work becomes more relevant and useful to those Puerto Ricans who are critical of the current state of all of those landscapes and who want to do something to transform them from landscapes that are not in the image and interests of the people of the island, to landscapes that better reflect their image and better promote their interests.

The literature component of this dissertation merits special mention here. In linguistics, there has been a marked reluctance to explore the rich and deep potential for synergies between the study of language as a "science" and the study of language as an "art." This tendency to erect and maintain barriers between linguistics and literary studies is being questioned and critiqued by more and more specialists in both disciplines, especially by those who are attempting to decolonize the academy (Faraclas, Storch & Velupillai, 2024). While it has traditionally been much less controversial for scholars who focus on the study of literature to integrate work from the field of linguistics, such as that of Saussure and Jakobson, into their work, the integration of substantial inputs from literature into a linguistic study such as this dissertation is not yet a common practice.

As is illustrated in this dissertation, there is great potential for deepening our linguistic analyses of such phenomena as Linguistic Landscapes through the careful and serious consideration of literary sources, as well as of the work that specialists in literature have done on those sources. The benefits to linguistics of such border crossing are not limited, however, to making our work less superficial. By including literary sources in the discussion of the *jibarx* and

other key tropes in the construction of Puerto Rican identities, the present work becomes much more relevant and understandable, not just to academics, but also to the community under study, than the usual dissertation focused on Linguistic Landscapes. Many Puerto Rican readers of the present work would probably have failed to grasp key points that underpin the arguments put forward in this dissertation, if these points had not been illustrated and made accessible through the literary texts which were included.

The conscious or unconscious avoidance of reference to literature in the work of Western linguists has not been the norm in most non-Western academic traditions. Other bodies of linguistic work from other eras and other parts of the world (such as the linguistic traditions associated with South Asia and Sanskrit) tended to consider what we today see as separate disciplines, such as linguistics, literary studies, rhetoric, etc., as part of the same area of study. Even in the traditions that gave rise to Western academia itself, such as that of Classical Greece, such strict disciplinary divisions were notably absent. In a dissertation focused on Puerto Rico, however, any attempt to separate linguistics from literature becomes even more problematic, because the island is part of the Afro-Atlantic. Of all of the areas of the world, the Afro-Atlantic is one of the regions where it is the most difficult to ignore the performative elements in language production, processing and practice, making the separation of the "art" from the "science" of language even more indefensible in a dissertation such as this one.

In the following paragraphs, some answers to the research questions that were initially formulated will be considered in the light of the findings outlined in the previous chapters.

Research question 1: Which linguistic varieties are represented in the written texts on the billboards under study? Initially, it was proposed that the use of varieties of Spanish vs. varieties of English on billboards in Puerto Rico would constitute a key strategy for targeting specific

audiences in specific communities on the island, namely more Spanish-oriented audiences in San Juan versus more English-oriented audiences in Guaynabo. As shown in Table 2, however, in the final analysis there was no detectable difference in the use of Spanish versus English on the billboards included in this study, no matter where they were located, with Spanish invariably serving as the matrix and default language to create a space where limited input from English might be used flexibly and creatively. All of the billboards used Spanish to communicate messages through text, while English was only used: 1) in instances where a proper noun corresponding to a product name or a trademark was originally formulated in English, and was thus not normally susceptible to translation, as is normally the case with proper nouns (for example "Bounty," "YouTube" or "MasterCard") or more rarely, 2) where a single English word or phrase has become integrated into Puerto Rican Spanish as a loan (for example "Tour" or "APR").

There are several possible interpretations for this unexpected result. One possible explanation might be that because the billboards considered were for the most part targeted at the drivers and passengers of automobiles rather than to the actual neighborhoods in which they happened to be located, their sensitivity to the variations and preferences of the local communities in which they were found was not as important as their adherence to the general variations and preferences of the island's population as a whole. Another possible reason for this pattern, however, might question the assumption that audiences living in and around Guaynabo really differ substantially in their use of varieties of Spanish versus their use of varieties of English from the rest of the population on the island. From the evidence on the billboards considered in the present study, it appears that the patterns of use of the two languages and the patterns of interaction between them on billboards differs little from the patterns found in the

everyday linguistic practices of Puerto Ricans, where Spanish serves as the principal matrix and default language to create a space where limited input from English can be used flexibly and creatively.

Figure	Billboard advertising …	Spanish	English
1	The lottery	All	
2	Rice	All, except:	Trademark: ‘YouTube’
3	Cock fighting	All, except:	Trademark: ‘Pan American Grain’
4	Performance tour	All, except:	Loan: ‘Tour’ Trademark: ‘Ford
5	Credit union	All	Product name: ‘Credit Union’ Loan: ‘APR’ Trademark: ‘MasterCard’
6	Spa	All	
7	Paper towels	All, except:	Product name: ‘Bounty’
8	Medical insurance	All	Product names: ‘Classicare’, ‘MCS’
9	[taken from angle]	All	Trademarks: ‘Wendy’s’ ‘Coca-Cola’
10	[mounted on pilon]	All	Trademark: ‘Burger King’
11	[building façade]	All	Product name: ‘Frosty …’ Trademarks: ‘Wendy’s’ ‘Quality

			is our recipe'
12	Hair straightener	All, except:	Trademark: '… Professionals' Hashtag: '#Hairpowerment'
13	Large hamburger	All	
14	Combination meal	All, except:	Loan/ product name: 'Nuggets' Trademarks: 'Wendy's' 'Coca-Cola'
15	Use of PR beef	All, except:	Trademark: 'Wendy's'
16	"International" hamburger	All, except:	Trademark: 'Burger King'
17	"International" chicken sandwich	All, except:	Product name: 'Spicy'
18	Hamburger with "more beef"	All, except:	Product name: 'Whopper' Trademark: 'Burger King'
19	Crunchy sandwich	All, except:	Product names: 'Cruncher Supreme' 'My combo'
20	Chicken breast sandwich	All, except:	Trademarks: 'Burger King'
21	Combination meal	See # 14	
22	Drive through/carry out service	All	Loan: 'Carry out' Trademark: 'Burger King'
23	Drive through service	See #10	

Table 2. Use of Spanish vs. English on the billboards included in this dissertation

In any case, less English than might be expected appears on billboards in areas of the island, such as Guaynabo, whose political class pride themselves on their use of English on public signage. This would indicate that while it may be politically expedient for English to become the matrix and default language for signage and other governmental inputs into the Linguistic Landscape in Guaynabo, the corporations who advertise on the billboards of Guaynabo have opted for Spanish as a matrix language to sell their products. The logic here is that it is more effective to advertise through the use of language that corresponds more to how Puerto Ricans actually speak, and less to the political agenda of Anglicization adopted by the politicians.

Among many others, Simounet Bey and Geigel (2022) review the linguistic and juridical history of the US colonial enterprise in Puerto Rico. These authors point out the ways in which the US has attempted to impose English as the main language of instruction in the island's public education system in an effort to impose the monolingual use of English in Puerto Rico. Simounet Bey and Geigel also highlight how Puerto Ricans have reacted against this policy by opting to use Puerto Rican Spanish as their main language. The degree to which Puerto Ricans have been successful in resisting the imposition of English is evident in the patterns of use of Spanish versus English on the billboards under study in this dissertation, even in Guaynabo where, one might argue, the resistance to English is supposedly less than elsewhere on the island.

The best example is observed in Guaynabo and its political posturing as an English City vs. the reality of how people use language in their daily lives. Political posturing is not allowed by the fast food companies and the advertising agencies to get in the way of maximizing profits. While a city mayor may think whatever she or he want to think, hence it comes to the bottom

line, you can communicate with people and manipulate them much more effectively in Caribbean varieties of Spanish in Puerto Rico (even in Guaynabo) than in English.

Research question 2: What are some of the more prominent mental models, social representations and ideologies activated on the billboards under study? Over the course of the research carried out in the process of writing this dissertation, it became apparent that the mental models, social representations and ideologies activated by the billboards under study could be grouped together under several 'tropes', which include the following:

1) The trope of Authenticity, which encompasses both Cultural and Natural Authenticity
2) The Trope of Size/Quantity
3) The Trope of Affordability
4) The Trope of Variety
5) The Trope of Facility/Accessibility

As noted above, the trope of Authenticity can be considered from two angles, each of which corresponds to one of the poles (the [plus] pole versus the [minus] pole) that define one of the basic artificial oppositions that underpins anthropocentrism as one of several systems of domination that have been unleashed under colonialism, and each of which has been intensified with each successive wave of colonialism. In the case of Authenticity, the binary opposition in question is that between [culture] versus [nature]. This opposition is, in its turn, a permutation of the more fundamental opposition between [plus human] versus [minus human]. The [plus human] versus [minus human] opposition defines everything to which the value [plus human] is assigned as true, real, good, and normal while condemning everything to which the value [minus human] is assigned as false, unreal, evil, and abnormal.

The operationalization and hegemonic internalization of this binary opposition has enabled and legitimized the exploitation, marginalization, ruination and erasure of all that is speciated as [minus human] by all that is speciated as [plus human]. For example, the wave of colonialism unleashed in the 17th century under the Dutch and the English involved an unprecedented and qualitative intensification of anthropocentrism in the form of the deforestation and environmental degradation of much of the Caribbean region to establish sugar cane plantations and mills. This unfolded alongside an unprecedented and qualitative intensification of plunder in the form of emerging capitalism in the Caribbean, an unprecedented and qualitative intensification of ethnocentrism in the form of racialized enslavement which involved the complete racialization of Caribbean societies, and an unprecedented and qualitative intensification of the exploitation of and domination of women, who formed the majority of the field gangs of cane cutters on the plantations. At present we are witnessing similarly unprecedented and qualitative intensifications of anthropocentrism, plunder, ethnocentrism and patriarchy as neocolonialism takes root as a globalized system, and some of the many manifestations of this intensification are to be found in the modalities and content used to project publicity on billboards.

The trope of Cultural Authenticity is closely related to the literary study of the two plays "*La Juega de Gallos o El Negro Bozal*" and "*La Carreta*" which was conducted as a part of this research. Both dramatic works reflect some of the ways in which terms such as *criollx*, *jíbarx* and *Boricua* have become synonymous with the artificial construction of a monolithic Puerto Rican identity that has been shaped by various imperial projects, such as the gradual 'whitening' of the island's population over the course of the 19th century, and which is reflected in advertisements on billboards of hair straightening products, beauty treatments, etc.

Billboards promoting the consumption of fast food can be seen as promoting an equally colonial project ostensibly aimed at 'developing' the island and its people during the 20th century. This project has resulted in the alienation of the vast majority of the island's population from their traditional land and their traditional subsistence lifestyles in the rural areas of the island to become wage slaves in the cities. In this way, an independent and resilient population living with abundance and food security has been reduced to an impoverished and fragile population living with scarcity and malnutrition. Fast food billboards that use images and language associated with terms such as *criollx*, *jíbarx* and *Boricua* activate mental models and social representations which have been internalized by Puerto Ricans through their constant exposure to the dominant discourses of coloniality. These mental models and social representations evoke mythologized notions of an "authentic culture" and an "authentically natural lifestyle" that can be deceptively commodified and packaged in the form of the most culturally disconnected and unnatural fast food.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the tropes of Size/Quantity and Affordability are closely related and have played a central role in popularizing fast food as a way to consume greater and greater amounts of food for less and less money. These tropes mask the fact that the only reliable quantities provided by fast food are unhealthy amounts of empty sugars, saturated fats, salt, and chemical additives. They also mask the fact that that the hidden costs to both individuals and society related to treating the obesity, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, cancer and other health conditions resulting from the consumption of fast food, when combined with other hidden costs such as environmental degradation, far outweigh any of the "savings" advertised on the billboards.

As for the trope of Variety, while fast food takes many different forms, it consists mainly of different combinations of the same unhealthy ingredients, and little in the way of the variety of micronutrients required for the maintenance of good health. Thus, the epidemic in obesity worldwide resulting in no small part from the consumption of fast foods has been accompanied by an epidemic of micronutrient malnutrition. Finally, the trope of Facility/Accessibility masks the fact that the vast monocultures on which the consumption of fast food depends have made land and subsistence livelihoods drastically less accessible to millions of people worldwide. This has forced them to follow in the tragic footsteps of the people of Puerto Rico, from a life of direct access to free healthy food from their own gardens to a life of ever less access to ever more costly and ever less healthy food.

In sum, it is no accident that what the main tropes identified on the fast food billboards are promising to Puerto Ricans, are also the very things that the people of the island had up until the corporate interests that now advertise fast food inflicted their 'development' discourses on Puerto Rico; that is, direct Access to an abundant Quantity and Variety of Affordable, Natural, Culturally appropriate, and healthy food.

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