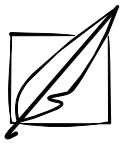

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Propaganda in 17th-century pamphlets on Jamaica: A corpus-assisted discourse study (1655-1700)[1]

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines features of propaganda discourse in a corpus of 17th-century English pamphlets about the settlement in Jamaica (PonJ_corpus) from 1655 to 1700. Drawing upon Taylor's definition of propaganda as "the deliberate attempt to persuade people to think or behave in a desired way" (2003: 12), the study investigates how pamphlets were crafted to encourage migration to the new colony. By analysing discourse strategies that highlight the colony's economic potential, this paper combines corpus-based methods with discourse analysis, interpreting quantitative data within the socio-political context of the time. The findings demonstrate how collocational patterns surrounding key terms contribute to the 'spin' of the message, aiming to shape readers' perceptions and behaviours toward migration.

Keywords: 17th-century pamphlets, propaganda, Jamaica, readership, corpus-assisted discourse analysis.

1. Introduction

After the conquest of Ireland and Scotland, Cromwell was eager to expand the British maritime power into Spanish America. His ambitious plan – known as the Western Design – envisaged the occupation of Hispaniola, a large and resource-rich island in the middle of the Caribbean which represented a considerable source of wealth for Spain. The expedition failed

1 I would like to thank the referees for their helpful comments. All remaining errors are my own.

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miserably and in order to compensate for the fiasco the troops fell back on Jamaica, a poorly defended Spanish island, not far from Hispaniola. From the day of the occupation, 10th May 1655, the island remained a British possession, becoming a crucial commercial base on the Atlantic route and a permanent British beachhead in the Spanish sector of the Caribbean. Even so, the transformation of a Spanish Jamaica into a British colony was a long and arduous process which required an intense propaganda campaign in order to persuade people both of the legitimacy of the occupation and the profitability of a new life on the island. Indeed, troops and the early settlers experienced all sorts of misery and distress after their arrival: famine, disease and repeated guerrilla attacks on the part of Spanish settlers and Afro-Caribbean bands caused the death of more than two thirds of the army. The circulation of stories about the misery and high mortality in Jamaica was an issue that the Protectorate, first, and the restored monarchy later on, tried hard to hinder through the spreading of optimistic promotional accounts.

By drawing upon Jowett and O'Donnell (2006: 48), I consider propaganda as a form of communication which uses both informative and persuasive tools to promote its own objectives by controlling the flow of information, managing public opinion and manipulating behaviours. From the early exploration of Virginia, at the turn of the 17th century, authorities incentivized the circulation of propaganda pamphlets in the attempt to alter people's perceptions of the newly occupied territories and their indigenous population. Pamphleteers combined a language of abundance, diversity and wonder with pervasive references to the natives' lack of civilization in order to persuade English readers of the legitimacy of the conquest and the benefits of migrating to the new settlement (Cecconi 2020). In the present study, therefore, special attention is given to the language through which late 17th-century accounts of Jamaica were presented to the public. To this purpose, the focus is on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the linguistic features adopted to construct a positive or negative spin around the information.

In order to analyse the colonial rhetoric of the time, a corpus of late 17th-century pamphlets on Jamaica was compiled for the years from 1655 to 1700. The specialised corpus aims to answer the following research questions:

1) Which are the most frequent keywords in the corpus?
2) How do words and clusters encode the propaganda message of the author?

Results will show that pamphlets on Jamaica maintain features of the colonial rhetoric of the early 17th century with some differences related to the specific

context of the conquest. As a matter of fact, the equation between indigenous and uninhabited land –on which premises the early settlers established their legal and Christian right to occupy territories in North America – could not hold for an island which was taken away from another European country. New rhetorical strategies were therefore set up in order to delegitimize the Spanish rule in Jamaica and reinforce the legitimacy of the English capture.

2. Propaganda and Early Modern pamphlets

When applying our modern concept of propaganda to historical text types, caution is necessary, as contemporary perceptions may distort our understanding of propaganda in earlier periods. For this reason, I adopt Taylor's approach and define propaganda as a neutral process of persuasion that has existed since human beings first began to communicate. More specifically, propaganda is understood as "the communication of ideas designed to persuade people to think and behave in the desired way" (Taylor 2003: 6). At the core of propaganda lies the concept of intent, which distinguishes it from other forms of persuasion, including education. Propaganda employs a range of discourse strategies to convey messages, ideas, or ideologies intended primarily to serve the self-interests of the propagandists and the institutions behind them, rather than to promote the well-being of the audience (Taylor 2003: 7; Jowett – O'Donnell 2006; Baines – O'Shaughnessy – Snow 2019: xxv). A step further in the theorization of propaganda has been taken by Staal (2019) for whom propaganda is aimed not only at communicating a message but also at constructing reality itself. Drawing upon the model elaborated by Chomsky and Herman (1988), Staal (2019: 2-3) conceives of propaganda as a performance of power in the process of manufacturing consent – that is in the process of shaping a new normative reality that serves not only the interests of élite power but also those of popular mass movements.

When we study how propaganda was actualized in early modern discourse, considerations about the historical and socio-cultural context of the time become of paramount importance. In his history of propaganda, Taylor considers the advent of the printing press in the middle of the 15th century as the most appropriate dividing line between medieval and modern propaganda. As a matter of fact, Gutenberg's invention determined a gradual shift from script to print which incentivized a massive growth in literary persuasions of all kinds and progressively paved the way for the shaping of

mass propaganda as we know it today. Thanks to the proliferation of books and cheap print representations of religious and political wars, expeditions to the New World and colonization became increasingly accessible to the English people.

Contrary to our modern ideal of objective reporting, 17th-century news discourse was deeply imbued with persuasion. As Greenspan (2012: 6) observes, "17th-century editors, journalists, and pamphleteers set out not simply to impart information but to engage in interpretative contexts and advocate particular points of view". This is clearly demonstrated in Brownlees's (2006a) study of polemic and propaganda in Civil War serial pamphlets, where the propaganda strategies of the royalist *Mercurius Aulicus* and the parliamentarian *Mercurius Britanicus* are thoroughly examined in relation to the aims and political standpoints of the two editors. Similarly, in the present paper, propaganda is investigated in relation to the a priori objectives of the government, which appropriated forms of mass communication to construct narratives favourable to its expansionist designs. Some texts, such as declarations, proclamations, and regulations, were transparently official, aiming to establish normative behaviour, while others camouflaged their official origins to create the illusion of spontaneous and therefore authentic communication. Most of these ostensibly unbiased publications were presented as first-hand accounts of Jamaica in pamphlet format and form the core of my study.

Occasional pamphlets were stitched quarto books of not more than twelve sheets, a length which helped to limit the cost of the product. Although towards the end of the century, the retail price was nearer a penny a sheet and a work of a dozen sheets could rise to as much as one shilling (Raymond 2003: 83), pamphlets continued to circulate among the lower sorts. Their ubiquity was ensured by the practice of considering these products as a sort of common property which was continuously exchanged, borrowed and passed on (Walsham 1999: 34). Pamphlets were read aloud in circles of friends and neighbours or in local centres of sociability from the Royal Exchange to St Paul's Churchyard, from coffee-houses to barber shops. Their oral transmission ensured that the content reached a large spectrum of society: from the humble receiver to the middle and upper ranking buyer. This was crucial for colonial pamphlets which needed to address both targets in the attempt to ensure the human resources and financial investments required for the maintenance of the possession. Because of their quite heterogenous and composite character (Brownlees 2006b), pamphlets can be considered a macro-genre predicated on the borrowing and combination

of different text-types. In the case of colonial pamphlets on Jamaica, texts comprise descriptions, historical accounts, practical advice, maps, minutes, official documents and letters which perfectly exemplify the hybrid nature of the genre (Raymond 2003).

As propaganda vehicles, early modern pamphlets shed significant light on the political and socio-cultural assumptions of their contemporaries. A propagandist must, in fact, conform to the preconceptions and prejudices of the audience in order to achieve their goal. As Harris (1987: 97) observes, "to be effective, a propagandist must know the sentiments and opinions, the current tendencies and stereotypes among the people he is trying to reach, and appeal to them in such a way as to win individuals over to his cause". In this sense, most propaganda reflects (and, to some extent, constructs) the common opinions of the age. By focusing on 17th-century pamphlets on Jamaica within the context of the London print market, it is possible to identify the prejudices and assumptions the pamphleteer seeks to emphasize, to determine whether the author attempts to imbue preconceptions with new meanings, and, finally, to assess what impact such arguments were likely to have on different groups of consumers.

3. Corpus and methodology

In order to answer the research questions outlined in the introduction, a corpus of 15 pamphlets on Jamaica (PonJ) dating from 1655 to 1700 and consisting of 211,974 words was compiled. The texts forming the corpus were taken from the *Early English Books Online* archive and selected by searching for the word *Jamaica* in the title. All the texts are accounts containing eyewitness descriptions, instructions to new settlers, narratives of the victory of the Protectorate over the Spanish forces, reportage of the Spanish cruelties over the Indians, tracts on the health conditions and presentation of the legal system confirmed by the king. The works of PonJ are listed in Table 1.

Drawing upon Partington (2004, 2009), I investigated my corpus by adopting the principles of corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS). CADS allows for the use of concordance technology applied to large amounts of linguistic evidence available in corpora in order to enhance the study of discourse features of particular genres, of the language and of the strategies used by authors to pursue their communicative aims (Partington 2004: 12). In the present study, this methodology enables us to identify units of discourse used to construct realities which fit the propaganda aims of the author.

Table 1. Works in PonJ

AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	WORDS
Anon.	1655	*A brief and perfect journal of the late preceedings and successe of the English army in the West-Indies, continued until June the 24th 1655: Together with some quæres inserted and answered. Published for satisfaction of all such who desire truly to be informed in these particulars. / By I.S. an eye-witnesse*	10,558
Oliver Cromwell	1655	*By the Protector, a proclamation giving encouragement to such as shall transplant themselves to Jamaica*	1,472
Bartolomé de las Casas (trans. by J. P.)	1656	*The tears of the Indians being an historical and true account of the cruel massacres and slaughters of above twenty millions of innocent people, committed by the Spaniards in the islands of Hispaniola, Cuba, Jamaica, &c*	28,498
Anon.	1657	*A true description of Jamaica with the fertility, commodities, and healthfulness of the place. As also the towns, havens, creeks, promontories, and the circuit of the whole island.*	915
Edward Doyley	1658	*A narrative of the great success God hath been pleased to give His Highness forces in Jamaica, against the King of Spains forces; together with a true relation of the Spaniards losing their plate-fleet, as it was communicated in a letter from the Governour of Jamaica.*	1,435
Edward Doyley	1659	*A brief relation of a victory, obtained by the forces under the command of Gen. Edward Doyley, commander in chief of his Highnesse's forces in the island of Jamaica. Against the forces of the king of Spain, commanded by Don Christopher Arnaldo Sasi, commander in chief of the Spanish forces there*	1,200
Edmund Hickeringill	1661	*Jamaica viewed with all the ports, harbours, and their several soundings, towns, and settlements thereunto belonging together, with the nature of it's climate, fruitfulnesse of the soile, and its suitableness to English complexions.*	11,256

Richard Blome and Thomas Lynch	1672	*A Description of the Island of Jamaica, with the Other Isles and Territories in America, to which the English are Related*	20,038
Thomas Trapham	1678	*A discourse of the state of health in the island of Jamaica with a provision therefore calculated from the air, the place, and the water, the customs and manner of living &c*	32,443
Governor of Jamaica, Sir Thomas Lynch	1682	*A narrative of the affairs lately received from His Majesties island of Jamaica*	2,965
Anon.	1683	*The Present State of Jamaica. With the Life of the Great Columbus the First Discoverer*	16,817
Francis Hanson	1683	*The laws of Jamaica passed by the assembly, and confirmed by His majesty in council, Feb. 23. 1683: to which is added, A short account of the island and government thereof, with an exact map of the island*	40,108
Thomas Tryon	1684	*Friendly advice to the gentlemen-planters of the East and West Indies In three parts.*	35,727
Rev. Emmanuel Heath	1692	*A full account of the late dreadful earth-quake at Port-Royal in Jamaica, written in two letters from the minister of that place, from aboard the Granada in Port-Royal Harbour, June 22. 1692.*	2,168
Edward Ward	1699	*A trip to Jamaica with a true character of the people and island / by the author of Sot's paradise.*	6,374

The analysis starts with the elaboration of a keyword list by applying WordSmith Tools 8.0 (Scott 2022) to PonJ. Keywords are calculated by comparing the frequency of each word in the wordlist obtained from PonJ (i.e. the target corpus) with the frequency of the same word/s in the wordlist generated from the *Lampeter Corpus of Early Modern English Tracts* (1640-1740) which functions as reference corpus (RC).[2] The words which appear in the keyword list are those whose frequency in PonJ is unusually high in comparison with their frequency in the reference corpus.

2 *The Lampeter Corpus of Early Modern English Tracts* is compiled by Josef Schmied, Claudia Claridge and Rainer Siemund (1999) and amounts to 1,193,385 words. It contains 120 pamphlets belonging to the domains of religion, politics, science, law and miscellaneous. It is available on ICAME and Oxford Text Archive.

From the keyword list obtained, I selected the four most frequent nouns and I investigated their most frequent clusters[3] in concordances by taking into account both their cotext and the wider socio-political context in which they occur (Brownlees 2015: 7). As a matter of fact, clusters allow us "to look not only at the immediate environment (cotext) of a search-word but also to link it outwards to the wider meaning context" (Samson 2021: 44). Furthermore, different situational contexts develop their own favourite clusters, which acquire a unique connotational meaning and persuasive force in that particular cotext. This is why the interlacement between word/s, cotext and context is of paramount importance in order to identify and assess meaning-making in a text.

4. Analysis

The four most frequent keywords in the corpus – *island, Spaniards, Jamaica, Indians* – were extracted from the keyword list and are reported in Table 2 below.

Table 2. The most frequent keywords in PonJ

No.	KEYWORD	PonJ FREQ.	%	RC FREQ.	%	P
1	ISLAND	595	0,28%	110	–	0,0000000000
2	SPANIARDS	333	0,16%	119	0,01%	0,0000000000
3	JAMAICA	223	0,10%	18	–	0,0000000000
4	INDIANS	199	0,09%	41	–	0,0000000000

The first column reports the keyword; the second shows its frequency in PonJ; the third the percentage of the keyword frequency; the fourth the keyword frequency in RC; the fifth the percentage of the keyword frequency in RC and the last column features the p. value, that indicates the statistical significance of the results obtained (cf. Samson 2021).

3 Clusters can be defined as multi-word units consisting of two, three, four (or more) words which occur frequently in a given corpus so as to form a recurrent lexico-syntactic pattern (Hunston 2011: 5).

4.1 *Island*

The most frequent clusters for the keyword *Island* are *of this island/of the island* (213 occurrences), followed by *within this island/in this island* (103 occurrences). The first pair of clusters has different collocational preferences: *of this island* is a postmodifier of noun phrases related to the island's administration/regulations and features the words *government* (24 occurrences), *mon(e)y* (28 occurrences) and *seal* (14 occurrences) as their most frequent left-hand collocates, whereas *of the island* is a postmodifier of noun phrases related to the geographical description of the island and features the words *description* (12 occurrences), *North/South side* (14 occurrences), *part(s)* (11 occurrences) as the most frequent left-hand collocates. Examples of the cluster *of this island* are provided below:

(1) Provided also that the aforesaid Penalties mentioned in this Act, and not declared where they shall be Recovered, or how Disposed of, be one half to Our Soveraign Lord the King, for and towards ***the Support of the Government of this Island***, and the Contingent Charges thereof.

(*The Laws of Jamaica*, 1683)

(2) and whosoever shall by Publick and open Profaness or Blasphemy Dishonour Almighty God, and be thereof duly Convicted in the Supream Court of Judicature, shall be Fined ***Twenty pounds Currant Money of this Island***, or more, at the Discretion of the Court for every such Offence.

(*The Laws of Jamaica*, 1683)

(3) Forasmuch as by the Laws of this Island no due and condign Punishment hath been heretofore provided for such as shall falsify, forge or counterseit ***his Majestys*** Broad ***Seal of this Island***, by reason whereof diverse evil disposed persons may be emboldened to perpetrate and commit the said Offence, to the dishonour of his Majesty, and the disinheriting of many of his Majestys good Subjects.

(*The Laws of Jamaica*, 1683)

Most of the occurrences are found in the highly influential pamphlet *The Laws of Jamaica* by Francis Hanson who meticulously reports the laws and regulations of Jamaica with detailed references to pecuniary punishment in case of offence. The lexico-syntactic patterns in examples (1) and (2) are meant to exhibit guarantee of law and order on the island as pre-condition

for the social stability, personal safety and economic prosperity of the new settlers. Furthermore, these acts and regulations for "the better Government of the Plantation" were interpreted as an extension of "all the Laws and Privileges of Englishmen exercised and continued amongst us there" (*The Laws of Jamaica,* 1683). The assumption according to which the Anglo-Jamaica colonists were enjoying the same rights and liberties as English freemen was at the centre of a propaganda campaign designed to highlight the king's goodwill towards Jamaica so as to reassure potential settlers at home and incentivize their migration to the colony.[4]

Another token of the king's commitment to the colony was the seal which testified to his royal grant of a "true coat of Arms" and his self-proclamation as Lord of Jamaica (example 3). Given the controversial capture of the island under Cromwell's regime, there was great anxiety about Charles II's position in relation to the occupation. The monarchy, which defended its right to rule through legitimacy, left the legal status of the conquest uncertain for a while and this sparked rumours that the island would not be retained for long. State propaganda promptly intervened in the debate by providing evidence of royal sympathy towards Jamaica. This bond of affection was discursively constructed through the lexico-syntactic proximity between *Majesty/ King* and *island* in the pattern: *to* [Our Sovereign Lord the King] *for and towards the support of the government of this island* (23 occurrences), as shown in example 1; *under the* [kings/Majesties] *Great/broad seal of this island* (6 occurrences) as shown in example 3 and in the cluster [His Majesties] *island of Jamaica* (7 occurrences) as we can see below:

(4) A true Account and Relation of this last Expedition against the Spaniard, by virtue of a Commission given unto H. Morgan by his Excel Sir Tho. Modyford Governour General of His Majesties Island of Jamaica.

(*The Present State of Jamaica*, 1683)

While late 17th-century propaganda for the settlement in Jamaica enhanced the power and benevolence of the king with more than 140 references to *His Majesty/ies*, PonJ shows only 4 instances of the word *Cromwell* and all occurring

4 In line with the propaganda campaign for the representation of the king's affection for Jamaica, in his preface to *The Laws of Jamaica* Hanson wrote that since Charles "was pleased to own what his subjects had done […] when he came to exercise his Royal Authority", then this "was the same as if he had commissioned them" (in Robertson 2002b: 37).

in the same pamphlet. This silence is indicative of the problematization inherent in the representation of a usurper as the do-er of the most significant English conquest in the West Indies.[5] Through deliberate omission of information and through the foregrounding of the king's role in the gracious retention of Jamaica, Restoration propaganda endeavoured to transform Cromwell's Design into a Royal Conquest (Robertson 2002a: 820). Even in the anonymous pamphlet *The Present State of Jamaica* (1683) where Cromwell is named, any honorification is denied and the Lord Protector's role is minimized by 1) the reference to the failed attempt on Hispaniola (example 5); 2) the focus on Col. D'Oyley who completed the military conquest and became the first governor of the new royal colony (example 6);[6] 3) the narrative of his death before the completion of the Design and the consequential shift of praise attribution from him to the Englishmen (example 7):

(5) But ***Crumwell*** sent his Army to seize *Spaniola,* or some place that was convenient for a Collony and seat of War, ***he having mist*** St. *Domingo* they resolved to fix here.

(*The Present State of Jamaica*, 1683)

(6) and ***Cromwell*** having sent Capt. *Mints* in a Third Rate Frigat, Capt. *Heytub* in a Fifth, and Capt. *Heylin* in a Sixth, Col. ***Doyly*** puts on Board them 300 Souldiers Commanded by Major *Wilbraham,* Capt. *Thomas Morgan,* and Capt. *Linch,* these being got high enough to wind-ward, Landed and took *Cumana.*

(*The Present State of Jamaica*, 1683)

(7) The latter end of this year Col. ***Doyly*** sent to ***Cromwell*** 10 or 12 Colours as Marks and Trophies of this Victory. But the Messenger Col. *Barry* found him ***Dead: so he never had one syllable of any thing that was grateful from the vastest Expence and greatest Design that was ever made by the English.***

(*The Present State of Jamaica*, 1683)

The second cluster *of the island* is linked to the geography of Jamaica (including position, resources, towns and transportation). Example (8) highlights

5 Richard Blome's *Description of Jamaica* was republished in 1678 with the elimination of a section which had appeared in 1672, so as to avoid any reference to Cromwell (Robertson 2002b: 38)

6 According to the revisionist narrative, Colonel Doyley did not enjoy Cromwell's favour, which made him a perfect candidate for a Royalist appropriation.

the natural resources of the island and example (9) describes the network of transportation which allows for the easy circulation of commodities. In both cases the keyword *island* is surrounded by a rhetoric of abundance and profitability (e.g. *excel, bounty, great abundance, for the most part, other, another*) which has the twofold aim of luring lower classes with the prospect of a profitable life in the colony and encouraging middle- and upper-class investors to seize the opportunities opened up by transoceanic commerce, especially after the Restoration (Minchinton 2023 [1969]). Below are some examples:

(8) The compass or circuit ***of the Island*** is an hundred and fifty leagues; its length from East to West is fifty leagues, the bredth is twenty, or better. This Island ***excels*** the others for the goodness both of the Ayr, and ***bounty*** of the soyl, it is ***for the most part*** a plain and even Country, yeilding in ***great abundance*** whatsoever is necessary for mans life.

(*A True Description of Jamaica*, 1657)

(9) Farther West is *Bluefields Bay,* and ***other good Roads***, and the like there is also in St. *James*'s, St. *Anns,* and St. *Maries,* on the ***North side of the Island***, and in the Parish of St. *Georges* in the North-East parts, is ***Port Antonio, a safe and good Harbour, and such another in the South-East part*** […] So that there want not conveniencies ***for the Importing or Exporting of their Commodities, in any part of the Country***.

(*The Laws of Jamaica*, 1683)

While the first pair of clusters focuses on what belongs to Jamaica, the second group, i.e. *within this island* and *in the island* encodes what is to be found in the place. Once again, the pair shows a preference for aspects of legislation and resources respectively. The cluster *within this island* (59 occurrences) appears in the account of regulations and institutions. As the mutineer Edward Tyson declared: "these civil institutions created a context in which men could make a firm and lasting commitment [in the new colony]" (Pestana 2017: 234). This can be seen in the following examples where references are made to the institutional role of Assemblies and Admiralty:

(10) It is hereby Enacted by the Authority of the same, that ***in every Assembly*** hereafter to be called by His Majesties Writs, and held ***within this Island***, there be Chosen Three Representatives for the Parish of St. *Catharines,* the like number for the Parish of *Port Royal,* and Two for each other of the respective Parishes that now are, or hereafter shall be in this Island.

(*The Laws of Jamaica,* 1683)

(11) Felonies, and other Offences upon the Sea, shall be Apprehended in, or brought Prisoners to this Island, Be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That all Treasons, Felonies, Piracies, Robberies, Murthers, or Confederacies committed, or that hereafter shall be committed upon the Sea, or in any Haven, Creek, or Bay, where ***the Admiral*** hath Jurisdiction, shall be Inquired, Tryed, Heard, Determined, and Judged ***within this Island,*** in such like form, as if such Offence had been Committed in and upon the Land, and to that end and purpose Commissions shall be had under the Kings Great Seal of this Island, directed to the ***Judge or Judges of the Admiralty*** of this Island for the time being.

(*The Laws of Jamaica*, 1683)

The cluster *in this island* (44 occurrences), on the other hand, is mostly used in descriptions of the commodities of the island, as shown in examples (12, 13, 14, 15, 16):

(12) *Hoggs* are here in ***exceeding great plenty***, as well those wild in the *Mountains,* as tame in the *Plantations,* whose *Flesh* is far better tasted, and ***more nourishing and easier*** to be digested then those of *England;* which is the reason that it is ***so much*** eaten ***in this Island***.

(*A Description of the Island*, 1672)

(13) I shall not mention here ***the plenty of all sorts*** of Fish, and wild Fowl, as *Ginney* Hens, Ducks, wild Pigeons, *&c.* because these Collections shall take notice onely of what is singular ***in this Island***, without a Copartner, or any Parallel in any other Settlements of our Countrey men.

(*Jamaica viewed,* 1661)

(14) ***There are great plenty of choise and excellent*** Fruits ***in this Island***, as Oranges, Pome-granates, Cocar-Nuts, Limes, Guavars, Mammes, Alumee-Supotas, Suppotillias, Avocatas, Cashues, Prickle-Aples, Prickle-Pears, Grapes, Sower-Sops, Custard-Aples, Dildowes, ***and many others whose names are not known, or too tedious to name,*** *besides* Plantains, Pines, &*c.*

(*A Description of the Island*, 1672)

(15) ***In this Island*** are ***abundance of*** Medicinal Herbs, Roots, and Plants. We have *Venillaes;* here's *China, Sarsaparilla, Gum Guaicum, Benjamin,* &c.

(*The Present state of Jamaica*, 1683)

(16) ***In this Island are many*** convenient Harbours for Shipping, ***besides several*** Bays and Roads fitting for the landing or takeing off of Goods: The chiefest of these is *Port-Royal,* which in its safety for Shipping, depth of Water cleanness of Ground, and conveniency of the Shore and Wharfs, for lading and unlading of Shipping, may compare with any in the known World.

(*Jamaica viewed*, 1661)

The majority of the quotations features the patterns: [resources] + *in this island* or *in this island* + [resources] and all examples are characterized by a rhetoric of abundance (*great plenty of*), diversity (*many others, several*) and highly positive semantics (*excellent*) which recall the language of exaggeration and opulence characteristic of the early 17th-century promotional pamphlets on Virginia (Cecconi 2020). The premodifier *great* is the most frequent adjective in PonJ and has *plenty* (23 occurrences), *quantities* (13 occurrences), *variety* (13 occurrences), *store* (13 occurrences), *abundance* (11 occurrences) and *numbers* (10 occurrences) among its most frequent first right-hand collocates (R1). The quantifiers *many* (404 occurrences) and *much* (328 occurrences) commonly cluster with the intensifier *so* (149 occurrences) and *other(s)* (38 occurrences) in order to reinforce the impression of plenitude and diversity that the island affords in terms of food, trade products, towns and transportation. A similar function is performed by the intensifier *several* (197 occurrences) in the pattern *several* + [NP] (154 occurrences), *several sorts of* + [NP] (13 occurrences), *several other* + [noun in the plural] (8 occurrences) and [NP] + *for several uses* (5 occurrences). Amongst the other things, *several* premodifies commodities (e.g. *fruits, plantations, liquors*), buildings (e.g. *houses, alehouses, store-houses, hackney coaches, utensils*) and geographical features of the island such as bays, harbours, rivers, towns and streets as marker of profitable life and commerce.

Comparatives as markers of grammatical evaluation are also frequent, the most typical token being *better* (165 occurrences), occasionally intensified by *much* and *far* (15 occurrences), as shown in example (12). The comparison with England and the New World is a common persuasive strategy in 17th-century colonial pamphlets and is functional to advertising the better quality of products and commodities in comparison with those already known. Another linguistic feature shared with previous colonial literature is the so called "exhaustive itemization" (Cox 1994) which constructs the perception of a healthy and productive life in the colony through lists of items. As we can see in examples (13), (14) and (15) the hypernym (e.g. *fowls,*

fruits, medicinal herbs) is followed by lists of multifarious commodities which creates people's positive perception of the material abundance offered by the island. As Lonati (2020: 244) notices, by being lexicalized as concrete products, colonies themselves become geographical and material commodities of profitable commerce and prosperous life.

One last consideration regards the use of the deictic *this* in the clusters *of this island, within this island* and *in this island* (235 occurrences) as quantitatively more salient than the determiner *the* in the corresponding patterns (100 occurrences). The demonstrative determiner conveys the meaning of "nearness" and is part of a grammar of space which uses the author's location on the island (or its a posteriori reconstruction) as deictic centre (Levinson 1983). The spatial proximity between the author and the island appears to be projected onto readers so as to discursively enact their future settlement on the island. Furthermore, through the repetition of *this*, the reader has the impression of being positioned in the spatial scene of Jamaica sharing the vantage point of the author.

4.2 *Spaniards*

The second keyword in order of frequency is *Spaniards*. The word occurs in two major lexico-syntactic patterns: [verb of action indicating murder, violence and destruction] + *by the Spaniards* (23 occurrences) and *Spaniards* + [verb of action indicating murder and destruction] (22 occurrences). In both cases *Spaniards* carries a strong negative semantic prosody[7] which is aimed at delegitimizing their rule on the island by exploiting and re-adapting the 16th-century Black Legend of the Spanish cruelty towards the Indians. The tactic was designed to nourish anti-Spanish sentiment, which had been circulating in England since the signing of the Treaty of Nonsuch (1585) during Elizabeth I's reign. The treaty had committed England to supporting the Dutch rebels against Spain and was followed by Philip II's dispatch of the Spanish Armada (1588). The prejudice against the Spaniards was further reinforced by perceptions of their 'black', miscegenated nature, attributed to their Moorish and Jewish heritage (Bhaduri 2018: 151). Propaganda discourse thus appealed to a pre-existing Hispanophobia, intensifying it by perpetuating the image of the Spanish colonizer as cruel and un-Christian.

7 Semantic prosody is defined by Louw as that "consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates" (1993: 159). Words can acquire favourable or unfavourable prosodies as a result of the collocational company they keep.

After the conquest of Jamaica, the demonization of the Spanish was instrumental in legitimizing the English occupation of the island. Authors indulged in the dramatic and sensational reporting of the Spaniards' ill-treatment of the indigenous Taino so as to construct the victory of Protestant England as a divine verdict on Spanish-Popish misrule (Robertson 2002b). This is shown in the following examples:

(17) […] perhaps it was formerly very populous with Indians, but ***those were destroyed by the Spaniards***, so that we have no Natives at present but Children of the English, or their Negro Slaves.
(*The Laws of Jamaica*, 1683)

(18) he [Cromwell] having mist St. Domingo they resolved to fix here; nor were they like to be beaten out, for there was not many Native Indians left, they ***being long before destroy'd by the Spaniards***.
(*The Present state of Jamaica*, 1683)

(19) Now there is so much to be said concerning the ***slaughters and devastations made by the Spaniards***, so many stories to be reckoned up, as would be hardly contained in writing, it being impossible to set down one thing of a hundred.
(*The Tears of the Indians,* 1656)

(20) In these ten or twelve years, what with Men, Women, Youths, and Children, above four millions were ***by the Spaniards consumed*** part by fire, part by the sword in these destructive wars; wars more unjust and more condemn'd both by the Law of God and men, then any invasion of the Turk against the Catholique Religion.
(*The Tears of the Indians,* 1656)

The majority of references to the Spanish brutality occurs in the pamphlet *Tears of Indians*, the English translation of the famous 16th-century work by Bartolomé de las Casa who harshly denounced the tyrannical behaviour of the Catholic Spanish towards the Indians. Interestingly, the translation was published in 1656 one year after Cromwell's troops landed in Jamaica. All subsequent English narratives of the Spanish conduct are framed within the paradigm of massacre and destruction provided by De Las Casas, as the following examples show:

(21) When the ***Spaniards*** became *Masters* of the *Isle,* they converted to *Pasture* for the feeding of their *Cattel*; bringing hither from Spain,

Horses, Cowes, Hoggs, and *Asenegros* for a Breed, ***after they had destroyed all the Natives, or Indians, which according to calculation, did amount to about 60000***.

(*A Description of the island*, 1672)

(22) The ***Spaniards***, who baptized the *New World* in *Blood*, murdered many ***Hundred Thousand Indians***, on pretence of propagating the Christian Religion, when in truth it was only to get *Gold* and *Empire*.

(*Friendly Advice*, 1684)

The use of numbers, albeit approximate, functions as a truth-authenticating device which enhances the persuasive force of the dysphemistic representation of the Spaniards as bearers of evil and tyranny. As van Dijk claims, it is not so much the exactness of these numbers that is important but rather the fact that they are given at all (1988: 87). Readers are, in fact, led to assume that reporters capable of providing such figures must have had first-hand knowledge as to what happened (Brownlees 2011: 87). In this way, their reportage is likely to be accepted as true and the change of perception and behaviour promoted by the government becomes much more feasible as a result.

Another repeated cluster for Spaniards is *against the Spaniards* (7 occurrences) which encodes the ideological polarization between Protestant English entitled to inhabit the territory vs the Catholic Spaniards as embodiment of the Anti-Christ. After representing the Indians as victims of the Spanish brutality, the English appropriation of Spanish Jamaica is re-interpreted as providential for the few indigenous people left or, at least, as an indisputable sign of God's just revenge against the Spanish. Once the Spaniards have been labelled as perpetrators of death and oppression, the encoding of the English as their opponents turns them into true Christian liberators (Pestana 2017: 16) and contributes to the assumption that their rule is legitimized by God and as such is to be preferred to the Spanish one:

(23) ***The English*** being thus become Masters of the *Island*, formed themselves into a Body, or Colony: Then did they they begin to settle themselves in *Plantations*, whilst others betook themselves to the Sea as *Freebooters* or *Privateers*, the better ***to secure themselves against the Spaniards.***

(*A Description of the Island*, 1672)

(24) […] a little Fleet of ***English men,*** fitted out from the *Chariby* Islands, chiefly from Sr. *Kits,* under the Command of Gen. *Iackson,* who landed about five hundred men at *Passage-Fort,* and fought his way up to the Town, ***against two thousand Spaniards,*** who still fled before him.

(*Jamaica viewed*, 1661)

4.3 *Jamaica*

The third most frequent keyword is Jamaica occurring in the clusters *Island of Jamaica* (24), *Majesties Island of Jamaica* (12), *the air of Jamaica* (10). The first cluster is characteristic of the title and preface of pamphlets. It is mostly found in the lexico-syntactic pattern *a description of the Island of Jamaica* (6 occurrences). The metadiscursive term "description" conveys the meaning of objective and unbiased account, thus cancelling or, at least, partly camouflaging the propaganda intent of the author:

(25) It is necessary I should say something in relation to the following Matter: I do not therein present you with a formal *Journal* of my Voyage, or *Geographical* Description of the ***Island*** of ***Jamaica,*** for that has been already done by Persons better Qualified for such a Task.

(*A Trip to Jamaica*, 1699)

(26) I shall therefore now conclude, only including brief description of the ***Island of Jamaica,*** by comparing it (in divers respects) with *Hispaniola,* together with some few passages by the way homeward.

(*A brief and perfect Journal*, 1655)

The second cluster was already mentioned when examining the keyword *island*. It features the discursive proximity between *His Majesties* and *Jamaica* which is functional to the Royalist appropriation of the Cromwellian Design after the Restoration:

(27) A NARRATIVE OF AFFAIRS Lately received from *his* ***MAJESTIES Island of Iamaica***.

(*A Narrative of the Affairs*, 1682)

The emphasis on the bond between the king and Jamaica is not only dictated by the need to rewrite the Republican past but also by the necessity to respond to people's concern about the precariousness of the colony. As a matter of fact, until 1670 Jamaica was still exposed to threats of Spanish

attacks, as documented by the lexicon of war surrounding the cluster (e.g. *war, expedition, magazines of arms, ammunitions or provisions*) and this vulnerability required a constant reassurance, on the part of the British government, that everything would be done in support and defence of the colony.

The third cluster for Jamaica is *the air of Jamaica,* mainly found in the pamphlet *A Discourse of the State of the Health in Jamaica* written by an English doctor living in Jamaica.

(28) Hence to conclude this Chapter of ***the air of Jamaica,*** the contagious plague is well and maturely prohibited inhabiting our Air, the which, to summ up all, is vifying hot, and multiplyingly moist, incorporating thick, and spirituously brisk and moving, by its nitrosity piercing and cleansing, in ***all most proper*** to increase life, suitable to the necessity of the place.

(*A Discourse of the State of Health*, 1678)

(29) ***The Air of Jamaica*** is ***eminent herein, and therefore most agreeable to women, benificial to their living, including their conceptions and facilitating their Births***: but yet not so far impregnating, as if they, like the Spanish Ginnets, might be impressed by the Wind to a fruitfulness, without the Airiness of a Male consort.

(*A Discourse of the State of the Health*, 1678)

(30) That the ***Air of Jamaica conduces much to the easie and speedy Cure of the Distemper, by Reason of its nitrous Quality***.

(*A Discourse of the State of the Health*, 1678)

As is the case with the many references to His Majesty's *Jamaica*, the frequency of the cluster *air of Jamaica* is indicative of problematization. As a matter of fact, widespread rumours about the intolerable heat of the island had had a negative effect on people and discouraged plans to migrate. The propaganda machine was therefore set in motion to counter these narratives by exploiting the authority of eye-witnesses and experts. The air of Jamaica was positively evaluated as having beneficial effects on the treatment of diseases and on the increase in life-expectancy. In the examples above, the doctor's authoritative viewpoint is encoded in discourse by means of positive evaluative adjectives (often in the superlative) – *most proper, eminent, most agreeable, beneficial, easie and speedy Cure, nitrous Quality* – and positive material verbs – such as *cleansing, increase life, facilitating, conduces* [to a Cure]. The reference to the benefits of the air on births and miscarriage

suggests that the author was targeting English Protestant families rather than male adventurers or vagabonds.[8] This was in line with the plan to establish a moral and respectable colony. The manipulative character of such a rhetoric becomes evident when we consider that out of the 12,000 Englishmen who had arrived in Jamaica by the time of the Restoration, fewer than 2,500 men and only one thousand women and children survived because of the many climate-related diseases present on the island (Block 2012: 146).

4.4 *Indians*

Indians is the fourth keyword in order of frequency. The word mostly features in the pattern [Quantity] + *of Indians* where the quantity slot is filled in with the words *number(s)* (7 occurrences), *many* (3 occurrences) and *sufficient quantity, eight thousand, a great company, full, certain, a cloud, a great company,* conveying the meaning of abundance as booster of the atrocities committed by the Spaniards. Indeed, the lexico-syntactic pattern is inserted within a semantics of destruction, forced transportation and massacre for which the Indians were primarily represented as done-to (14 occurrences) and the Spanish as merciless do-ers, as we can see in the following examples:

(31) Into this River entred a perfidious Tyrant, wasting many miles of Land, committing many slaughters, consuming many by fire, and putting ***an infinite number of these poor Indians*** to the sword, that liv'd peaceably in their own houses without any suspicion of making disturbance.

(*The Tears of the Indians*, 1656)

(32) The chief Tyrant, with a nose and lips down to his beard, having call'd together ***a great number of Indians***, reported to have been about two hundred, caused them all to have their members lopt off, leaving them in this sad and painful condition, the blood streaming

8 The explicit reference to the beneficial effects of the air on women might be due to the fact that white men outnumbered white women by 5.41 to 2.02 by 1673 (Wells 2015: 201). Plausible accounts were therefore produced to persuade English women to leave their county for a healthier life in Jamaica: "if we also consider the nature of the Climate (as it really is), most propitious to Child-bearing Women who are not so subject to Miscarriages, Distempers, Pains or Difficulties before, at or after Delivery, as they are in *England,* for being always Summer, there is no danger of catching colds, nor need of Fires in their Chambers" (*Laws of Jamaica*, 1683).

forth, to be witnesses of the mercy of these persons baptiz'd in the Catholike Faith.

(*The Tears of the Indians*, 1656)

(33) I do also affirme that the *Spaniards* got together as ***many of the Indians*** as possibly they could croud into three houses, and there, upon no occasion given, burnt them to death.

(*The Tears of the Indians*, 1656)

In only a few cases (4 occurrences) does the pattern [quantity] + *of Indians* feature the Indians as do-ers, at first willing to offer their service to the Spanish and then forced to take revenge or escape:

(34) Whereupon ***an infinite number of the Indians came to the Spaniards*** requesting that they might be their subjects, and that they might serve them. The Captain made answer, that he would not receive them, and that moreover he would kill them all unlesse they would declare whither their Lords were fled.

(*The Tears of the Indians*, 1656)

(35) & ***when a great company of the Indians pursued them with weapons*** for the recovery of their Wives and Children, they resolving not to let go their prey, when the *Indians* came near them, immediately with the points of their swords ran the poor Women and Children through the bodies.

(*The Tears of the Indians*, 1656)

To the Indians vs Spaniards opposition nourished by the government-sponsored translation of *The Tears of Indians*, pamphleteers add the positive representation of the peaceful and profitable Anglo-Indian relationship in other parts of the occupied territories as evidence of the beneficial and mutually rewarding presence of the English colonists on the island. In the examples below *English* is found in the proximity of *Indians or they,* the two actors being engaged in harmonious relationship, trade and co-habitation:

(36) This Countrey [New York] is also possessed with sundry sorts of people, not much unlike the ***Indians*** of *Virginia,* being well-*proportioned, Stout, Swarthy, Black haired,* very expert in their *Bow,* and *Arrows,* which are their chief weapons of War. ***They are courteous to the English, of a ready Witt, and very apt to receive Instructions from them***.

(*A Description of the Island*, 1672)

(37) The Town is Inhabited by ***the English and Dutch, and hath a considerable Trade with the Indians***, for the Skins of Elks, Deer, Bears, &c. also for those of Bever, Otter, and other Furrs; and doth likewise enjoy a good Trade with the English.

(*A Description of the Island*, 1672)

(38) […] neglected by the more Northerly and armstrong Regions, whose Character […] especially of those of ***Guiana and Charby Indians, that cohabit with the English in Surinam***, I deem not much extravagant here to insert.

(*Jamaica viewed*, 1661)

In the attempt to delegitimize the validity of the Spanish rule in America, the pamphleteer indulges in a defence of the Native Indians' natural right to their territories. This conformed to the early modern Protestant worldview, according to which the natives' right to their land was considered undisputable, provided the indigenous people converted to the Protestant faith and accepted reformed evangelization, as expressed in John Cotton's sermon to Winthrop's Company, *God's Promise to His Plantation* (1630). The emphasis on the natives' right to their land is framed within a self-celebratory narrative that highlights the Indians' willingness to submit to the superior and benevolent authority of the Protestant English, as illustrated in the following examples:

(39) ***The Indians***, who are the natural proprietors of America, do abominate and ***hate the Spaniards for their cruelty and avarice***; and upon every occasion will shew their willingness to give themselves and their Countreys, ***freely into the power and protection of the English***.

(*A Description of the Island*, 1672)

(40) The *Popes Donation* is of little validity, for he hath given them the Crown of *England,* which of the two he might more legally do, then the *Indies;* ***for that the English have been subject to his power, the Indians never.***

(*A Description of the Island*, 1672)

5. Conclusion

In the second half of the 17th century, the circulation of propaganda pamphlets recounted stories which contributed to the mythistory of the English conquest and colonization of Jamaica (Robertson 2002a: 815). The aim was to encourage and maintain a continuing stream of British immigrants which was essential to the colony's life and defence after 1655. This required a skilful manipulation

of information through exaggeration of positively evaluated aspects and prospects, the suppression or sanitization of controversial issues related to the capture and retention of the island and the demonization of the Spanish colonists as do-ers of atrocities against the Indians. Since the success or failure of propaganda depended on the reader's willingness to accept the credibility of the source and the content of the pamphlet, authors endeavoured to place the message within a socio-cultural and historical framework which readers could adhere to. This was crucial to challenge and possibly defeat rumours about the unlawfulness and precariousness of the possession as well as narratives about the hardship and mortality on the island.

The results of the corpus-based analysis featured four most frequent keywords: *Island, Spaniards, Jamaica and Indians* which reveal how propaganda discourse interlaced the description of the territory with the ideologically biased representation of the two ethnic groups living in it. The quantitative and qualitative analysis of keywords and clusters in context show that authors rely on five major cultural constructs to persuade potential recruits to leave for Jamaica: 1) bountifulness of the island through a language of abundance (e.g. *exceeding great plenty, full of*) and biodiversity (*variety, other*) which recalls the rhetoric of early 17th-century pamphlets on Virginia (Cecconi 2020); 2) legality and safety guaranteed through a detailed reporting of laws for the protection of rights and property (e.g. *Judge or Judges of the Admiralty of this Island*); 3) health guaranteed by the beneficial effects of air and herbs on human body and pregnancy (e.g. *beneficial to their living, easy and speedy Cure*); 4) the reassuring representation of the Island as a steady possession of the British Empire enjoying the king's favour (e.g. *under the* [kings/Majesties] *Great/broad seal of this island)*; 5) the divine legitimation of the English colonization through the dysphemistic representation of the Spanish as brutal killers of the Indians and the consequential framing of Protestant Englishmen as liberators (e.g. *destroyed, murdered, massacred, an infinite numbers of the Indians, many of the Indians*). To assess the extent to which these cultural constructs persuaded readers of the truthfulness of the information and eventually led some of them to migrate to Jamaica is not an easy task.[9] What is possible to claim is that the conflation of informative

9 In the aftermath of the capture of Jamaica, the Florentine resident in London Amerigo Salvetti reported to the Grand Duke of Tuscany that English people did not fully believe in the optimistic accounts provided by the generals and published in the press, neither did they express any desire to settle in Jamaica, after seeing the terrible health conditions of those who had just come back from the island: "Contuttociò non pare che questo popolo dia intera credenza a questa sua [General Penn's] relazione, nè che mostri nessuna inclinazione ad andarvi ad abitare, vedendo per sperienza che

and emotional elements contributed to engaging reading which responded to people's growing interest in colonial expansion and the socio-economic opportunities that it could offer.

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