

# PHOTOGRAPHIC POSTCARDS OF THE PROVINCE OF LIMÓN, COSTA RICA. A TRANSDISCIPLINARY READING\*

*Enrique Camacho Navarro*

## ABSTRACT

From a set of five Costa Rican photographic postcards, although a few more examples will be taken into account, an iconological task is undertaken regarding these visual relics. While the images in these cards offer an iconographic testimony, the objective is to make a visual reading of them and subject them to an iconological analysis. As a working hypothesis, considering them documentary artefacts, it is possible to select information that makes possible their contribution to historical knowledge. It is imperative to articulate the concept of “iconology” as an interpretive reading that goes far beyond the simple description of an image without strictly adhering to that which is represented. The formulation of interpretations that go beyond the boundaries of the visible is, iconographically speaking, implemented as a practice that contributes to a richer, more acute historical articulation.

**Keywords:** Costa Rica, iconographic reading, iconology, postcard

## RESUMEN

A partir de un conjunto de cinco postales fotográficas costarricenses, aunque se tomarán en cuenta algunas más, se acomete una tarea iconológica en torno a estas reliquias visuales. Si bien las imágenes de estas fichas ofrecen un testimonio iconográfico, el objetivo es hacer

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una lectura visual de las mismas y someterlas a un análisis iconológico. Como hipótesis de trabajo, considerándolos artefactos documentales, es posible seleccionar información que posibilite su contribución al conocimiento histórico. Es imperativo articular el concepto de “iconología” como una lectura interpretativa que va mucho más allá de la simple descripción de una imagen sin adherirse estrictamente a lo representado. La formulación de interpretaciones que van más allá de los límites de lo visible se implementa, iconográficamente hablando, como una práctica que contribuye a una articulación histórica más rica y aguda.

**Palabras clave:** Costa Rica, lectura iconográfica, iconología, tarjeta postal

### RÉSUMÉ

A partir d'un ensemble de cinq cartes postales photographiques costariciennes, bien que quelques-unes soient prises en compte, une tâche iconologique est entreprise autour de ces reliques visuelles. Si les images de ces cartes offrent un témoignage iconographique, l'objectif est d'en faire une lecture visuelle et de les soumettre à une analyse iconologique. En tant qu'hypothèse de travail, en les considérant comme des artefacts documentaires, il est possible de sélectionner des informations qui permettent leur contribution à la connaissance historique. Il est impératif d'articuler le concept «d'iconologie» comme une lecture interprétative qui va bien au-delà de la simple description d'une image sans adhérer strictement à ce qui est représenté. La formulation d'interprétations qui dépassent les limites du visible est mise en œuvre, iconographiquement parlant, comme une pratique qui contribue à une articulation historique plus riche et plus nette.

**Mots-clés :** Costa Rica, lecture iconographique, iconologie, carte postale

### Prelude

The study of postcards has caught the attention of scholars from diverse latitudes (Geary and Webb 1998). They have been studied from different disciplinary perspectives, such as history (Evans and Richards 1980); cultural studies, or collecting (Grant 1999). Postcards have been regarded as valuable visual artefacts in the field of politics, where they have been used as instruments for propaganda (Roberts 2008 and 2009), or for configuring national identities (Semmerling 2004). In this field, the work of the German scholar Hinnerk Onken (2014) stands out for its analysis of South American representations of nation and nationality, in his appraisal of some postcards

from Peru, Argentina, Chile and Brazil, that were in circulation at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. For my part, I have carried out interpretations on postcards using methodological and theoretical frameworks as well as placing the postcards in their historical contexts, where economic, social, political, international relations and cultural factors all come together (Camacho 2015 and 2017). This line of transdisciplinary research has led to the completion of my monograph, *Gomes Casseres y su Banana Series (1907-1920)*. *Imaginación fotográfica en postales de Costa Rica*, CIALC, UNAM (2020); this has been a long process, and one which has enabled me to acquire a good number of visual records. Despite some scholars arguing against postcards as valid primary sources, this position has been successfully challenged for a number of years (Stevens 1995). This article is a continuation of the previously mentioned iconographical studies, and my focus here, using a transversal perspective, is on a small set of postcards that I acquired after the completion of the Gomes Casseres monograph, which serves to illustrate how difficult it is to pronounce the end-point of this kind of work.

Within my personal collection of postcards, I have a set of five that I bought together at an online auction. Their characteristics show a uniform creation process used for them all. Any observer could perceive this at first sight, whether or not he or she is a specialist in the study of this type of visual artefact. As can be seen in the images analysed below, the tones used in the printed images are the same. They are not just similar, but actually these postcards were made with exactly equivalent colours. Each postcard has a blank space located in the lower front where there is a title referring directly to the image located above. The paper type is the same in each of the postcards. In addition, the reverse side of the cards are also identical regarding the elements included in the printing process. So, using this set of postcards, and the iconographic testimony they offer, as a starting point, and with the aim of carrying out a visual reading of them, I propose an iconological analysis. My hypothesis is that, if we consider them to be documentary artefacts, it is possible to extract valuable information to deepen our historical knowledge of a particular period, such as the first thirty years of the twentieth century, during which time the participation of foreign investors in the banana industry in Costa Rica is evident. I argue, therefore, that the images used on the postcards are not interested in showing real settings, but on the contrary, their objective is to convey an imaginary that can be taken as real, and one that always favours hegemonic interests.

## Introduction

The first postcards appeared on the world scene in the year 1869. They were created during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, under the government of Franz Joseph I (1830-1916). His original task was a desire—and need—for written communication between people who were located in distant places. From being simple, easily malleable cards on which a brief message was written, they evolved into illustrated forms of communication, including different thematic aspects that, in general, were related to the places from which they were sent, or at least where they were bought. In 1873, the United States was the first country on the American continent, to adopt the concept of the postcard.<sup>1</sup>

The invention of photography was both significant and also fundamental to the birth of postcards, as well as to the transformations that they went through in the first decades of their existence. However, specialized historiography has not really taken on board the intimate relationship between photography and postcards. And the situation is more serious than would appear. Even scholarly works that are considered classics in the history of photography in Latin America (Levine 1989), lack a detailed study of the photographic images inserted onto the postcards, and so their study is not beneficial for the scope of this article. Even in works where an important number of postcards are included as primary sources, such as in the work of the Castro Harrigan brothers (2005 and 2006; Castro Harrigan and Sánchez Fuentes 2012), they still do not go further than showing a collection and a limited historical context. It is important, however, to consider new interpretations and methodological approaches for the analysis of Latin American images (Canepa and Kummels 2016). Recent studies point to new aspects for the interpretation of iconographic evidence in Latin America, arguing for the need for a history of photographic images as well as the use of images for historical interpretation (Mraz and Mauad 2015).

Postcards have been produced using different techniques, but those that were made from photographs, stand out quantitatively. The use of photography also led to them being seen as examples of reality. Inasmuch as they were elaborated from photographic images, and that during the beginnings of photography it was common to assume that this was automatic proof of truthfulness, this goes to explain why postcards were also catalogued as examples, apparently undisputedly, of a direct representation of reality. Considering the historiographical tradition that views images as reflections of authenticity, we find that “the starting point has

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<sup>1</sup> For more information regarding the origins and development of postcards, see: Ripert and Frère 1983:17-40.

almost always been that images reflect the society in which they were created, and the thoughts of the men who made them possible, a kind of mirror in time” (Pérez Vejo 2006:76). However, this idea of a faithful reflection is a long way from what I will argue in this paper. On the contrary, I propose that photographic images on postcards are mechanisms in which the intention is not to capture “what is real”. Over time, particularly in political, economic and cultural environments, the goal of iconographic usage is, and has always been, to seek a certain hegemony by building up a favourable profile of a modern and distinguished society, that can appear as exemplary (De Sá Machado 2012:41).

The technical advances incorporated into the elaboration of postcards, had a quantitative impact on their development:

[It was] The use of collodion, a natural emulsion also known as “Powdered Cotton” that allowed the photosensitive solution to stick to the glass that replaced the bronze plates of the “daguerreotype”, and its combination with albumin, another emulsion made of egg white, which, when applied to paper, then enabled multiple photographic production. Collodion and albumin had many advantages: they were not only accurate and reproducible, but easy and inexpensive to manufacture. Thus, their purchase was extended to the middle classes. Calling cards were given to family and friends as souvenirs, almost always with a dedication on the back. While calling cards were used for portraits, the larger prints, such as postcards, were used for landscapes and architectural views. (González Flores 2007:8)

As a cultural artefact, the extensive manufacturing of postcards has had a social impact worldwide. The first two decades of the twentieth century, specifically from 1900 to 1918, are defined by scholars as the “Golden Age of Postcards” (Montellano 1998:16, 31). The inclusion of images on the postcards worked as a catalyst for achieving this *boom*.

Although the receiving public was probably unaware of the process in which they were participating, the cards enabled acts of propaganda that emphasized images of various destinations; of imagined geographies that were projected on different “desirable” territories. In the cases that will be discussed here, these would exalt the benefits of fertile Costa Rica. Supplementing the direct visits of people, often made difficult by questions of distance or economic reasons, among others, the photographs on the postcards were presented as artefacts endowed with credibility. This belief was maintained despite the fact that their elaboration was possible thanks only to the absolute control exercised by those who promoted their creation. As Joan Fontcuberta (2002:120) explains:

Perhaps this is the main quality of the technological image in the order of epistemology. To impose a meaning on the image. When an image has a technological origin, such as photography and cinema, it tends

to overcome many prejudices and a lot of reluctance on the part of the spectator in general and the doubtful spectator in particular. Technology becomes a guarantee of objectivity.

This sense of visual representation stems from the interests of the person who took the editing decisions on the postcard, or indeed, from not doing so when it was considered preferable to discard an image, even overriding the concerns of the creative artist. Thus, the incorporation of certain scenes on the postcards would give them a meaning that might differ from the logic of their original production. The postcard would not only serve to communicate two or more people, but could fulfil other purposes, be they political, ideological, or cultural and even economic. In this way, through postcards, the creation of social imaginaries began.

These images from the past explain some of the ways in which their producers perceived the world. Every image stimulates reflection on how a particular imaginary was constructed, or how the images might have been received by readers at the time of their creation, or at a later one. In the case of the photographic postcards, there are several studies where attention is focused throughout Latin America, including Central America and the Caribbean. Postcard productions in Brazil and Argentina stand out, followed by, but with a lower quality, Peru, Uruguay, Panama and El Salvador. Although without the excellence of the first two nations mentioned, the collections of postcards from Costa Rica also stand out and constitute a valuable visual corpus.<sup>2</sup>

Attention to photographic postcards of Costa Rica goes unnoticed among historians of photography there, and there are few references to them (Vargas, Alvarado and Hernández 2004:19, 26, 33-34, 39, 55). However, there are actually thousands, or tens of thousands, of these artefacts where it is possible to identify a variety of different visual discourses regarding the Costa Rican nation. This is made possible by the notable work done by collectors, who provide access to many of their cards. Currently, access is through online purchase and sale, or by consultation [in print] due to the fact that some of those collectors gathered their postcards together and published them in book form, where they are now preserved (Castro Harrigan 2005 and 2006; Castro Harrigan and Sánchez Fuentes 2012). However, it should be noted that the work of card collectors does not in itself guarantee that all the possible benefits of the postcards are perceived. To extract the immense wealth contained in this type of artefact, or at least a good part of it, it is necessary to carry out an iconological reading. As this study does not intend to make a theoretical argument, I only refer here to the conceptual instruments

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<sup>2</sup> See: Camacho Navarro 2015, specifically, the chapter concerning “Postales de América Latina.”

that are necessary for particular sections of this study.

In this context, a brief outline on the concept of “iconology” is needed. This is to be understood as the manifestation of an interpretive reading that goes beyond the simple description of an image, of what is seen in it at a first glance; that is, a reading that does not adhere only to the visual elements of the image. In this process, putting forward new ideas and proposals that go beyond the merely visible in iconographic terms, are adopted as practices that can contribute to a deeper historical knowledge and to the possibility of a more precise interpretation. Iconological practice then, is based on using visual materials to reflect on their presence in the academic field, on their use or disuse, as well as on their abuse, within the process of constructing historical social knowledge (Burke 2001:11-100), as well as in economic and cultural spheres (Pérez Montfort 2011:115-146). Therefore, iconology can be understood as a:

[...] work of interpretation that demands an in-depth commitment of the historian’s thinking, and that is represented in the results of that exercise: the study of the modes of intention, representation, transmission and reception of the images. Above all, two decisive moments in the history of the works must be highlighted: the power to infer the “intentionality” of the intellectual author and/or artist, who deliberately hides behind the images or the ambiguous discourses; and in their public reception, when the meaning of the image is activated thanks to its eloquent prominence. (Cuadriello 2004:29)

It can be said that the cards representing different aspects of economic activities carried out in Costa Rica are acting as propaganda. They have an intention to, and an effect on promoting commercial tasks, such as the purchase and sale of agricultural products, and as they would have then—and maintain even today—on the promotion of tourism. As can be appreciated from the postcards included here, their principal aim is to offer a promising future, one that will include urban living, and all the services and conditions provided in a city environment. Each iconography invites us to contemplate a particular place, for example, Limón, Costa Rica, with its own specific harmony and tranquillity, the perfect ambience for the development of commerce: these images offer the promise of progress. Neither should we overlook the propaganda that relates, in a parallel manner, to the incentives for investment that seek backing from North American and Costa Rican institutions, regarding business and economic transactions.

Postcards are everywhere. Their accessibility is explained by their affordability and the ease in acquiring them. However, the ease of disposing of them is also characteristic. An inherent circumstance of postcards is that they can be easily discarded. This explains why they might also be treated as simple trinkets. This sad reality contrasts with

those of us who are dedicated to the study of postcards and, therefore, who exalt their value in the cognitive process, since they are also visual artefacts that generate attention and stimulate a high level of academic discussion. Specializing in their study makes it possible to argue that: “In fact, they can today, play an important role in the politics and culture of national identity discourses” (Semmerling 2004:1). However, research on postcards is not a widespread activity.

This brief preamble creates a frame of reference on the origin and development of postcards worldwide and outlines the specific case of Costa Rica. In this article, I underscore the importance of these apparently inconsequential objects, that will be shown to be of particular value for the study of their impact in Costa Rica during the first three decades of the twentieth century. The task is to use an iconological perspective to interpret a group of images and their corresponding imaginaries, that together produced some of the cards that were used for communication within Costa Rica, and on multiple occasions, even sent beyond its borders. My central thesis argues that, since the late nineteenth century a variety of different postcards linked to commercial activities were elaborated, and through these images an iconographic practice was developed that would influence the gaze used to view the Caribbean area of Costa Rica. There, an imaginary would be consolidated, one that was gestated under the influence of the Western world view, and generated from the centre of power, *i.e.*, the United States of America, and which at the end of the nineteenth century demonstrated an interest in controlling the Caribbean and a great part of the rest of Latin America. Thus, along with the importance of salvaging this type of cultural artefact, this research highlights an iconological reading around the ideas built up by a group of economic and political interests regarding this Central American country.

### **Reading Photographic Postcards: Pre-iconographic phase**

Following Peter Burke’s method of iconological analysis (2001), itself the continuation of a methodological initiative that originated in the Warburg school (where the work of Erwin Panofsky (2002 and 2004) clearly stand out), the first stage for reading images is called the pre-iconographic phase. This consists of the description—one might say basic—of the visual artefact to be studied. So, first I will describe the five postcards used in this study. I must add here that this initial identification prioritizes the theme of the banana industry activities that were carried out, and are still carried out, in the Caribbean zone of Costa Rica.

The first postcard to be discussed is the one described in its text as: “Bananas full grown” (see Figure 1). It is a photograph of nature, with green, blue and white colours, a full-grown banana plant in the

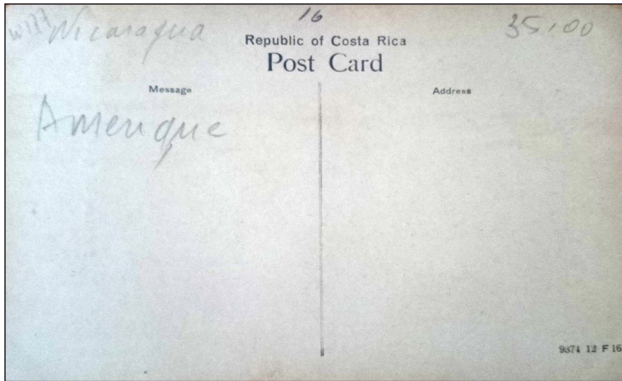




**Figure 1**

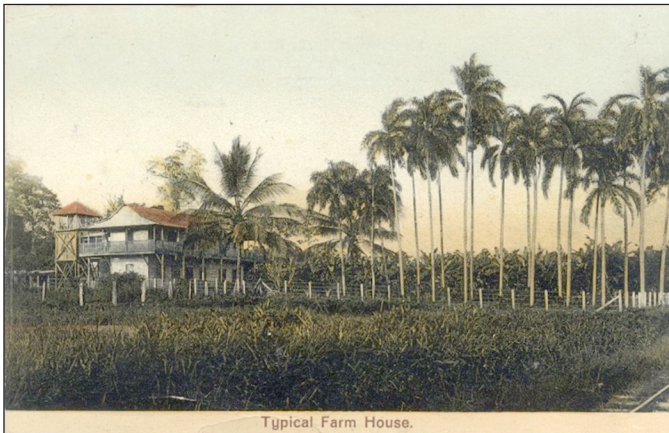
foreground, from which two clusters hang, and in the background a green curtain that contrasts with the blue tones of a calm and cloudless sky. On the reverse side, as well as the details shared on all the five cards, the number 16 is marked above the words “Republic of Costa Rica,” and the sheet number, “9374 12 F 16.” This colour photographic postcard is identified here as “Number 1” (N1).

I have already indicated that this set of postcards share some identical features. On the front of each card, where the image is located, a photographic shot in colour is inscribed. In the lower section of the cards there is a white stripe, small in almost all cases, containing an indicative text in English (see Figure 1). The reverse side offers a reference to the “Republic of Costa Rica” and an allusion that would seem unnecessary, since it simply says, “Post Card.” There is also a thin dividing line, which is useful for marking two zones, designated by the words “Message” and “Address.” On this same side, on the lower right, there is a number that seems to refer to a specific sheet for each card, since the numbers do not match. Finally, within this “pre-iconographic” review, it is worth mentioning the presence of some words and numbers written in pencil. On four of the cards, “Nicaragua” and “Amerique” were written, in addition to indicating their prices in dollars (see Figure 1 reverse).



**Figure 1 (reverse)**

The next postcard, assigned “Number 2” (N2), has the title “Typical Farm House.” The image inserted on the front is a panoramic view that includes a natural green space in the foreground, followed by a wire fence that serves as a visual base for a dwelling, guarded by trees and palms, and which gives way to a natural green curtain like the one on N1. A detail located on the lower right hand side, is the barely perceptible presence of lines that can be identified as parts of a railway track. The sky is blue and pristine, with a faint ochre twilight drawn on the horizon. The reverse side indicates the number 16 above the word “Republic of Costa Rica,” as well as the number “9372 12 F 16” (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2**

The third postcard is called “The Market, Limon.” Of the five cards mentioned, it is the only one that depicts people. Most of them are turned towards the camera. It shows two women and seven men located in front of the market, some closer to the building (the women) and

others further away. One of the men stands almost on the street, that occupies the base of the foreground. In the intermediate section there is an entrance way to the door of the market,<sup>3</sup> flanked by a planted and wooded area that precedes a building, on top of which stands a four sided tower, where each face should have a clock, but there are only two visible. A simple detail: on the pedestrian sidewalk that frames the small landscaped space, a water pump can be seen, like those used to provide water in case of fire (see Figure 3).

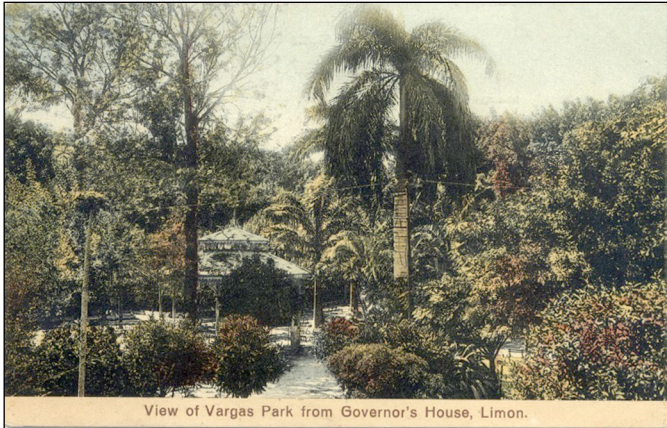


**Figure 3**

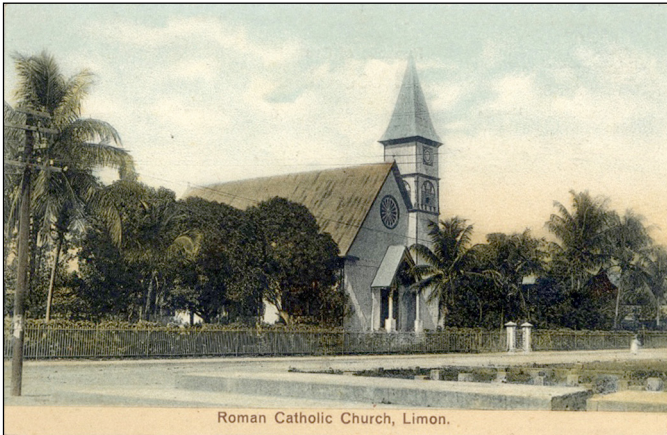
Postcard number four (N4) is titled “View of Vargas Park from the Governor’s House, Limon.” Someone wrote with pencil, a fact that I have mentioned before, the number 1 on top of “Republic of Costa Rica,” while the sheet number is “9383 12 F 16.” On this card the natural exuberance depicted in the photograph stands out. Shrubs and trees abound in the image where an exemplary royal palm tree towers over, leaving only a few paths that lead towards what appears to be a shed, as well as a brief area of sky, more discreet than the one seen on the other postcards (see Figure 4).

The next postcard is “Roman Catholic Church, Limon,” alluding to another urban building, and its corresponding religious architecture. In the centre of the image is the church, whose nave is covered by a peaked roof and a tower, flanked by contiguous green spaces that seem to be part of the ecclesiastical property, as indicated by the metal fence that encloses the occupied ground, that runs along the street and sidewalk (see Figure 5). In a startling coincidence with Laura González (2007:13) when discussing the *Álbum fotográfico mexicano* [Mexican photographic

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that the writer has visited the city of Limón on various occasions.



**Figure 4**



**Figure 5**

album] by Desiré Charnay, published in 1860 by Julio Michaud, this postcard highlights an image of cleanliness and care. Looking ahead to the iconological phase, in which an interpretation can be sustained that is not necessarily based on what is immediately visible within the iconograph produced, I argue that an idea of order is transmitted here, through the alignment of the sidewalks and the streets, their amplitude and the notion of giving rationality to the buildings. This visual construction leads to an ideal view; but not of a dynamic city—alive, active, with defects. It is an image that conveys a message of urban utopia achieved through economic development. It is an image whose discourse alludes to modernity, promoting an ideal of change in the social environment, that attempts to highlight the changes occurring in the cities themselves (De Sá 2012:16).



### Reading Photographic Postcards: Iconographic phase

Iconographically, that is, according to the collection of data and information used to identify the contexts of the images circumscribed to the postcards, I can confirm that this set of cards formed part of a series that would have circulated after 1906. This cannot be determined by any date marked specifically on the cards, nor in the texts that were added when sent to another person. None of the cards, unfortunately, was sent by the official postal service, which would have made it possible to add a written text, maybe including a date. Nor do they have postage stamps, which occasionally can offer some chronological information. I arrive at this date (post 1906) because the format used on these cards corresponds to the one used by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) only after this year. In 1906 it was determined that the reverse side of the card should be used for the message and the address of the addressee, as can be seen on image N1 *reverse* (above). But even during the year 1906 it would be a common practice, and even an obligatory one, that this place on the card still be occupied by the image, thus leaving only a small part blank on that side in which to put the message. From 1907 onwards, however, the UPU resolution had to be observed and postcards would be made accordingly, with the reverse side divided to give space for the address of the recipient and also a proper space for communication (Montellano 1998:13-17).<sup>4</sup> Of course, cards made in previous years, using the earlier design, also continued to circulate. This information is fundamental for explaining the elements used to determine the date of creation of specific cards and sets of cards.

As an example, it is worth including the reverse side of a photographic postcard whose creation dates prior to 1906, even though, as can be seen in the image, it was sent and certified in the post office of Limón in 1908 (see Figure 6). Previously, the free spaces were used to write the messages (see Figure 7); which in this case, is illustrated with only a few notes, but there are copies in which the blank spaces are used to the maximum, giving a baroque appearance to the cards.

In addition to the direct reference indicating that these postcards show images of Costa Rica (see Figure 1 *reverse*), and despite the handwritten text alluding to Nicaragua (which is obviously a mistake), it is worth noting the presence of the texts on the front, indicating what is shown in these colour photographs. This is called the iconotext (Burke 2001:50, 181; Wagner 1997). This text exalts the physical characteristics

<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that England, from 1902 onwards, proposed that one side be divided between the address and the message, and the other side was left for the illustration, a format that was adopted internationally from 1906 and is conserved to this day. See: Fraser Giffords 1999:11.



Figure 6



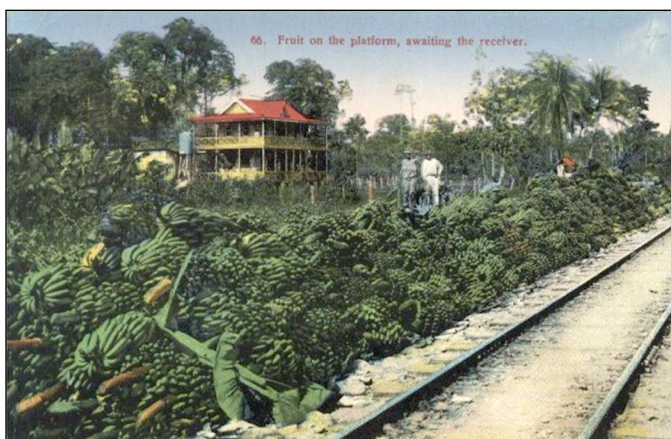
Figure 7

of “what is portrayed,” of what is captured in the photographic moment. Attributes of certain scenes are brought to the fore, reinforcing them with precise references to specific conditions, or giving particular details to elements they wish to emphasize.

Thus, N1 highlights “Bananas full grown,” that is, the words focus attention on the fruit, shown hanging from the plant. The location is not defined, and all human presence is left out. The object shown is of two stalks of bananas, and their growth. In the case of the N2 postcard, identified as “Typical Farm House,” our iconographical reading points to the reference of what is intended to be seen as a “typical” building, located in a strategic place of a productive agricultural area. By connecting these first two postcards, I can add that they show the existence of

agricultural activities carried out by the United Fruit Company (UFC) throughout the Caribbean part of Costa Rica. Here, I point to the role of history as an instrument for deepening the meaning that postcards can have, until now seen only within the field of photography.

It should be noted that this type of landscape was frequently used as a visual discourse. The harmonious combination of a domesticated nature and buildings constructed with precision and order in rural areas, reinforced an imaginary of progress. A comparison here to other postcards is relevant as it helps to explain certain parallels to be found in many cards produced during these years, and even in more recent periods. A careful reader will understand the value of a comparative analysis for deepening our understanding of these postcards. It is possible, however, that a less attentive reader could be distracted by further examples. I will move on to discuss the existing coincidences in the different sets of postcards. These recurring images became representative stereotypes throughout the Caribbean area, as can be seen when comparing the image of postcard N2 with other postcards we have found (see Figure 8), such as the one belonging to the series created by the American H.M. Wimmer, which highlights the image of a “typical house,” with many bunches of bananas and two men of colour. However, these were idealized views, that is, they were not examples of scenes recurrent throughout Costa Rica. The “typical” was actually a fallacy, but at the time, the word captivated both the recipients and the readers of the postcards’ images.



**Figure 8**

Card N3 displays an evident connection with N1 and N2. It is a commercial relationship. The economic-productive structure, as well as evidence of agricultural development pictured on the cards, is linked

to the market. The image “The Market” shows a space dedicated to commercialization, to the supply and sale of products necessary for daily consumption. The postcard already offers a reference to “Limón,” indicating the specific demarcation of the geographic site. It is Puerto Limón, in the Province of Limón. This port was created with the intention of mobilizing the successful coffee trade into international markets from the second half of the nineteenth century, and then for mobilizing the banana trade in the same way, commercialized since the beginning of the twentieth century and continuing to date. In this way, we can confirm a propagandistic agenda in these images. Of course, this is a subtle process, where the intention is for the consumer to assume the images portrayed on the postcards as real.

Understanding the messages contained in the postcards is made easier when there is additional information available relating to their production. This is fundamental for the contextual revision carried out in the iconographic phase of analysis. From the eighteenth century onwards, attention would be shown towards that area of the Atlantic where a link had not yet been formed that would allow for sufficient discussion of the integration of this region into Colonial politics and economy. The Spanish crown intended to make contact with that distant area, as was shown by the trip of Governor Carrandi Menan to the territory, which was difficult to communicate with due to the geographical conditions (*Viaje* 1738), even though it was already considered as geopolitically important for regional development. After independence, new attempts would be made to reach the Atlantic borders of Costa Rica (Coto Conde 1967), and to attempt to maintain some minimum control over the order and conditions existing in the main settlements of those places (Angulo 1966). Even though the city would officially be founded in 1870 (Castro Harrigan 2006), it is not until the end of the nineteenth century, thanks to advances in telegraphic communication and the expansion of the railway system, that considerable contact is made with the Costa Rican coast of the Caribbean (Cooper 1896).

From the decade of 1870 onwards, the integration of the Caribbean coast was sought after, with the goal of opening it to international trade.

That is where the American Minor Cooper Keith enters the scene. Then a young man, he would be involved, in his beginnings, as an entrepreneur who had to stand in for his uncle Henry Meiggs, so as to fulfil the contract signed between him and the government of Tomás Guardia, which aimed to install a railway line between San José, the capital, and Puerto Limón, located in the Caribbean and from which it was hoped they would make contact with world trade. (Camacho 2015:113)

Banana cultivation began in parallel with the laying of the railway.



Minor C. Keith invested personal capital to install banana plantations in the Zent Valley, while at the same time building some sections of the railroad. Following other business initiatives, such as the Tropical Trading and Transport Company, along with his companies Snyder Banana Company and the Colombian Land Company, as well as his contact with Andrew Preston of the Boston Fruit Company, he then negotiated with Preston to found the United Fruit Company, which was incorporated under the laws of New Jersey in March 1899 (Viales and Montero 2010:32; Stewart 1967:65).

I now return to the iconographic analysis of the Puerto Limón postcards. As well as the references to the port of Limón<sup>5</sup> that are also seen on both N4 and N5, N3 is distinctive because of the human presence it exhibits, pointed to earlier. Of the seven men who appear here, five are looking directly at the camera. Their clothes, that can be seen more clearly than the other two, stand out for their elegance and formality. Most notable are the suit jackets, shirts, and the hats that they all wear. The attitude of the figures attracts a lot of attention: their posture, with a certain panache and a touch of haughtiness, demonstrates an undeniable security. The other two men can be seen carrying out menial tasks. At least this is what we can devise from the figure located to the right of the postal image, who seems to be taking care of the garden. The purpose of the image on this card is to extol the material progress, the appearance of a thriving economy that led to the supposed building of a better urban area, and would indeed contrast with other images that, far from the task of beautifying Limón, denoted inequality and injustice. The presence of men and women here, is no more than a sign of a dramatization, even if the photographic moment has not been captured in a city studio. This postcard does not offer up an irrefutable reality, but rather a manipulation of what that society could have been. Achieving this should be considered as an attribute of these photographic images, and also of this type of iconological exercise.

The exaltation of a Western appearance is absolute. The idealization is evident in the construction of the scene. Far from presenting scenes of everyday life, the aim was to idealize the uses and practices of a society to which men and women of colour were not identified at all, within a society where the white elite maintained the hegemony of Puerto Limón, the provincial capital. Who defined which people would appear in the portrait? Why did they have to be only people of colour? Were these really their own clothes? If not, one might ask: how to know who provided them? Evidently, they were not portrayed by their own personal initiative. Indeed, if that were the case, there would be some trace of their

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<sup>5</sup> Note that it is written in English, without an accent [Limón, in Spanish].

personality, some referential data. But no, actually “The Market, Limon” (not the people) was the pretext for the photograph and, indirectly, the real reason for it was to place Minor C. Keith as the main subject. Even though he does not appear there, he is evoked as a promoter of the construction and urbanization of Puerto Limón, as well as the main investor in the agro-export activities of the region. “The Market” is the visual representation of liberalism, of the economic power of the United Fruit Company, a banana company whose hegemony wielded an enormous influence at a political and social level.

The two women included in the shot are located at the entrance to the market. One enters and another leaves, in a clear attempt to put movement into the photograph. These dynamics are fulfilled by the women buying in the market, and also by the two men attending the garden. In this postcard, therefore, we see a portrait of people who are not necessarily represented as they would be in their day to day lives, but rather as how they ought to be, an ideal to which one should aspire, one that every human being would reach in a future society, that is, in the imagined society of that time. In photography, however, the image of that ideal is already clearly marked as present, as current, and “is fascinating because it freezes the image of people in a perpetual present, but also because it articulates, around this, multiple elements of desire, power and fantasy” (González 2007:21).

The market, understood as an eminently urban construction, conveys a similar meaning to the one that is represented by postcards N4 and N5, since the garden and the church are both elements that give an idea of the life that would take place in a growing urban population centre. Now, while the market is linked to commercial activity but at the same time also represents a useful service for society, Vargas Park and the Catholic Church impose as constructions that give meaning to the everyday life of Limón. In these last two, the absence of human beings stands out once more. But of this subset, that is, cards N3, N4 and N5, I can affirm that, in the sphere of the visible, it is the streets, the buildings, and the city centre that dominate, excluding those urban areas that they do not want to show. It is about the construction of a bourgeois vision that valued the investor, elaborating an image of prestige and class distinction within the urban setting, utilizing postcards as their means of communication (De Sá 2012:17).

### **An Iconological Interpretation**

In iconological terms, I can argue that the five Costa Rica postcards studied here are part of a series in which the intended photographic representation is evidenced through a reading of the whole group. I accept

that my proposal is no more than one interpretation among many possible readings of these artefacts, however, my research is grounded on careful methodological procedures. Therefore, I contend that the visual discourse emanating from the images intends to underscore the importance of agro-productive sector work, that was to be imposed as a mechanism for achieving the change expected for Costa Rican society in the first half of the twentieth century.

Through the postcards, we can observe the manifestation of a commercial practice in which an ideological manipulation is obvious. For example, the agricultural activity, the care of nature—domesticated to promote development, to bring progress—, both of which are evident in the visualization of the “Typical Farm House” (see Figure 2 *detail*). Another example is the signalling of modernization, discreetly indicated also in N2, by placing a part of the railroad in the lower right corner, which is intended to explain that order has been established in Costa Rica.



**Figure 2** (*detail*)

Not only in that postcard, but also in the remaining ones, the intention is an imaginary representation of social progress, always promoting banana activity as a necessary task for achieving change. Considering the limits of space for this text, I will continue with detailed reference to only more postcard.

On card N1 we find a representation in which the photograph of a natural scene can be identified, with a background divided into two large parts. In the upper section a colourful sky is reflected, a very attractive light blue, while in the lower section there is a green and dense vegetation, which contrasts with the two large branches from which hang two bunches of bananas, thus highlighting the very identification already made by the title of the postcard. The pre-iconographic reading of this postcard does not reveal much: the elements to comment upon are few. It is limited to the iconotext of the title, to a specific photographic representation of the bananas themselves and to the vegetation. However, an iconographic explanation enables us to offer more information about

the postcard, in spite of the fact that it is a card that, on first approach, can apparently be seen as extremely simple. However, using both an iconographic and iconological analysis we achieve greater depth.

If we were to be accurate, the title “Bananas full grown,” would actually refer to “ripe bananas” or “full-grown bananas;” but if we consider a broader context, we can actually narrow down the reference to, for example, “Bananas fully grown and mature, ready and perfect,” as a direct reference to the correct development of the produce (the fruit) and implicitly also, to the business of production itself. The banana is, therefore, the protagonist of a representation that has been well planned in advance, for use in this photographic postcard. This postcard and indeed the remaining examples from the set, show that there is an almost never ending scope for interpretation, particularly as our knowledge of their full context grows.

I have found other examples of postcards that relate intimately to the five presented here, which serve to develop this argument further. I refer particularly to the “Banana Series,” a set of postcards where one particular card within the group contains the same image that we find on postcard N1. Part of the title also corresponds exactly to postcard N1, identified as: “Banana Series No. 4. Bananas full grown” (see Figure 9).



**Figure 9**

On the reverse side, is the copyright data, pertaining to: “D.D. Gomes Casseres.” It is a black and white photographic postcard, which also has the reverse side divided in two, that is, it was also produced after 1906. Don David Gomes Casseres, now identified as the creator of this card, was an official of the United Fruit Company, in charge of the commercialization of goods for the American company (Camacho 2017). This information allows us to add in other elements that facilitate our interpretation of the nature of the postcards analysed here.

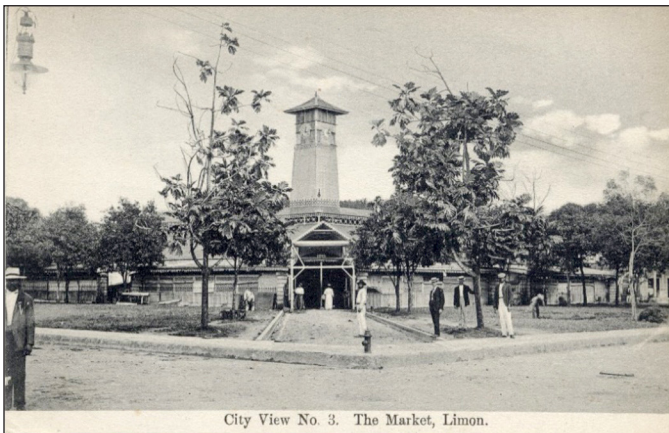
Although the colour postcards do not indicate a chronological order, the sequence of the banana production process was surely considered in their creation. The banana plant is the central figure of this postcard, but we could argue that it is the axis of the complete series. It gives meaning to all the other photographs in this set of postcards. This is also reinforced by the connection to the Gomes Casseres postcards, and in particular because of the closeness to the “Banana Series” postcards.

The presence of the banana denotes the enormous importance of the fruit. The absence of people confirms the secondary role given to individuals, as we perceive in N3, where the presence of people is simply an element with which to “decorate” the postcard. But, in spite of the absence of people in the photograph, once we realize that Gomes Casseres worked for the company, we can acknowledge that the investors (the United Fruit Company itself), its representatives, and the workforce identified therein with the transnational industry, are all referenced in the image, because it is thanks to their initiative that the development of the agricultural product is achieved: they explain its majesty. Two huge arms of the banana plant form the shape of a capital “V” that at each end is crowned with a bunch of bananas. Although the intention was to offer a presentation of the plant, in its entirety, the desired framing is undoubtedly achieved with the integration of the two clusters within the photograph. The photo leaves no doubt as to what is intended in the postcard. These agricultural products are the most significant element of the photograph. Studying this visualization, we can make an approximate calculation of almost one-hundred and fifty bananas for each cluster, an amount that is used to illustrate the banana bonanza that it wishes to emphasize. A lack of experience in the act of visual readings is clearly an obstacle for understanding the arguments I propose here; it would prevent a reading of photographic image N9 (or any other image) as anything more than an insignificant illustration. This kind of academic approach is important, therefore, and enables us to reveal not only the meanings of these images, but also to indicate their significance for augmenting our historical knowledge.

Thus, once again, we are faced with the need to compare different visual sources. For those of us interested in such iconography, provoking a dialogue around these sources is a necessary and enriching process.

The “Banana Series” is a set of twelve photographic postcards that evokes the entire banana production process, from the moment the land is prepared for planting banana plants, until the fruits are transferred on UFC ships to the markets of the United States of America. The name ascribed to the Banana Series is indicative of the importance of the product, at the centre of the imaginary that is built up. Thus, with the inclusion of postcard N1 in the group of my five colour postcards, it can be inferred that, as with the “Banana Series,” the colour postcards, although they do not reveal any explicit references, can be understood as part of a well-elaborated propaganda policy that is identifiable only from the connection made with the “Banana series.”

There is also another connection to Gomes Casseres as a designer of postcards. I refer to another series of photographic postcards known as the “City View” set. In this set the card identified as No.3, and whose title also refers to “The Market, Limón” (see Figure 10), uses the same image as N3 discussed above. The “City View” is a black and white series (like the “Banana Series”), in which all the elements studied and presented here can also be found. There is however, one element that marks a striking difference. In the foreground of the upper left side of the “City View Series, N° 3” there is a piece of street lighting. This element, together with the wires that are seen along the top, is intended as a tribute to the technological advancement of Limón. Meanwhile, in N3 (discussed above), it would seem that the use of colour accentuates and gives greater importance to the bright, blue sky, with no interest in including any element that would break the air of tranquillity created in the “theatrical scene” where men of colour stand calmly by.



**Figure 10**

As I commented earlier, one of the notable elements in this postcard (N3) is the placement of the people in the image. Of particular mention



is the position of the man at the left margin. Although some attention is given to portraying the elegance of his clothing, as also in the case of the other individuals in the same shot, the placing of this particular figure at the edge of the photograph can be read as a case of marginality, especially taking into account the central position of “The Market” itself. Not only is the figure placed at the margins, but he is also mutilated. Contrary to the positioning of important figures, who are placed in such a way as to enhance their presence in photographs, whether or not this situates them in the centre of the image or not, in this case, there is no attempt to allow a complete representation of this man. Although he is presented formally, emphasizing his suit jacket, his hat, and even what appears to be a handkerchief or a flower in the pocket of the jacket, or in the buttonhole, there appears to have been little concern over “cutting him out,” when editing the photograph, displaying a similar attitude to that described by Susan Sontag when she refers to a lack of concern for portrayals of our dead or disgraced loved ones. A reading of *Ante el dolor de los demás* (2004) proposes a more intense initial contact with photographs, but also one with greater caution. This approach allows us to appreciate that: “it is not always possible to distinguish the topic” (Sontag 2004:12), and that the pain of others can be found even in images that denote optimism regarding the future, as in this case where the “city boom” is evident but does not take into account the true social conditions and difficulties experienced by workers of colour in the Province of Limón at the beginning of the twentieth century (Chomsky 1995).

In his analysis of a photograph of “Revolucionarios frente al monumento a Benito Juárez,” Miguel Ángel Berumen offers a reflection that, in a surprising way, aligns to the case of the individuals portrayed in N3:

The only ones who do not look in that direction [which in this case makes us think of “The Market”] are the ones who pose in front of the camera, they evidently have no awareness of the rest of the elements of the photographic frame, much less about the place they occupy in it, they do not realize the role they play in this photograph. Although they believe themselves to be protagonists, they do not know that they are at the mercy of the photographer. (Berumen 2016:48-49)<sup>6</sup>

The photographer would define the type of image desired; the need to build a particular discourse leads even to the choice of horizontal or vertical positions for the shots. This explains why N1 requires a vertical position. N3 also shows the control that the photographer has over the

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<sup>6</sup> Berumen 2016:48-49. The photography mentioned is that of Heliodoro J. Gutiérrez, “Revolucionarios frente al monumento a Benito Juárez,” Jorge Guerra Collection, Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, March of 1911. Secretaría de Cultura, INAH, SINAFO. FN.MX, gelatin silver print.

placement of each element included in his photograph. He maintains absolute control over the men and women present in the foreground. Of the nine people, six look directly at the position occupied by the camera. Thus, the photographer determined exactly where each would stand. The other three reveal more clearly how they were instructed to assume particular poses; two men are squatting in garden-care activities, and a woman is entering, turning her back on the photographer, each with the aim of giving dynamism of the photographic moment. The photographer could have decided that everyone looked towards where he was standing, but he undoubtedly preferred to create mobility, to give an air of realism to his creation. It is obvious that this theatrical control is total, held by the person pressing the shutter.

In the case of the postcards on Costa Rican themes, as we might expect, there is a reiterative rhetoric that simplifies and leads to an acceptance of the visual discourse—or the sensation therein—as consensual. This “illusion of consensus” is created from the images’ gaze, creating unity. We should be aware, however, that the consensus reached is not that of the people represented in the cards, but rather, the social imaginary proposed here, has more to do with the intention of the photographer, or the people involved around the images’ production. The Costa Rican population, among which we will consider those who permanently inhabited the region, be they white, of colour, or indigenous, had no opportunity to propose their own interpretation of the images that were produced, and in which they themselves apparently occupied a central place. But this would not be the same within the capitalist agenda.

### **A Transdisciplinary Reading of Images**

The existence of different objects of study, such as these examples in the postcards, outlines the need to find new methodologies for their analysis. The nature of these cultural artefacts is unique when subjected to an analysis that aims to find ways that contribute to deepening our knowledge of them on several levels. The use of photographic postcards in teaching and research, in the discussion of the benefits arising out of their study, and as documentary sources, places them within scenarios akin to inter and transdisciplinary methodologies: “There is a coincidence in that this way of looking at and addressing objects of study raises new strategies, demanding an ‘attitude’ and a ‘strategy,’ in the face of difficulties that demand understanding, explanation, and even a solution” (Guerra González 2016:10).

In addressing the complexity concentrated within these small 14 x 9 cm cards, the size commonly used, this text is itself the result of an inter and transdisciplinary study. In this sense, we see transdisciplinarity



as a concept referring to the “resolution of socially relevant problems” (Fernández-Carrión 2016:11), as well as a strategy and research method that reveals a possibility for developing cognitive processes that go beyond the scope of a specific disciplinary focus. That is, it goes beyond its own limits, but without crossing over those of the other disciplines.

In the first (disciplinary) sphere, my approach aims to show that the processes represented in the postcards allow us to understand that the trajectory of the development of capitalism in Latin America—although for practical purposes in this article, I focus on the case of Costa Rica—has not resulted in the promises that were intended to be both desired and easily attainable, by the simple fact that capital was transferred from the North American imperial centre to those regions that were regarded as potentially productive, as well as lacking any modernization project of their own. This involves an interest in fostering, through teaching, the exposure of problems, and an attention to them from a humanistic perspective that can contribute to the formation of social responsibility. Regarding the second sphere, that refers to the attempt to transcend the borders of cognitive disciplines, the study of postcards is a case in point, demonstrating the importance of going beyond disciplinary margins, coming into contact with other different disciplinary proposals, and innovating ways to reach results that exceed the limits of those methodologies that are not interested in breaking boundaries and disciplinary specialization. My approach to the study of postcards is not hampered by reductionist approaches, as the view towards these historical artefacts within the field of Latin American Studies is in any case centred on interdisciplinary readings, that consist of looking at and analysing the diverse and complex processes integrated into their production.

The transdisciplinary view of postcards implies an encounter with cultural production, with a historical interpretation acquired from new documentary sources, as well as considering activities involving different types of actors, such as artists, businessmen, politicians and economists, to name only a few. Likewise, my work aims to take into account a professional ethic regarding the study and reflection of neglected historical artefacts, such as these postcards. In the same way, this must also take account of ethical considerations that emerge when reflecting on the production of the postcards and bring to the fore complex global and personal problems integrated therein. So, there is a need to apply critical thinking, that uses the trans, multi and interdisciplinary lens to go beyond disciplinary studies. The transdisciplinary method in the humanities can encompass spheres such as cultural history, the aesthetics of everyday life, history of art, economics, the history of international relations, migration studies, discourse analysis, and literature, which can all come to bear on our work with postcards.

I have striven to show that a transdisciplinary analysis, where “trans” means “what is behind, on the other side,” actually leads me to observe and identify what is not at first revealed in the postcard images. It is important, and even imperative, therefore, not to lose sight of this and in discovering what is not immediately evident, so bring it to the fore, and see what can be exposed through this reading, given that in “normal conditions” it could not be perceived at all. In this way, we are able to distinguish that “a certain level of reality” undoubtedly exists in these postal images (Guerra González 2016:63), but that there is much more to consider, underscore and resolve. Attending to this, allows us to contribute further to the knowledge of our history.

## Conclusion

The outcome of a transdisciplinary reading allows us to approach the interpretation of the images presented—with or without words—in an ambiguous way, making possible what John Berger identifies as the existence of “another way of telling” (Berger and Mohr 1995:92). When a visual discourse is revealed using certain words, it often happens that there is no direct correspondence between the image and the text. The iconotext has a forced presence, that can be explained by the fact that it attempts to illustrate an idea or a process in a pre-conceived manner. When the images are not communicated using textual references in any way, then there is a declared interest on the part of the person interested in its creation, and that is when the role the photographer takes on a relevant role:

The photographer chooses the event he photographs. This choice can be thought of as a cultural construction. The space for this construction is, as it were, cleared by his rejection of what he did not choose to photograph. The construction is his reading of the event which is in front of his eyes. It is this reading, often intuitive, and very fast, which decides his choice of the instant to be photographed.

Likewise, the photographed image of the event, when shown as a photograph, is also part of a cultural construction. It belongs to a specific social situation, the life of the photographer, an argument, an experiment, a way of explaining the world, a book, a newspaper, an exhibition.

Yet at the same time, the material relation between the image and what it represents [...] is an immediate and unconstructed one. And is indeed like a trace.

The photographer chooses the tree, the view of it he wants, the kind of film, the focus, the filter, the time-exposure, the strength of the developing solution, the sort of paper to print it on, the darkness or lightness of the print, the framing of the print—all this and more. But

where he does not intervene—and cannot intervene without changing the fundamental character of photography—is between the light, emanating from that tree as it passes through the lens, and the imprint it makes on the film. (Berger 1995:92-93)

Noting the relationship that the five postcards analysed here have with the series created by David Gomes Casseres, and although not detailing in greater depth due to lack of space, it is clear that the United Fruit Company was aware of the importance of photographic images, and their acceptance at that time, as undeniable, irrefutable realities. However, it is clear that photographs and, of course, photographic postcards, can be, and indeed are, utilized to deceive and misinform on a massive scale.

We are surrounded by photographic images which constitute a global system of misinformation: the system known as publicity, proliferating consumerist lies. The role of photography in this system is revealing. The lie is constructed before the camera. A “tableau” of objects and figures is assembled. This “tableau” uses a language of symbols (often inherited, as I have pointed out elsewhere, from the iconography of oil painting), an implied narrative and, frequently, some kind of performance by models with a sexual content. This “tableau” is then photographed. It is photographed precisely because the camera can bestow authenticity upon any set of appearances, however false. The camera does not lie even when it is used to quote a lie. And so, this makes the lie *appear* more truthful. (Berger 1995:96-97)

The images were produced on request, there is no doubt about it. These are not snapshots that just any person, not even a tourist, would capture. There is a clear and preconceived idea of what is intended to be built into the image. In the case of the persons in N3, they might seem to be the protagonists. But I do not believe that is the case. The iconotext itself belies this. Here, it is “the Market”—and in the case of the other postcards, the bananas, the “typical” house, the church or the park—that takes on the leading role. Those men “are nothing more than props that give meaning” to the interests already outlined previously. These postcards show that there was indeed an underlying interest in announcing or evoking a possible order in nature and of men; they become the accessory that—more than substitutes—embodies that place of hope. They are images that speak of hope for a promised future.

We can see that the photos on the postcards sought out to capture the idea of everyday life in Limón. But we can also point to the creative process itself, that really works as a homage to the new (Massé 2016:26). It is the urban advance that is captured, such as the market, the office buildings, the images accompanied by symbols of progress—such as the water pump, the railway and public lighting: these choices leave

traces of the new, which, in turn, represent the modern, itself linked to a liberal concept of progress that would be accompanied by a taste for the bourgeois. But I want to highlight one aspect. This type of photography should be seen as an example that expresses a sense of mastery on the part of those who promote the creation of the images. What dominates is the sovereignty of the individual, that one person behind the whole process of the construction of imaginaries. That is, there is a self-exaltation that materializes the presence of Minor Keith and of the entire United Fruit Company, without them actually being present in the photographic image.

Each one of the images presented here, and also the entire series, has as its goal to make the observer feel the possibility of “seeing everything” through a broad picture, “like the etymological meaning of the word panoramic, or at least all that the photographer wants to show” (Pretelin 2016:30). As a visual document, each photographic postcard is a testimony of the need to register all the infrastructure that the banana investors want to be noticed, because that way they leave evidence of “their work.” Although, at the same time, as also happens with the iconographic information that N3 leaves us via the figures that appear around the market, they are also a parameter for appreciating disparity with respect to “the others,” who were intentionally positioned, probably without realizing it, or without suspecting the true intentions and impact of the photos for which they were expected to pose.

In the set of five postcards analysed, we have found informational inaccuracies, ranging from the erroneous reference to them as Nicaraguan postcards, to the deletion of the data regarding who actually took the photographs, and to the absence of data on the relationship that they had with the propaganda campaigns implemented by the UFC. Unanalysed, and as isolated postcards they can offer us very few details. As scholar Beatriz Malagón affirms, some photos do not offer well-defined data, but any information can be valuable, despite being very limited:

Crumbs of evidence, certainly, but that would help rescue the visual information of the document that waits to be discovered and interpreted. If the data is lost or if information is missing in the files, there remains only one unidentified image that prevents performing a work of interpretation with a minimum possibility of success. Without reliable clues in the file regarding the piece, its meanings can be confused and even lost.

Hence the importance of learning to observe in our own images what other sources cannot provide us: the particularity of a smile, a gesture or the way of dressing. Ambiguous signs that are difficult to interpret but, nevertheless, refer us to a moment in time that made this or that composition possible, and speak to us about the character of an era,

because they display the cultural reminiscences that mark that particular moment. (Malagón 2016:35)

The work in favour of enhancing knowledge never ends. This is evidenced by finding more and more information. A recently purchased photo postcard is a fine example, another “crumb of evidence.” The characteristics shown on this new postcard suggest it should also belong to the series of colour postcards, and therefore to the series belonging to Gomes Casseres. Entitled “United Fruit Co’s. Offices and Quarters, Limon” (see Figure 11) at first sight, it is perfectly feasible that it may enhance or increase the interpretative proposals surrounding the propagandistic presence of the UFC in Costa Rica, and the neighbouring region. But this will have to be part of further research on these postcards as documentary artefacts for generating a deeper knowledge of the Caribbean Area.



**Figure 11**

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