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Lost and Found: Conflict in Transnationals' Writing Identity

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Abstract

The theme of identity has been researched extensively in the past twenty years and continues to be a significant topic to be researched inside the field of applied linguistics (Burr, 2003; Charon, 1998; Hall, 2002; Norton, 2000, 2013; Vieira, 2016; 2018). Oddly, bilingual writers engaged in professional academic writing rarely verbalize the processes they apply when writing. In this article, we make use of multiple academic conversations and written interview data to propose an important adaptation to a conceptual model that reflects the complexities experienced by professional bilingual academic writers when involved in the act of writing. Furthermore, the data sheds light on the difficulties of geographical transition in writing, as well as the mobility of literacy.

Keywords: bilingual writing identity, ethnography, language mobility, transnationals.

1. Introduction

Migration can promote economic growth for families, but it can also take an emotional toll, as families move back and forth across borders. Often in response to economic problems, migration also poses problems for identity. Based on research in central Mexico, this article shows how transnational students see writing and learn new ways of writing.

In this study regarding academic writing, three bilingual researchers look closely at three transnational Mexican university students and the way in which they relate themselves to writing in two languages, product of having lived extensively in Mexico and the US. Because of their status as transnationals, geographic movement was an element of their lives. Because of this, identity is a strong element of the research. Identity in many aspects is shaped by context and language. Identity, like language, is both personal and social. In the world of migration writing has a place for analysis.

Neither the pervasiveness of writing in everyday life nor the movement of people across international borders is abating. Global migration has increased 33% since 2000 (UNFPA), leaving millions of people negotiating family, politics, and money across borders (Waldinger). Likewise, according to Deborah Brandt's recent book, *The Rise of Writing*, more people are writing in more aspects of their lives, with as yet unknown emotional, cognitive, and civic consequences. Driving both trends are the familiar characters of our rapidly globalizing age — state politics, changing technologies, economic neoliberalism.

But how precisely do such macrosocial forces act on both writing and migration? How do they pressure the ways these two widespread experiences act on each other? And what do these intricate relationships mean for the lives and livelihoods of ordinary people, who are increasingly moving and writing across borders? Such questions, in my view, are at the heart of transnational composition studies today (Vieira, 2016: 138).

- This research demonstrates through a collaborative ethnographic lens that there is a perceived rhetorical conflict in transnational writers that translates to difficulties in finding a balance between the two languages.
- The data suggests Individuals who write in more than one language do not have a clear definition of what is first or second language for writing.
- The findings indicate that family and education play a powerful role in how writing is viewed.

The idea of 'self' is central to writing (Ivanič, 1998). However, the social pressures that can surround the writing 'self' are multiple and more complex in their interrelationship for the transnational writer (Vieira, 2016; 2018). The shaped 'self' employs language as a tool for making one's presence felt. Charon (1998) details and explains the complex relationship between identity and interaction in the world:

When referring to "self-concept," Charon assigns a projection, persona, or wish fulfillment part to identity. Charon also suggests that we reveal our identities via motivated actions in interacting with others. Identity might be figuratively represented by a mirror that reflects who we are, how we see ourselves, how we perceive others, and how other people perceive us (Crawford et al., 2016a: 116).

Academic writing has approached varied issues related to the identity of monolingual academic writers, such as the use of first person pronouns (Ivanič, 2006; Sheldon, 2009; Starfield & Ravelli, 2006), the evaluations made by writers (Swales & Burke, 2003), voice (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001), and Stance (Charles, 2003). Differences in American English and Mexican Spanish have been mentioned in many academic studies (e.g., Montaña-Harmon, 1991; Santana-Seda, 1975; Santiago, 1971; Simpson, 2000; Thatcher, 2000). However, the interrelationship between identity and academic writing in transnational writers remains a theme to be explored more, especially in contexts where both languages are used for academic purposes and more importantly, where the researchers and participants are all bilingual. The reason for this is:

Literacy is mobile. Far from locally circumscribed, as it was once theorized, literacy is now often understood as a material and embodied semiotic resource that travels with and without people through time and space (Vieira, 2018: 165).

This is unique in that monolingual writers carry out much of the research on second language writing in the EFL/ESL context and only focus on basic level university writing (Leki & Carson, 1997). As a result, the interaction of literacy and identity may be overlooked or at least underscored in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) field.

The interaction of identity and language is an everyday occurrence in a context such as the Language Department of the University of Guanajuato, where university students use different languages for academic purposes, for both publication and for everyday school activities. These activities have not been explored sufficiently in the sense of how it is a complex issue which involves decisions at different levels that affect the individual both on the personal level and on the a collective level in the sense of what groups he/she identifies with and how he/she is accepted within circles (Busayo, 2010; Crawford et al., 2013). In our context at the University of Guanajuato, our transnational students face a situation of being forced to acquire a second language writing identity and in a sense a heritage language identity because of their transnational condition in order to complete their undergraduate and graduate studies. For the most part they use their dominant language the majority of the time and a second language for specific activities. In this

article, we will examine the struggle of students as academic writers and the conflicts they have as transnational writers based upon data collected from in-depth written interviews. In addition, informal conversations with the interviewees influenced the data analysis. As such, we employed foundations of collaborative and duo ethnography as a methodology to utilize different positions as researchers and having been the teachers of the participants over six years in the description, analysis and interpretation of data (Camicia & Zhu, 2012) in a personal collective effort to sustain the agency of all the participants and researchers members involved in the research.

2. Language use of two countries

The use of language as a symbol of individual identity is important. Busayo (2010: 3048) mentions that: “When two languages come into contact, usually one language is dominant over the other. The dominant language is usually spoken by the group that holds political, cultural and economic power in the community”. This is possibly the one of the most important features in Mexican society, where English has a strong political position powerfully shaped by the tense historical political relationship between Mexico and the United States (Crawford, 2007; 2010). Added to this, there is a complex on-going political/linguistic relationship. Mexico and the United States share a border where more people in the world cross than any other border (Condon, 1997; Verduzco & Unger, 1998).

This political presence needs to be considered as it has direct influence on the learning of second language writing in Mexico. When transnationals move back and forth in two contexts where the norms and practices are different, it is still expected that they will practice the prevalent norms and values in each context, in order to achieve some degree of integration in the language environment (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Mills, 2002; Wenger, 1998). This constant movement may cause conflict as an author in an academic context. This is more complex when dealing with two educational systems and communities because as pointed out by Burgess and Ivanič (2010: 230):

For most students, identities in educational contexts are transitory, mediating identities; hence, the practices in which they engage while attending courses may be for extrinsic purposes, not part of the identities to which they aspire for the rest of their lives. Students may be in an ambivalent relationship with this identity: partially desiring and partially resisting being constructed as “someone in education.” In the immediate present, however, this is an aspect of their identity that they cannot ignore.

In the case of transnational students, it is more than just someone in education. Their writing identity is moved beyond the educational realm and is directly tied into the concept of geographical location. The transnational is forced usually against his/her will to move between educational systems and countries. This intensifies the “someone in education” moment as they must deal with two educational systems, two cultures, and the politics that come with it.

While such scholarship opens the possibilities that migration promotes literacy learning, the time and space of the migratory context itself is often (though not always) imagined as static. How, then, might migration promote literacy learning in countries undergoing the rapid economic and political changes that often accompany immigration? Put another way, what—and how—do homeland community members learn about literacy when not only people and their literacies are moving across borders, but when borders themselves shift? (Vieira, 2018: 165).

Because of this complexity of geographical movement intertwined with literacy, a qualitative approach to the research project was adopted to explore these complex interrelations.

3. Methodology, participants and in-depth interviews

We use a qualitative research approach in order to explore the concept of identity formation when writing in different languages. Qualitative research is difficult to define as no one has copyrights on the term. It ends up meaning a variety of things for a variety of people. Chenail (1992: 1) mentions: “that is the most important point: qualitative research can be a diverse, rich, and sometimes self-contradictory world of inquiry”. Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 2) define qualitative research as:

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives.

For this article, we consider all the participants and the workspace as a visible small culture that we work in as defined by Holliday (1999). Because all the participants involved are or were members of the Language Department as a student for a six-year period across two degree programs. The participants and researchers all have from six to thirty years of bilingual writing experience. Their stories and views about second language writing were collected from an in-depth written structured interview over a two-month period to be blended into a collaborative story about transnational writers' identity. Collaborative in the sense that we have funneled through our own experience of years of bilingual writing/publishing as the guideline to shape the story.

3.1 Collaborative ethnographic lens: Participants in the study

Participants	Professional background	Educational background	Years of bilingual writing	Years in Mexico	Years in US	Age
Israel	In-service transnational English teacher	BA TESOL, MA Applied Linguistics	10 Spanish-English	15	11	26
Bella	In-service transnational English teacher	BA TESOL, MA Applied Linguistics	10 Spanish-English	16	14	30
Orlando	In-service transnational English teacher	10 Spanish-English	8 Spanish-English	8	20	28
Linda	Teacher Education	Academic professor and researcher, PhD in Language Studies	37 Spanish-English	39	24	63
Cody	Second Language Writing	Academic professor and researcher, PhD in Language Studies	30 Spanish-English	36	19	55
María	Bilingualism	Academic professor and researcher, PhD in Applied Linguistics	20 Spanish-English	2	38	40

Thus, this paper draws upon principally research data from three participants in the form in-depth written interviews and discussion with the participants and three academic researchers of the Language Department of the University of Guanajuato. The participants were part of two academic teacher-training programs: BA in English Language Teaching (ELT) and MA in Applied Linguistics in Teaching English. We exclusively focused on strong “transnational” writers. By strong, we mean individuals that have published academically in two languages in referred journals. All these participants have worked together over the last six years on diverse research projects and been in class in student teacher research relationships with the authors.

3.2 *In-depth structured written interviews*

The complexities which came from the data gathered in the in-depth written interviews pushed us to a point where we needed a place to re-enter and discuss the data, but we needed a setting in the form of a conversation rather than just simple clarification from previous ‘research subjects’. We felt that something more dynamic would be more helpful to get at the underlying aspects of being a bilingual writer. We finally decided to go in a direction along the lines of Eakin (2008) and find a way to create identity through narrative, but in the form of an academic conversation. Thus, the concept of duoethnography was used, the three forms of ethnography, named as such beginning in the 1990s. They are not only intended to answer different questions but are meant to engage different processes and forms of representation (Rinehart & Earl, 2016). Duoethnography, the term coined by Joe Norris and Richard Sawyer (2012: 9), sets out to create a “dialogic methodology”. This is structured upon the concepts of storytelling and currere.

Currere involves examining one’s experiences as curricula that shape understandings: each of us undertook the steps of currere individually and then shared our reflections through collaborative autobiography. This collaboration expanded our self-reflexivity in relation to curriculum and to discursive contexts and, unexpectedly, created an authentic learning community (Beierling et al., 2014: 2).

Norris and Sawyer (2012: 35) state:

...through dialogic storytelling, one can reclaim agency, authority, and authorship over one’s life. In (re)presenting experience, duoethnographies (re)generate and (re)conceptualize them.

However, we, the researchers, made a slight move away from this original intention in that the dialogue and what we developed was more like a collaborative discussion amongst ourselves, all of whom have written for publication in two languages. Through a dynamic discussion on our distinct views of writing, identities, and languages seem to overlap or collide, we collaboratively engaged in the process of academic writing. In practice, we became keenly aware and modified a statement below from Barrett and Brown (2014) that discusses auto-ethnographers, so that it focuses on academic writers:

“Autoethnographers use their personal experiences as primary material (data) for social investigation” (Chang, 2013: 108). Our collaborative autoethnographic examination of our resocialization as second language writers focused on our use of an informal comentorship as a way to address our struggles in finding a second language authorial identity. It was completed with full collaboration meaning that we worked through each phase of the research process together from “beginning (data collection) to the end (writing)” (*Ibid.*, 111). Using the writing and sharing of our personal stories and experiences as primary data, we found textual constructions from our past being brought to life, unveiling the complexity of the many variables

inherent in our roles as academic writers and showing how our previous texts influenced the tensions in our current ones (*Ibid.*, 4).

What we did was not a “true” auto or duo ethnographic study, but filtering the discussion through a collaborative ethnographic lens that allowed us to explore in more detail the data and allowed us to get a better understanding of what the participants had expressed. In the end we believe it has made the data discussion richer. This, the level of dialogue between us as researchers and the participants, in turn led to a more dynamic narrative in the data discussion.

4. Discussion of findings

4.1 *Challenges of finding a balance between two languages*

The introduction to two languages for transnationals can be a traumatic and unexpected event. Even more so, the shift from writing in Spanish to writing in English can happen at an undesirable moment in life as stated by Israel:

Having migrated to the U.S. at the age of four, I began kindergarten and went on to Elementary school according to the public education system in Oregon. I was submersed in an English-speaking environment from this early age, and it was a “must” to learn to write in English as soon as possible (Israel).

We can only imagine what it is like to have your natural course of learning to write interrupted at the age of four to make a shift to English in a type of sink or swim environment. Even with the passing of time and more education, the situation does not disappear. It simply transitions into a different type of struggle that the writers must deal with, Israel continues with his story:

I feel that the biggest challenge is having a combination of both languages in my mind and thinking in both languages. On one hand, my Spanish writing tells me to be as detailed and as descriptive as possible. On the other hand, my English writing tells me to be as direct and concrete as possible. I believe that finding a balance between the two in aiming to have my voice is quite a challenge. I have found writing in English to be quite particular. I also believe that others are able to notice my writing according to the style and the word choice that I tend to rely on (Israel).

So even though the second language is acquired, the complexity does not disappear. It takes a new type of ‘challenge’ that seems to migrate from the learning stage to finding a way to manage two writing systems in one’s head. Having these two systems can even be a dangerous social tool for a transnational because the teachers in the two systems are not necessarily prepared to deal with this type of learner. Consider this brief narrative by Orlando:

As a Mexican writer of English in high school, my writing skills were often challenged. I recall a specific moment when I used the word “castigate” in one of my essays. My English teacher questioned if the word even existed and asked me to look it up in the dictionary in front of the entire class. Lucky for me, it was there, and nobody said anything afterward. To me, it seemed natural to use it as it was similar to Spanish and Word did not correct it with a red underline. From that point forward, I was very cautious when using “Spanish sounding” words. I’d double check in the dictionary and I found a synonym that was more “Anglo sounding” I would use it instead. Looking back on this, I now understand that I was using my knowledge of Latin root words and applying it to English writing (Orlando).

Here we can see two types of challenges that Orlando had to face. First, a skill he had at the time and did not know it was useful as a resource to aid him in writing in English. However, this unknown resource was socially challenging with the show of force by the teacher, placing him in a possible scenario of humiliation. This resulted in him starting to hide his ability to write so

that he could “blend in” or “avoid more possible humiliation” as a writer. To what extent this altered or reduced his writing may never be known, but what is clear is that having two language writing systems available for use can be perceived as negative inside the educational system. Besides this type of external confrontation, there can also be an internal confrontation for the individual.

Consider here how Bella describes the challenge of sorting out two rhetorical systems:

As an English writer I have found it hard to organize my thoughts because sometimes I organize my ideas like it is done in Spanish. This makes it hard because it takes me longer to express myself in writing because I find myself wondering did I use the Spanish structure or am I using the English one. Another challenge I encounter while writing is the loss for words. I mean I start writing but then I think of the word in the other language and sometimes I do recall the word but if I don't find the word in the language I'm using I end up erasing that sentence or idea because of that one word. It is very frustrating, and I hate it when this happens because it takes me forever to write (Bella).

Here Bella has explained how the two languages seem to overlap in her mind. This implies that she is struggles with the specific language in itself, while she tries to work out what to put on paper. This, in turn, suggests that the writing process for a bilingual may be more complex and difficult than more a monolingual, at least until they achieve a level of mastery in both languages.

This complexity is not necessarily dealt with by the school system. Israel recounts his support system for separating the two writing systems:

I am thankful that I have an older brother and an older sister. We would gather each day after school and teach and learn from each other about the English language. I remember becoming familiar with the writing and proofreading process (brainstorming, drafting, editing, rewriting) of a story since my early elementary school years (Israel).

What stands out here is that the activity of writing when using two language systems that have conflicting rhetorical systems that place the user at a disadvantage both academically and socially during the educational process (Crawford, 2007; 2010). This would strengthen the argument to implement in the US, heritage language programs and it also implies that in Mexico steps need to be taken to accommodate the individual differences that these types of learners could have because of their condition of movement between school systems. Also, attention needs to be given to the implication the label transnational creates for a learner because there are two languages involved in their educational development.

4.2 Practice in academic programs

The basic common result from the data concerning the studying of the BA and MA programs was a consistent reference to practice. However, there were two clear classifications of the type of practice. In relation to the BA program the two strongest terms are practice and academic writing. Israel narrates an outline of the four-year program in terms of writing.

The BA helped me a lot in terms of my academic writing. Having a basis in general English writing, I think that the process was relatively easy to transfer on to academic writing. The Academic Writing course in second semester was a pioneer for all the work that was to be done throughout the BA. The Sociolinguistics class in 3rd semester offered us a new type of writing in terms of a critique and a response paper. Academic writing was always modeled throughout the assigned readings, yet I believe that hands-on practice was key to continue to develop in the academic writing process in English. I also believe that constant exposure and use of the English

language throughout the BA helped strengthen the language, in general. Large amounts of vocabulary was not only remembered, but also learnt. Also, the BA prepared me for my first thesis. I had previously written a *tesina* [thesis] for high school, but that was in Spanish and not close to the formality requested for the BA thesis (Israel).

Interestingly, he separates the types of writing: response paper and thesis. He also makes an emphasis on practice. This separation is important because they are both genres that are rarely present in EFL programs. Also, the amount of time available to practice when learning a second language is often limited to short products designed to test linguistic knowledge and not actual writing. The ideas of practice and academic writing are confirmed by the following, firstly Orlando states:

The BA program without a doubt had a huge role in my development as a writer of English because a key component of the BA was to express oneself and our ideas in academic writing in English and to be open to critique. Most courses in the BA required of students to write at least two academic papers throughout the semester. This was accompanied by an extensive amount of reading in preparation for such papers (Orlando).

Here it is noteworthy the reference to reading. There has been extensive research that links academic writing to reading. So, it seems logical the association of reading in the classes, which also links to the opportunity. Again, the impact was considered relevant and related to academic writing. Finally, Bella says:

The BA program was very helpful because it helped me practice writing academically because to be honest I have never stopped writing in English and I love to write in English. For example, I would write journals and other stuff. But I wasn't really practicing academic writing until I was in the BA. I know and knew back then that academic writing was not the same type of writing I was doing because since in academic writing there are rules and structures that need to be followed. I feel that I adopted a writing style thanks to the classes where we had to do essay's or reaction papers (Bella).

This seems to demonstrate the idea that writing is a long-term process which requires up to six to eight years to reach basic level of proficiency (Collier, 1987). This process also continues on throughout the career of a professional or in other cases comes to an abrupt end after leaving educational institutions.

4.3 *Transnationalism: Having two options?*

We open this section with the idea of having two options rhetorical available. Israel indicates that these options were not freely chosen, but that he was required to learn to adapt and change against his will, even though he feels that it was not difficult.

I believe that the main impact that my transnational background had on me is having two different options to choose from when it comes to writing. While living either in the US or here in Mexico, I was required to write according to the standards in terms of what was generally expected from the student population. I had no choice but to adapt as quickly as possible if I wanted to succeed academically. The transitions and the adaptation processes were rather easy-going, and I was able to adjust quickly. I believe that migrating to the same places (in both Mexico and the US) helped promote this quick adaptation process. Being constantly in touch with both languages and making use of both continuously also helped in maintaining both English and Spanish (Israel).

Orlando, on the other hand, feels that this process was more difficult, and he does not see the idea of two languages being necessarily a positive situation. This is mostly because the label of transnational places automatic expectations on him as a writer.

I believe that it made it more difficult. Being a transnational implies knowledge and use of two languages. Often this creates expectations, especially under certain circumstances and contexts. In Mexico, I am expected to be a proficient writer in Spanish. This expectation is also raised because I hold a BA and am now studying an MA. As a writer of English, I think that I can hold my ground, but as a writer of Spanish I am insecure. I do not have the same level of confidence as a writer of Spanish that I do in English. I often refuse to write in Spanish unless I can type it and double check with someone else – usually my wife. The only way I can get over this is through practice; however, English is the language I am exposed to the most in academics. I am now able to speak about this more openly because I know the solution and I have embraced this as my writing identity. However, in a field where most academic publications are in English, knowledge of both languages has helped. Often times, academic writing utilizes Latin root words, thus knowledge of Spanish becomes helpful. In terms of writing, knowledge deriving from exposure and experience with English has helped me in following the expected structure (Orlando).

Then we go to Bella who coincides with Israel in the sense that it is positive to have two languages, but she does point out some initial doubts about academic writing in the below excerpt.

My transnational background has had a positive in my development as a writer because I have been writing in English ever since I was in elementary. When I was in elementary I remember that I always had to write journal entries for the spring break. Then in 7th grade one of my teachers had us write our own story and he was the only one that was going to read it. I enjoyed that project but more surprisingly I realized that I liked writing. Then, when I was in high school I had a history teacher that had us write academic papers for our midterm and final but to be honest I didn't know back then that those papers were academic. I honestly thought he was a picky teacher that had a crazy writing style. But now I know that he was teaching us how to write academically. Therefore, when I had to write the reaction papers for the BA it was not hard for me because I remembered what that teacher taught us and so I applied it (Bella).

What needs to be brought to the foreground of these narratives is that there was no free will here for the participants. Their learning of writing was a shift back and forth between two systems and they were required to adapt in order to survive in the two school systems. It seems probable to suggest that this lack of choice could be the underlying cause of conflict when discussing their views regarding the process of learning how to write. This coincides with the fact that earlier when they address the BA program where they made a personal decision to study with no institutional obligation the overall comment on writing is more positive. This is even more reinforced by the comment related to the studying of the MA where the following emerged from the data:

I also had the opportunity to publish a number of articles. I felt as if my academic writing had improved greatly for me to take the chance to submit a proposal for a publication. It was important to consider the guidelines for each publication in order to initially correspond with what was expected as a proposal. It was also very beneficial to obtain different perspectives on what had been proposed. This helped in strengthening critical thinking skills and pleasing what was expected by others while at the same time maintaining my initial ideas on a given topic (Israel).

The research component of the MA – thesis writing and extracurricular academic activities such as publishing – has made writing imperative not only to course

completion but also to our professional careers. I feel that now I am much more able to carry out independent research in part because my writing has improved as a result of the MA's demands (Orlando).

The MA played a huge role in my development as a writer because I published an article in MEXTESOL but also because the teachers motivated us to improve our writing. I enjoyed the writing workshop that we were offered because it reminded me certain things that I had forgotten because I hadn't written an academic paper in some time since it had been a couple of years that I had graduated from the BA (Bella).

What is clear from the above is that by continuing with their studies in the MA and having completed them, there is a stronger sense of linguistic capital. This is directly related to publishing. It is possible here that there is a direct correlation between the act of publishing and a feeling of redemption as a writer. All the participants at some point were questioned about their ability to write in English. A publication is an external confirmation of their ability to write, as well as, evidence that their previous difficulties experienced in writing in the school system reflects previous teachers' personal views and an evaluation of them as writers.

4.4 A writing model for transnationals

The following model was given to the three participants that is taken from Crawford et al. (2016: 1242) to see if it represented how they saw themselves as transnational writers of English. The responses of the participants were all positive, but with a complex observation. The modification of the model is crossing out the words first and second, so the reader can see visually the original as well as the modification that is proposed by the research participants.

Figure 1. Bilingual writer's identity (Crawford et al., 2016: 1242)

I believe that this model does represent how I see myself as a writer. Whether fully conscious of it or not, there is a zone of struggle and conflict within the rhetoric and linguistic structures of writing in either English or Spanish. As writing in each language has its rules and structures, it is vital to become aware of them. The need to write in both languages at a given time allowed me to have this array of techniques to write in either language. I had to somehow fit the standards and adapt to what was expected according to the place in which I was at (Israel).

What may be conflicting may be to determine in which language I began writing in. My first and home language was Spanish. There was a policy to always speak in Spanish at home when my parents were around. However, I can recall my first writing to be in English when enrolling to kindergarten in the U.S. I am unsure of if

the model may represent knowledge of the first language as knowledge of writing in a first language, or knowledge of a second language as knowledge of writing in a second language. Again, Spanish was my first and home language, yet I believe that I began writing in English. If the model could reflect knowledge of writing in a first language and knowledge of writing in a second language, I believe that the conflicts would arise for me when I was faced to write in a given language after migrating to the country where the language is mainly used. For example, I faced struggles when writing in Spanish (my first language) after I migrated back to Guanajuato. I also faced struggles when writing in English (my second language) after migrating to Oregon. Although I had knowledge of my first and second languages, the knowledge was superior in writing in my second language than writing in my first. As of now, I believe that I am equally proficient in writing in both languages, in general. However, I believe that my academic writing proficiency is much greater in my second language than in my first (Israel).

What emerges from this comment is the link between language struggle and geographical location, along with a doubt about which the first language is and which the second language is. This ties in strongly with the literature in the sense that there are multiple pressures on a transnational writer due to the movement of both physical and linguistic borders. This is difficult to reflect in a model in the sense that the conflict is clear, but the dichotomies and stereotypes around language users is difficult to show because the labels transnational, returnee, or ESL/EFL are related to your geographical location and nationality and not your ability to write. Nevertheless, there are two clear aspects: (1) there exists a conflict, and (2) the first and second languages are relative in their definition. As such, it is difficult to completely envision themselves in the model.

It is difficult to place myself within the model above. Perhaps this demonstrates a rupture in my writing identity as I cannot pin point which is my first and which is my second language (Orlando).

Again, it is difficult to determine which language is the first and the second. Yet, the school system in each country, as well as the teachers, have no problem deciding which language is the first or second, or heritage, or ESL/EFL. Yet the user has little say in this labelling. The following shows this.

Looking at this model I feel like I can relate to it but at the same time I am unsure of which language is my L1 because I have always said that my L1 is English because I can relate more to the English language and I prefer it. But also, I have been in touch with Spanish since I was little because of my mom. She taught me how to write and read in Spanish while English I learned how to write and read in school, with my dad and other family members. However, as I have mentioned before I have always felt better and preferred writing in English (in journal entries, notes, and other stuff). Nonetheless, nowadays I find that I have difficulty writing in both languages. But I can relate to the diagram and it shows how I see myself when it comes to my writing (Bella).

There is a connection to model, but at the same time there is a disconnection. The disconnection seems to be related to the issue of first and second language and the ever-present conflict between the languages. However, there is a connection in the sense that a conflict is ever present.

5. Conclusion

Again, a participant takes issue with the model because she is unsure of which is her first or second language. This idea is also present for the researchers of this article. The researchers in this article all take issue about what is their first or second language. It depends on the context

and what the expectations of the writing are, along with issues of audience. As a result a common phrase that we hear about a person's first language is directly tied to the type of writing the person is doing or for who the document is intended.

This opens a discussion as to the validity of placing different labels on writers to classify what language they write in. It seems at times that as academics we look for a new label to place on language users with the intention of placing them inside sub-groups. These groups are usually with the intension of helping, or for researching. Yet the users of the languages simplify want to be referred to as a bilingual writer. In conclusion, this research suggests that we need to be more careful in assigning labels to writers of second languages, so as to not fall into a situation that's could imply a type of discrimination.

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Archilochus' ῥυσμός: A Take on Fragments 128 and 129 West

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Abstract

The paper presents a new interpretation of Archilochus' fragments 128 and 129 West. It argues that the two fragments were part of the same poem. The argument is based on a narrative pattern underlying both fragments and on a new interpretation of the meaning of the word ῥυσμός in v. 7 of fragment 128 West as "a hostile temper or disposition".

Keywords: Archilochus, reciprocity, ῥυσμός, *Doloneia*.

1. Introduction

The power of a paraenetic poem derives from some vivid scenario or from the expressive language through which it conveys its precepts; or from both, as is the case with the following tetrameters by Archilochus printed in modern editions as two separate fragments²:

Fragment 128 West

θυμέ, θυμ', ἀμηχάνοισι κήδεσιν κυκώμενε,
†ἀναδευ δυσμενῶν† δ' ἀλέξο προοβαλὼν ἐναντίον
στέρνον †ἐνδοκοισιν ἐχθρῶν πλησίον κατασταθεῖς
ἀσφαλῶς· καὶ μήτε νικέων ἀμφάδην ἀγάλλο,·
μηδὲ νικηθεῖς ἐν οἴκῳ καταπεσὼν ὀδύρεο,
ἀλλὰ χαρτοῖσιν τε χαῖρε καὶ κακοῖσιν ἀσχάλα
μὴ λῆν, γίνωσκε δ' οἷος ῥυσμός ἀνθρώπους ἔχει.

"My heart, my heart, confounded by woes beyond remedy, rise up (?) and defend yourself, setting your breast against your foes by laying ambush (?) and standing steadfastly near the enemy. Do not exult openly in victory and in defeat do not fall down lamenting at home, but

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² West (1989) fr. 128-9, Tarditi fr. 105-6, Lassere fr. 118-9, Diehl fr. 67a-b.

let your rejoicing in joyful times and your impatient grief in bad times be moderate. Know what sort of hostile temper possesses men”³.

Fragment 129 West

σὺ γὰρ δὴ παρὰ φίλων ἀπάγχει

“for you are being strangled by your friends”

The poem may be read purely along gnomic lines, without reference to any particular event (real or fictional) or any performance occasion. However, this would mean to ignore a narrative, which pushes its way to render gnomes and didacticism only epiphenomenal.

- A narrative pattern underlies Archilochus’ exhortation to θυμός in fr. 128 and 129 West.
- The noun ῥυσμός in v. 7 of Archilochus’ fragment 128 West denotes a kind of hostile disposition, not a universal principle of nature or the world.
- Fragment 129 belongs to the same exhortation to θυμός as fragment 128 West.

If we follow the narrative, the question arises whether the war scenario elaborated in the poem is to be taken literally, or metaphorically⁴. On the one hand, even though it is clear that θυμός, the heart or the spirit, cannot literally “set breasts” against his foes, “stand steadfastly near the enemy” or “fall down at home”, the fragment never officially leaves the metaphor to enter non-figurative discourse or another metaphor⁵ and as a result, the identification of θυμός with a warrior naturally suggests an identification of the speaker with a soldier. On the other hand, we are under the impression that the poem is not only about a war situation, or even not primarily about one. How is this achieved? The explanation, in my view, lies in the accent that is put on the emotional, motivational and strategic aspects of war, not on military action as such. These could be easily transferred to other social contexts, possibly, to fit a wide range of performance occasions⁶.

The text of the first fragment is in doubt concerning two points. The less problematic one is ἐνδοκοισιν in v. 3, virtually non-existent in other texts and justly corrected to ἐν λόχοισιν⁷. The real crux comes with ἀναδεν δυσμενῶν, where numerous solutions have been proposed⁸. Of

³ The translation is by Douglas Gerber. I modified the translation of three phrases to bring it in accord with the interpretation presented here: †ἐνδοκοισιν ἐχθρῶν I translated as “by laying ambush(?)” (contrast Gerber’s “as they [the foes] lie in ambush(?)”); ἀσχάλα I translated as “[let your] impatient grief”, whereas Gerber has only “[let your] grief”; οἷος ῥυσμός ἀνθρώπους ἔχει I translated as “what sort of hostile temper possesses men”, whereas he translates “what sort of pattern governs mankind”. In the last modification, my translation is closer to that of J. M. Edmonds: “what sort of temper possess the man”.

⁴ John Barron and Patricia Easterling include the poem among songs designed for the military drinking party, with the presupposition that the speaker is a soldier who is engaging in a genuine military exhortation. Cf. (Easterling & Knox, 1985: 121). According to (Rubin, 1981: 4) the speaker’s θυμός is anthropomorphised as a warrior only for a couple of verses, after which the battle metaphor is transformed into another one. For an entirely allegorical interpretation of the poem see (Theunissen, 2000: 173 ff.).

⁵ *Contra* (Rubin, 1981). The war theme continues through vv. 4f. (cf. νικέων and νικηθείς). In v. 6 ἀλλὰ introduces a new message, but it is again on the same topic as the previous verses.

⁶ Unfortunately, we know nothing of the original performance setting of the poem, but precisely its diffused use of the war metaphor suggests that it might have targeted more than one context. Cf. (Steiner, 2012, esp. 38-40) on the intended wide range of performance occasions for fr. 13 West, a fragment that is often paralleled with ours.

⁷ The apparent word ἐνδοκος is found in Hesychius’ lexicon with the meaning ἐνέδρα. Most likely, the word is taken only from one place – this corrupt passage in Archilochus – and the proposed meaning was initially a marginal gloss in the manuscript possessed by Hesychius or his source. Cf. (Jaeger, 1946). On the use of plural instead of singular of abstract nouns to denote single occasions cf. (Katsouris, 1977: 229).

⁸ Cf. (Kamerbeek, 1961: 5; Nikitas, 1979: 34-43; Lomiento, 2000).

the two conjectures fulfilling the criteria of meter, sense, style and manuscript evolution at once, ἄνα τε δυσμενέων proposed by Anastasios Nikitas will be taken as a basis for this interpretation⁹.

At the beginning of fragment 128 the speaker confronts the ἀμήχανα κήδεα, the “woes beyond remedy”, by which his θυμός is confounded¹⁰. Their cause remains unnamed throughout the poem, but hints gradually pile up: first, we may think of the affliction described in v. 1 as similar to that warned against in v. 5; second, judging again retrospectively, this affliction might be caused by some κακά, as those mentioned in v. 6; and finally, if we accept fragment 129 to be part of the same poem, we may be fairly certain that the whole narrative (the κήδεα, as well as the guidelines for escaping from them) is propelled by an act of betrayal on behalf of the speaker’s friends.

For purposes of analysis, but only for such, we shall consider the paraenetic section of the poem (fr. 128, vv. 2-7) as composed of two parts: exhortation to counteract immediate danger (fr. 128, vv. 2-4) and long-term strategic advice (fr. 128, vv. 4-7).

2. Counteraction

The first part admits of several interpretations depending on the answer of two questions:

- (1) whether the λόγοι, the ambush, addressed by the aorist participles προσβαλὼν and κατασταθείς in vv. 2f. are taken to precede, to coincide with or to follow the κήδεα of v. 1¹¹;
- (2) whether ἐχθρῶν in v. 3 is taken as genitivus subiecti or as genitivus obiecti, when regarded as a qualification of ἐν λόγοισι¹².

⁹ The criteria are fulfilled by Nikitas’ (1979, p. 39-43) ἄνα τε δυσμενέων δ’ and Lomiento’s (2000) ἀλλὰ δυσμενέων δ’. I prefer Nikitas’ text for the following reasons: (1) I find the evolution from *ANATEΔΥΣΜΕΝΕΩΝ to αναδεδυσμενων, as explained by Nikitas, more likely than that from *ΑΛΛΑΔΥΣΜΕΝΕΩΝ to αναδεδυσμενων, as explained by Lomiento: Nikitas’ explanation involves less permutations, and such that are more plausible. (2) The use of the “irregular” corresponson of particles τε...δ’ might have more easily led to the confusion in the manuscripts than ἀλλὰ...δ’. (3) I suspect that this corresponson – or rather a slightly different one, but with the very same function – has a more extensive use and a more systematic role in our poem than Nikitas has believed, which in turn would make its appearance in v. 2 even more likely. (4) ἄνα is more consistent with the parallels to the epic *Doloneia*, which I discuss in section 1.

¹⁰ The expression κήδεα θυμοῦ is found in *Il.* 18.53. A very similar expression to ἀμήχανα κήδεα is found in *Od.* 2.79: ἀπρηκτοὶ ὠδύναι. The participle κυκώμενος is also a Homeric one (*Il.* 12.238 and 241; also 21.235, 240 and 324), appearing always to qualify moving water (ποταμός, κῆμα ποτάμου or θαλάσσης). Some scholars see a connection between κυκώμενος in v. 1 and ῥυσμός in v. 7, which is supposed to allude to the hypothetical primary meaning of ῥυσμός (“the running of a river”). See Kamerbeek (1961: 5). On states of anguish, ascribed to the heart or spirit in early Greek poetry, see Sullivan (1996).

¹¹ Aorist participles which express a circumstance of time are often used in such a way that the action expressed by the participle may temporally precede or coincide with the action expressed with the finite verb. For examples of both types see Seymour (1881, p. 93f.). The finite verb in v. 2 is ἀλέξ<εο> and the aorist participles, most naturally, should be taken to coincide (at some future point) with the action encouraged by this verb. We cannot, however, exclude the possibility for the aorist participles to refer to a point of time preceding or simultaneous with the moment of speaking, expressed by the present participle κυκώμενε in v. 1. Apart from their function to establish a particular narrative, the aorist participles may play their part in rendering the poem gnomic, as Nikitas (1979: 45, n. 81) has noted.

¹² ἐχθρῶν could be paired with πλήσιον and, perhaps less preferably, with ἐν λόγοισι. Cf. (Jaeger, 1946). Regardless of pairing, the question stands: who is laying the ambush – θυμός or his foes? An interpretation with *genitivus subiecti* is proposed by: Edmonds, 1931; Tarditi, 1968: 272; Lasserre & Bonnard, 1958: 39; West, 1993; Gerber, 1999: 167. An interpretation with *genitivus obiecti* is proposed by: Friedländer (1929:

Most of the emerging combinations lead to interpretations that are in a way viable, as I hope to show in the conclusion. However, the one in which λόγοι follow κήδεα and ἐχθρῶν is taken as *genitivus obiecti* particularly stands out: the speaker finds his θυμός in a state of utmost distress caused by a recent event, probably a kind of attack by people whom he calls δυσμενεῖς and ἐχθροί; as a result, he urges θυμός to pull himself together and counteract by laying an ambush, and thus guarantee his own safety. This interpretation is plausible in terms of both internal coherence, and rapport with a background of already existing narrative. The former will hopefully become clear in the course of the analysis, the latter deserves a separate discussion here.

In their study of the *Doloneia* (*Iliad* 10 or Kappa), Casey Dué and Mary Ebbott have restored ambush (λόχος) to its legitimate status as part of Homeric warfare and Homeric narrative. Not only is ambush not un-heroic, but it is also an indispensable part of any war (together with conventional battle, πόλεμος) and consequently, of many heroes' biographies¹³. The way Archilochus unfolds the ambush metaphor in vv. 1-4 of our poem reminds us strikingly of the epic treatment of the ambush theme, particularly as instantiated in the *Doloneia*. Archilochus' ἀμήχανα κήδεα signal a situation of despair (caused probably by a devastating attack of his enemies) that gives rise to the inevitability of counteracting not by conventional measures, but by λόχος¹⁴. In the *Doloneia*, anguish in the face of immediate danger is voiced consecutively by Agamemnon, Menelaus and Nestor¹⁵, and the noun κήδεα comes up in one of Agamemnon's speeches¹⁶. In both *Doloneia* and Archilochus, despair leads to full mobilization of forces¹⁷ and the decision to engage in resistance, not retreat¹⁸. Then the core ambush scene is in order¹⁹. The

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378f.), Jaeger (1946), and Treu (1979: 71). Note, however, that Friedländer and Treu do not take into account the correction ἐν λόγοισι.

¹³ Cf. (Dué & Ebbott, 2010: 31-49).

¹⁴ "The decision to undertake a spying mission or an ambush is often born of a situation of desperation, or the need to defeat an enemy who was not or cannot be beaten in conventional battle." And also: "[...] ambush is a strategy used when *polemos* tactics fail" (Dué & Ebbott, 2010: 70 and 98).

¹⁵ Agamemnon: *Il.* 10.5-16, 47-52, 87-101; Menelaus: 25-8; Nestor: 118, 145, 160-161, 172-3. It is as if Archilochus' κυκώμενε, alluding to the power of moving water, compresses into one word the description of Agamemnon's anguish by the forceful natural-disaster simile in vv. 5-10 of the *Doloneia*.

¹⁶ *Il.* 10.91-2: πλάζομαι ὧδ' ἐπεὶ οὐ μοι ἐπ' ὄμμασι νήδυμος ὕπνος // ἰζάνει, ἀλλὰ μέλει πόλεμος καὶ κήδε' Ἀχαιῶν.

¹⁷ Archilochus' ἄνα τε at the beginning of v. 2 reminds of the consecutive scenes of waking in the *Doloneia*: *Il.* 10.32: βῆ δ' ἵμεν ἀνστήσω; 55: εἶμι, καὶ ὀτρυνέω ἀνστήμεναι; 67: καὶ ἐγρήγορθαι ἄνωγθι; 138: ἐξ ὕπνου ἀνέγειρε; 146: καὶ ἄλλον ἐγείρομεν; 159: ἔγρεο Τυδέος υἱέ; 175-6: ἀλλ' ἴθι νῦν Αἴαντα ταχὺν καὶ Φυλῆος υἱὸν // ἄνστησον; 179: βῆ δ' ἰέναι, τοὺς δ' ἔνθεν ἀναστήσας ἄγεν ἥρωες.

¹⁸ In the *Doloneia* retreat is an option that is explicitly considered (*Il.* 10.147, 310f., 327, 398f.). In Archilochus, the expression ἀλέξ<εο> προσβαλὼν ἐναντίον στέρνον signals the decision to counteract.

¹⁹ A particular feature of the ambush setting is highlighted both in the *Doloneia* and in Archilochus: the enemy is said to be near (cf. *Il.* 10.100: δυσμενεῖς δ' ἄνδρες σχεδὸν εἵαται; 189f: πεδῖον δὲ γὰρ αἰεὶ τετράφαθ', ὀππότε' ἐπὶ Τρώων αἰοίεν ἰόντων; 221: ἀνδρῶν δυσμενέων δύναι στρατὸν ἐγγὺς ἐόντων Τρώων) – this is the imminent danger – and the ambusher should, in turn, go near the enemy to carry out his mission (cf. *Il.* 10.307f: ὅς τις κε τλαίη [...] // νηῶν ὠκυπόρων σχεδὸν ἐλθέμεν; 320: ἔμ' ὀτρύνει κραδίη καὶ θυμὸς ἀγῆνωρ // νηῶν ὠκυπόρων σχεδὸν ἐλθέμεν); 394f: ἠνώγει δὲ μ' ἰόντα θοῇν διὰ νύκτα μέλαιναν // ἀνδρῶν δυσμενέων σχεδὸν ἐλθέμεν. In Archilochus, this thought is expressed by πλησίον in v. 3. As regards the description of the ambush scene itself, however, the *Doloneia* seems to depart both from the traditional narrative pattern and from Archilochus' treatment of it, as it does not emphasize the wait (cf. Archilochus' v. 3: κατασταθεῖς in the meaning of "physically and mentally endure the whole ambush"), but only the surprise attacks (*Il.* 10.349-69 and 482-501). The latter aspect, on the other hand, is entirely absent from Archilochus' fragment.

success of the ambush guarantees at least a temporary escape from danger²⁰. In the *Doloneia*, the success is followed by a glorious return and vibrant expressions of joy²¹. In our poem there is a marked difference on this point: the speaker in fr. 128 explicitly discourages display of joy as a part the overall strategy after the ambush (fr. 128, v. 4)²².

The question arises whether we are ready to commit ourselves to the stronger claim that the parallel between the *Doloneia* and Archilochus' fr. 128 amounts to a case of textual allusion, i.e. that Archilochus appealed to the text of the *Doloneia* or some other similar fixed text, or to the weaker, that he drew the theme of ambush out of the pool of oral tradition²³. The short episode in Archilochus shares rather little with the traditional list of sub-themes that constitute the ambush theme²⁴. Notably, the *Doloneia* does not include all traditional sub-themes either²⁵. However, as I tried to show, there is a set of sub-themes, perhaps marginal to the tradition, that are common to both the *Doloneia* and Archilochus fr. 128 (anguish, mobilization, decisiveness, menace). What is more, these themes have been expounded through similar figures of expression in both texts. In such case, even if textual allusion is not far to seek, we should not rush to charge the fragment with aspirations of continuation or schemes of subversion. The *Doloneia* or a similar narrative might have been evoked for a reason, that has nothing to do with the appreciation or the rejection of its epic style and values (the principal axes of the continuation-subversion controversy). Some other significant aspect of narrative might have been prompted in order to enrich the audience's perception of the poem's imagery. For instance, by reminding his audience of the *Doloneia*, Archilochus might have intended to evoke the doubling of spying missions and ambushes so characteristic of its narrative²⁶, thus representing the λόχοι, laid by θυμός, as a part of several successive moves of this kind²⁷. This would be also in an accord with the sort of static-warfare strategy described in the letter part of the paraenesis.

²⁰ Cf. Archilochus' ἀσφαλέως in v. 4 with the reaction of the Trojans in *Il.* 10.515-25.

²¹ Cf. *Il.* 10. 541f. and 577-9.

²² In a nutshell, the strategy described in fr. 128, vv. 4-7, is one of defense and minimal reaction. This strategy corresponds strictly to the set goal – achieving safety (v. 4: ἀσφαλέως). Victory and defeat are considered only secondary and the excessive preoccupation with them is vividly warned against in vv. 4-5, as it might impair achieving the primary goal: displaying joy or grief, or indeed any emotion, could make θυμός vulnerable to new attacks. The *Doloneia*, on the other hand, following a typically epic manner, does not present three options (safety, victory and defeat), but only two (victory and defeat) in a framework of life-and-death struggle: *Il.* 10.174f: νῦν γὰρ δὴ πάντεσσιν ἐπὶ ξυροῦ ἴσταται ἀκμῆς // ἢ μάλα λυγρὸς ὄλεθρος Ἀχαιοῖς ἢ βιῶναι. In this context, every victory shall be properly celebrated and every defeat – lamented. This peculiar motivational shift allows Archilochus to transfer the narrative of war to other social situations, where life and death are not at stake, but safety is to be valued more than victory and defeat.

²³ A brief recent overview of the relationship between Archilochus and the Homeric epic is found in (Swift, 2012: 140-2).

²⁴ “The sub-themes that constitute an ambush include: (1) selecting the best men as leaders and/or participants; (2) preparing and arming for the ambush; (3) choosing a location for the ambush; (4) the ambushers concealing themselves and enduring discomfort while they wait; (5) the surprise attack; (6) returning home” (Dué & Ebbott, 2010: 70). For Archilochus' poem sub-theme (1) is irrelevant, as the ambush is to be set by a θυμός. Traces of sub-themes (2) and (4) can be found, whereas sub-themes (3), (5) and (6) seem to be entirely absent.

²⁵ Theme (4) is entirely absent. For theme (3) there are only occasional hints.

²⁶ On “ambush doubling” see Dué and Ebbott (2010: 82).

²⁷ The ἀμήχανα κήδεα, as well as the hesitation about how to call the enemy (cf. n. 27-30) suggest that the attack which has triggered the κήδεα, might itself have been a surprise attack. And the overall strategy (vv. 4-7) of not disclosing one's own attitudes, while keeping a close eye on the other's (see section 3 of this essay) is also targeted at facilitating ambush warfare, rather than direct battle.

But before that, there is one last point in the first part that needs to be discussed. Why are the enemies called once *δυσμενεῖς* and once *ἐχθροὶ* within the span of two subsequent verses?²⁸ We can either assume that the two terms have different meanings, or that they are synonymous. To suppose that they denote different groups of enemies, is ungrounded, and furthermore, poses too great a complication, given that the straightforward identification of even one group seems difficult at this point. Another possibility would be that the second term, having a different meaning from that of the first, was deliberately introduced to suggest that the entire talk about enemies and warfare is only metaphorical: these enemies are not enemies from a foreign country, they are fellow-citizens, perhaps members of the speaker's own circle; and respectively the ambush is not an act of war, but some kind of personal injustice or mistreatment within speaker's own society²⁹. This claim rests on the presupposition that *δυσμενής* is part of the war metaphor, whereas *ἐχθρός* is not³⁰. But if we stick to the view that the poem never leaves the war metaphor, we might consider yet another possibility: the speaker, in a state of anguish, is uncertain about how to call these people and uses the two synonymous terms³¹, as if he is trying to reassure himself that this is the right qualification for them. This hypothesis appears particularly relevant if these people were his friends and he is being decisive about defining a new attitude towards them in the face of their hostile act against him³².

3. Long-term strategy

By *ἀσφαλέως* in v. 4 the battle is over, immediate danger is averted. It remains to be seen how the war should be fought from now on. The paraenesis takes the form of a thought experiment, in which different scenarios are played through, depending on the success of the *λόχοι* from vv. 3f. The rare corresponsion of particles *τε...δέ* continues to govern the exhortation up until the end of the fragment: cf. *μήτε...μηδέ* in vv. 4-5 and *ἀλλά...τε...καί...δ'* in vv. 6-7³³. The stylistic

²⁸ *δυσμενέων* in v. 2 can be taken only as genitive plural of the adjective *δυσμενής* dependent on *ἐναντίον* as a preposition. If not dependent on *ἐναντίον*, it should be “mentally” taken as the object of *ᾠλέξω*, which is grammatically an impossible construction (*ᾠλέξομαι* governs the accusative). Cf. (Merone, 1960: 86). Or otherwise, *δυσμενέων* could be taken as an adjectival participle, but then we have to, again “mentally”, supply an object for *προσβαλὼν ἐναντίον στέρνων*. Cf. (Nikitas, 1979: 44).

²⁹ This interpretation is suggested by Nikitas (1979: 84), according to whom the qualification *ἐχθροὶ* is introduced to avoid misunderstanding of *δυσμενεῖς* as foes from a foreign country. They are rather “verhaßte, böse Mitmenschen” and the *λόχοι* are “Nachstellungen, [...] Ungerechtigkeiten, Beleidigungen, Mißhandlungen o.ä.”.

³⁰ Indeed *δυσμενής* is used in Homer and in the *Doloneia* in the prevalent meaning of “an enemy from a foreign country”. However, this use is not exclusive and the word may also denote the “internal” enemy: cf. *Od.* 6.184.

³¹ They are synonymous in their denotation, but at the same time they describe the two opposite sides of the relation of enmity: *δυσμενής* means “hostile”, whereas *ἐχθρός* means “hated”. *δυσμενής* is used in the first place to refer to the attack by the enemies and *ἐχθρός* comes next to refer to *θυμός*'s reciprocal feeling and his counteraction.

³² Cf. Ammonius, *De adfinium vocabulorum differentia*, p. 63: *ἐχθρὸς πολέμιου καὶ δυσμενοῦς διαφέρει. ἐχθρὸς μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ πρότερον φίλος, πολέμιος δὲ ὁ μεθ' ὅπλων χωρῶν πέλας, δυσμενής δὲ ὁ χρόνιον πρὸς τὸν ποτε φίλον τὴν ἔχθραν διατηρῶν καὶ δυσδιαλλάκτως ἔχων.*

³³ This sequence of particles may be analyzed as follows: *ἀλλά* signals the transition from the negative of vv. 4f. to the positive exhortation of v. 6f. (although qualified again by an intervening negative – *μὴ λῆν* – in enjambment); *ἀλλά...τε* has a Homeric sounding to it, cf. (Merone, 1960: 66); *τε...καί* creates a connective corresponsion between the clauses *χαρτοῖσιν χαίρει* and *κακοῖσιν ἀσχάλα*, cf. (Denniston & Dover, 1966: 511-3); in the *τε...καί...δ'*-sequence, the *δ'* adds something distinct to what is expressed by the connective *τε...καί*, cf. (Denniston & Dover, 1966: 199ff.) and again, emphasis is put on the addition, much in the same way as in the *τε...δέ*-corresponsions of v. 2 and vv. 4f. Cf. (Nikitas, 1979: 40 ff.) Thus, in the last two verses of the

organization puts a strong emphasis on necessary actions in a scenario of defeat³⁴, either because the speaker considers it the probable one, or because he wants to prepare his θυμός for the worst case.

In vv. 4f., counterproductive behavior is discouraged, whereas in vv. 6f. the right course of action is delineated. Precepts in both the negative and the positive exhortation are concerned at once with: (i) ensuring emotional and motivational preparedness, characterized by both adequacy and proportion (vv. 6f.); (ii) delivering action that does not show any kind of weakness as perceived from a social point of view (vv. 4f.)³⁵; (iii) developing control over emotions and actions (vv. 6f.)³⁶; and (iv) understanding a particular feature that is common to all people, the ῥυσμός.

The course of action endorsed in these lines takes the λόχοι-tactics of vv. 2f. to the level of war strategy in general: θυμός is advised to stand firm (compare ἄνα τε with μὴ καταπεσών), to engage in concealing (compare ἐν λόχοισιν with μὴ ἀμφάδην)³⁷; to endure and be patient (compare κατασταθεις with ἀσχάλα μὴ λῆν) and to focus on the minimally achievable (compare ἀσφαλέως with μὴ λῆν). The whole strategy builds upon lying in wait: it is generally defensive, insofar as it encourages only reaction or counteraction, and in this it is also minimalistic³⁸. Accordingly, the most essential part of it is not the way of counteracting itself, but the recognition of ῥυσμός, which might even spare the need of counteraction.

4. ῥυσμός

Let us, then, consider in some detail the meaning of ῥυσμός. The majority of scholars contend that the noun – this is its first use in Greek literature – designates here an external power, independent of human volition, that is capable of determining the course of human life. Often this power is identified with fate, as it dictates the fluctuations between victory and defeat, success and failure, happiness and misery. Interpretations vary according to the degree of constancy and

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fragment, three operations organize the paraenesis: (i) continuation: ensured by the use of imperatives and by the particle sequence τε...καί...δ'; (ii) emphasis: conveyed, on the one hand, by the accent on κακοῖσιν ἀσχάλα μὴ λῆν due to its position in the ἀπὸ-κοινοῦ-construction of v. 6f. (Merone, 1960: 89), and on the other hand, by the accent on γίνωσκε οἷος ῥυσμός ἀνθρώπους ἔχει achieved through the δ' in v. 7; (iii) addition: the distinct message is added, once again, by the particle δ' in v. 7. This particle may be taken to create contrast, as it emphasizes the shift from emotion and action (χαῖρε and ἀσχάλα) to cognition (γίνωσκε). And besides, by pointing out that θυμός should be only knowing people's ῥυσμός (presumably without succumbing to it himself in his own behavior), δ' creates a contrast with what other people might be getting wrong in their behavior, i.e. they might not be following the precepts of v. 6f. to rejoice and grieve with patience under the right circumstances, and to be moderate in it.

³⁴ Cf. previous note on the use of particles: μηδὲ νικηθεὶς ἐν οἴκῳ καταπεσών ὀδύρεο is emphasized by the μηδὲ; κακοῖσιν ἀσχάλα μὴ λῆν is emphasized by its position in the ἀπὸ-κοινοῦ-construction of v. 6f.; γίνωσκε οἷος ῥυσμός ἀνθρώπους ἔχει is emphasized through δ'.

³⁵ Both boasting around, when victorious, and being out of sight, when defeated, show immoderate reactions, which constitute a strategic disadvantage.

³⁶ The latter aspect comes forward especially in ἀσχάλα μὴ λῆν, where the verb means “to be distressed”, “to resent” or “to grieve” with a strong connotation of impatience or proneness to inconsiderate/indecent behavior. Cf. *Il.* 2.293, 24.403 and 22.412.

³⁷ Concealing involves both kinds of inconspicuous behavior: not showing off excessively and not dropping out of war / social life.

³⁸ Fränkel (1951: 196): “Aber der Märchentraum des Epos ist ausgeträumt. Beherrschtheit ist für Archilochos nicht mehr ein Mittel, um einen phantastischen Endsieg über alle Feinde zu gewinnen; sie soll nur Haltung und Widerstandskraft verleihen, und die allzu heftigen Schwingungen des Gemüts abdämpfen”.

regularity (or respectively, unsteadiness) they ascribe those fluctuations³⁹. In the case of a regular rhythm, the θυμός is supposed to “understand the pattern that governs mankind” and adjust his behavior to this pattern. In the case of a chaotic rhythm, θυμός has to accept that there is nothing permanent in human affairs and fate can turn life upside down any time. In both cases, γίνωσκε δ' οἷος ῥυσμός ἀνθρώπους ἔχει should be taken as the motive the speaker points out in order to justify the precepts of vv. 4-7: only after one has recognized the vicissitudes of life, can he adequately direct his affections and temper them. According to this reading, γίνωσκε continues the line of the previous imperatives and at the same time plays the role of a prerequisite for them; the particle δέ is used instead of γάρ⁴⁰; the relative adjective οἷος refers to the essence and qualities of the ῥυσμός (but particularly if ῥυσμός is taken as a scalar noun, οἷος might imply a reference to the degree of ῥυσμός); ἀνθρώποι are introduced to generalize the statement and thus make it gnomic; and ἔχω is in the usual meaning of “have control of”⁴¹.

The traditional reading seems to have its grounds as seen from the perspective of other poems by Archilochus, expressing the same idea of instability and transitions from one state to its contrary: fr. 13 West, vv. 7-9; fr. 122 West; fr. 130 West. Further, this idea is deeply rooted in Greek thinking and often find its expression in more or less established proverbs about the periodic passage through phases of happiness and misery within the span of life: ἐκεῖνο πρῶτον μάθε, ὥς κύκλος τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἐστὶ πρηγμάτων, περιφερόμενος δὲ οὐκ ἔῃ αἰεὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς εὐτυχέειν (Hdt. i. 107. 2) or κύκλος τὰ ἀνθρώπινα πράγματα (Arist *Phys.* iv. 14, 223b24 and Ps.-Arist. *Probl.* xvii. 3, 916a28)⁴².

However, the traditional reading faces some problems as regards consistency with the rest of the poem. First, the poem is a paraenesis and as such, is not easily reconciled with a deterministic worldview. On the proposed terms, it assumes a consolatory tone, which is at odds with its exhortative force: how does the call for counteraction, resistance and endurance bear with resignation in the face of ῥυσμός, be it a resignation of the μηδὲν-ἀγαν-kind? Second, we may infer that θυμός does not need to be reminded of the power of ῥυσμός, as he has already been acquainted with the possibilities of victory and defeat, of success and failure by vv. 4f. at the latest. Why should this motive appear again, in a generalized form, at the end of the poem? Finally and most importantly, the noun ῥυσμός/ῥυθμός has never been attested in the meaning neither of a fixed natural principle governing human affairs, nor of a unpredictable swing between ups and downs⁴³. The often pushed analogy with Ionian philosophy, apart from being anachronistic, never points to a use of ῥυσμός/ῥυθμός as a natural principle.

The chronologically closer uses of ῥυσμός/ῥυθμός by Anacreon and in the Theognidean corpus attest to another meaning of the word, namely “character” or “disposition”⁴⁴.

³⁹ For a more “regular” ῥυσμός see: Pfeiffer (1929: 140), Jaeger (1934: 174f.), Fränkel (1951: 196), Wolf (1955: 109), Lesky, 1971: 138f.), Rankin (1977: 80f, 91), Nikitas (1979: 45), Rubin (1981: 5), Schadewaldt (1989: 124f.), and West (1974: 131), who even proposes the view that ῥυσμός should be conceived as a specific figure, the circle, following Zuntz (1971: 320f.). For a more “chaotic” ῥυσμός see Schroeder (1918: 324f.), Wehrli (1931: 14, n. 2), and Kirkwood (1974: 36).

⁴⁰ Cf. (Denniston & Dover, 1966: 169f.).

⁴¹ On two possible meanings of ἔχω along the lines of this interpretation cf. (Theunissen, 2000: 181f.) in an attempt to harmonize the “regular” and the “chaotic” ῥυσμός.

⁴² There are also many other instances: Eur. *Iph. A.*, 161ff., Aesch. *Ag.* 928ff., Soph. *Tra.* 1ff., Eur. *Andr.* 100 ff., Eur. *Tro.* 510 and so on.

⁴³ Wolf (1955: 108) cites examples from Democritus, where ῥυσμός means a fixed or established order, but in these cases social, not natural order is intended. The only place, known to me, that comes close to a similar principle involving swing between ups and downs is Menander, *Georgos*, fr. 2: τὸ τῆς τυχῆς γὰρ ῥεῦμα μεταπίπτει ταχὺ, but here ῥεῦμα is the principle, not ῥυσμός.

⁴⁴ Anacreon PMG 416; Thgn. 963-70.

Some scholars have proposed that ῥυσμός should be taken in this sense also in Archilochus' poem⁴⁵. Their view is in better accord with the interpretation developed here: tempering and concealing one's own attitudes in the course of war goes along with understanding the "disposition" of the other players. This latter aspect is even more important, as it could entirely prevent direct conflict with its unclear outcomes. This explains its emphatic position in our poem – emphatic with respect not only to the exhortation of vv. 6f., but also to the whole narrative: if only θυμός had known people's dispositions, he might not have been pressured to counteract by laying ambush in the first place. On this account, then, the words of the last verse of fr. 128 should also be interpreted differently: γινώσκω means to recognize people's disposition, which in turn can be concealed in the same way, as θυμός is urged to conceal his own; δέ is the emphatic extension of the particle series ἀλλά...τε...καί in v. 6; the relative adjective οἷος refers to the qualities of people's ῥυσμός, again supposed to be disguised⁴⁶; ἄνθρωποι is not merely a gnomic generalization, it signals an important turn in the poem – the term is meant to comprise not only the foes of vv. 2f., but also other people, who might potentially become foes; and ἔχω is in the familiar inverted sense appearing often with nouns denoting a particular state, mental or physical⁴⁷.

ῥυσμός in Archilochus' fr. 128 W allows us to further qualify the meaning of this word in its earliest ethical uses. It denotes: (i) a more or less durable mental state (ii) which is always ascribed to people with malicious attitude towards the speaker⁴⁸ and (iii) the presence and qualities of which cannot be easily inferred, as this requires time and/or some special cognitive ability.

5. Fragment 129 West

Fr. 129 is an incomplete trochaic tetrameter, short by little less than a colon⁴⁹. It is not only metrically, but also semantically incomplete judging from the stand-alone γάρ δῃ. The first part of the verse is likely to have been in enjambment with v. 7 of fr. 128 West or another verse of the same poem⁵⁰. The pronoun σὺ refers to the speaker's θυμός, as we learn from Aristotle's testimony⁵¹. This is already a serious ground to suppose that it was part of the same poem beginning with fr. 128, as invocations to θυμός are not altogether too common in Greek poetry, not to mention Archilochus. Another serious ground is the fact that Aristotle qualifies θυμός as ἀήττητος ("unconquered, nor beaten"), strongly suggesting a military context for the fragment, similar to that of fr. 128. Even more so, if we take it together with the whole Aristotelian passage that includes the Archilochus quotation among other quotations on war with friends.

If we welcome the fragment into the poem, a ring composition arises as regards the address to θυμός. The initial quandary about κήδεα is finally resolved: they are caused by friends

⁴⁵ Petersen (1917: 12), Benveniste (1971: 284), and Calame (1993: 14).

⁴⁶ Cf. the use of this word in *Il.* 2.192: οὐ γάρ πω σάφα οἶσθ' οἷος νόος Ἀτρεΐωνος.

⁴⁷ Cf. LSJ, s.v. ἔχω and also (Dué & Ebbott, 2010: 231f.), who see a special role of this inverted use in the *Doloneia* and similar episodes.

⁴⁸ This is the case both in Anacreon and the Theognidean συλλογή.

⁴⁹ The missing part should be of the form: - v - x -.

⁵⁰ This is to be judged from the little space in the beginning of the verse, as well as from the frequent use of enjambment in this poem.

⁵¹ Arist. *Pol.* vii. 6, 1328a: "πρὸς γὰρ τοὺς συνήθεις καὶ φίλους ὁ θυμός αἶρεται μᾶλλον ἢ πρὸς τοὺς ἀγνώστους, ὀλιγωρεῖσθαι νομίσας. διὸ καὶ Ἀρχιλόχος προσηκόντως τοῖς φίλοις ἐγκαλῶν διαλέγεται πρὸς τὸν θυμόν: "σὺ γὰρ δὴ παρὰ φίλων ἀπάγχεαι. καὶ τὸ ἄρχον δὲ καὶ τὸ ἐλεύθερον ἀπὸ τῆς δυνάμεως ταύτης ὑπάρχει πᾶσιν: ἀρχικὸν γὰρ καὶ ἀήττητον ὁ θυμός". On Aristotle citing Archilochus see Moraitou (1994: 123).

who have turned into foes. Initially, the speaker, stricken by surprise, is trying to establish a new qualification for them by calling them δυσμενεῖς and ἐχθροί. Then they are included among the ἄνθρωποι as in anticipation of the final disclosure of them previously being friends. Thus, the κήδεα at the beginning reveal not only strategic concerns on how to lead this particular war, but more general ethical concerns on how to treat one's friends, even in a situation of betrayal⁵².

5. Conclusion

In this interpretation, I have argued: (i) that a narrative pattern underlies Archilochus' exhortation to θυμός; (ii) that ῥυσμός in v. 7 of fr. 128 denotes a kind of hostile disposition, not a universal principle of nature or the world; (iii) that fr. 129 West belongs to the same exhortation to θυμός and ultimately explains what event propels the narrative of the poem. I believe that these three claims hold, even if we assume other interpretations of the poem. For instance, we may take the λόχοι of v. 3 to precede the κήδεα of v. 1. This is a less plausible scenario in terms of internal coherence, because we will be forced to detach νικέων and νικηθεῖς of v. 4f. from the λόχοι-situation in v. 3 (which will have already ended neither with victory, nor with defeat, but with ἀσφάλεια) and assign their reference to some other battle not named in the poem. Or we may take the κήδεα of v. 1 to temporally coincide with λόχοι of v. 3 (whether laid by θυμός or by the foes). Then, θυμός will be found in the middle of the λόχοι-situation, which is, in fact, very good reason for the κήδεα of v.1. However, in this scenario the appeal to the ambush theme from the *Doloneia* or even from traditional narrative seems less plausible, if plausible at all, whereas we have seen that this appeal has its basis both on the thematic and the linguistic level. In any case, the poem should be taken to be paraenetic and not consolatory, and to encourage reciprocity towards the newly become enemies.

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Conflicts of interest: none.

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⁵² The message of the poem ultimately boils down to an ethics of retribution. Thus it is similar to that of fr. 23 West, v. 14ff. and fr. 126 West. Cf. also (Gentili, 1984: 249).

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“Los Mirreyes de Outlet”: A Critical Discourse Analysis on a Broadcast Portraying the Postmodern Lifestyle of Mexican Middle Class

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Abstract

Through the rise of social media and mass communication social phenomena acquires major popularity levels. In Mexico, “el mirreynato” is a trendy phenomenon that has increased its status through social media. The popularity is such that a Latin-American network broadcasted a report on this matter. The report’s transparent intention was to present “mirreyes de outlet” and describe their activities. This critical discourse analysis aimed at uncovering the opaque intention, behind this report. Through the use of systemic functional linguistics, it was found that the discourse used in this report had a different intention than the transparent purpose mentioned by the network.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, transitivity, modality, textual, opaque meaning, social divisions, stereotypes.

1. Introduction

Mexico is currently facing a social phenomenon called “el mirreynato” which means the reign of mirreyes. According to Espinosa & Henderson (2012) a “mirrey” is the term used to describe the high privileged social class. Mirreyes are believed to have the following characteristics: wealthy, prestigious family, good looks, dresses in brand name clothing, popular, travels, powerful, and is constantly surrounded by VIP society. The popularity of this group is such that individuals aspire being “mirreyes” yet, scarcely anyone becomes part of the selected group. Those who do not meet the demanding characteristics of a real “mirrey” are labeled as “mirreyes de outlet”. This label depicts individuals who on the outside may appear and behave as a ‘mirrey’ nevertheless, their origins are in working middle class.

Recently the television network Univision (Latin network in the United States) presented a report on the marginalized group “mirreyes de outlet”. They titled the report “¿Quiénes son y qué hacen los mirreyes de outlet? / Who are “mirreyes de outlet and what do they do?” and it was presented in the show “Aquí y Ahora/ Here and now”. The transparent aim of the report was to describe the lifestyles of “mirreyes de outlet” by presenting their main characteristics and their daily routines. This paper presents a critical discourse analysis (CDA) with the aim of analyzing this report in order to uncover the opaque or hidden intention. The analysis is divided into three sections, transitivity, modality and textual. To conclude I present the social repercussions of the report and a call of action in search of social justice.

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- The central element to the social phenomenon of “El mirreynato” is the notion of power.
- Beyond the humorous labels and popularity of this social phenomenon this report portrays a social problem of dominance and inequities.
- Through the use of systemic functional linguistics, it was found that the discourse used in this report had a different intention than the transparent purpose mentioned by the network.

2. Theoretical Framework

Prior to presenting the critical discourse analysis, it crucial to understand the central phenomenon that is under study in this paper. To provide this understanding, I shall first provide the historical background, in which I explain why and how this became a social matter of interest. Subsequently, I discuss the relevant social concepts behind the phenomenon.

2.1 *Historical background on social phenomenon*

“El mirreynato” has recently increased its popularity through the rise of communication and social media. Nonetheless this is not a new phenomenon, class divisions and stereotypes have existed long in history. In Mexico, the first label for high class appeared in the 80s and the terms used were “juniors”, “niños popis⁴” or “hijos de papi” (Feixa, 1998: 102). The term mirrey was first figured in the 90s, however its origins are uncertain. Espinosa and Henderson (2012) explain the word could be associated with the prominent singer of the decade Luis Miguel who was often referred to as “Luis Mirrey”. The signer was not only recognized by his music but also by his luxurious lifestyle. This artist is said to be the best example of a mirrey and an inspiration to many. It is also believed that it could have originated from the typical paternal expression “¿cómo estas mi rey?” (Espinosa & Henderson, 2012). Although its origin is uncertain, it is clear that ever since then word mirrey has normally been used to name high class in Mexico.

As previously stated, the high status quo of this group has led many to aspire being part of it. Those who do not meet the requirements but have some characteristics are labelled as “mirreyes de outlet” or “shabbys”. Although they are not real mirreyes they try to imitate the luxurious lifestyle by: spending money on personal care, clothing, visiting exclusive night clubs and fancy restaurants. They appear on social media with the famous “duckface” in which their lips seem to be sending a kiss. They are also recognized by their particular use of language; they speak as “fresas⁵” by making longer sounds for vowels and speaking as if they had a potato in their mouth (Espinosa & Henderson, 2012). Even though these individuals have the appearance and lifestyle of a mirrey, they do not have the same socioeconomic level and have to work intensively to enjoy these luxuries.

With the above in mind “mirreyes de outlet”, have to face challenges and work hard to access this lifestyle. Aside from their daily struggles they must also cope with social marginalization. The real mirreyes ridicule them by defining them as a “una copia barata” cheap version (Espinosa & Henderson, 2012). The lower class also mocks and marginalizes them; there are several YouTube channels and webpages used for this purpose. For instance, “Mirreybook de outlet un sincero homenaje para aquellos que no lo lograron/ Mirreybook de outlet a sincere tribute to those who did not make it” is Tumblr website that portrays mirreyes de outlet with a photograph and a legend that mocks the way they dress, their behaviors among other aspects.

2.2 *Theoretical concepts of social phenomenon*

The central element to the social phenomenon of “El mirreynato” is the notion of power. Foucault (1997) explains that power is not something some can be held, but it is exercised

in none egalitarian situations which reinforce divisions and inequities. In this case, mirreyes use their social power to marginalize and create greater divisions the Mexican society. These social divisions or class divisions are all based on economic status of the individuals (Martin, 2003). Unfortunately, this is the way society works, power is used to divide people into groups according to economic status.

In Mexico, the sociologists Carlos Feixa and Jose Manuel Valenzuela have researched into the existing social divisions of young adults. Feixa (1998) identified that in our country there are subaltern social divisions that are grouped according to two aspects: social conditions and cultural images. The author refers to age gender, social class, and ethnic background as social conditions, while ideological attributes, trends, musical preferences, and languages practices as cultural images. On the other hand, Valenzuela (2009) explains the Mexican society is divided into three types of social groups; marginalized, tolerated, and encouraged social groups. The marginalized social sectors are those are rejected by most of society could be any of the following “pachucos”, hippies, punks, etc. The tolerated group are those individuals who do not represent any moral or ideological problems to the dominant society. While the encouraged social groups are those who work towards stimulating the dominant ideologies, such as religious and political groups.

In addition to the concepts of power and class division I also use the terms postmodernity and lifestyle. Postmodernity has been characterized by the rise of mass communication, media, mass consumption (Martin, 2003). All which benefits global economies and high class but affects the low and middle working class. With the growth of mass consumption and mass media people have created a need to define the way they live and the term lifestyle has come to live (Jagose, 2003). Historically there had not been a need to define the type of life one had, yet now most of the population uses the term to describe their everyday life. Lifestyles are routines that discuss personal habits, for instance dressing and eating habits (Giddens, 1991). Moreover, postmodernity has brought social media, which is an online space where people post information that reveals their lifestyles.

3. Critical discourse analysis as research methodology

This analysis sets out to examine a broadcast portraying the postmodern lifestyle of Mexican middle class report to uncover the opaque or hidden intention. In order to conduct this examination CDA was employ as the research methodology. Fairclough (2001) argues that CDA is a method that can be utilized to research into scientific social areas due to the following reasons. It is first crucial to point out that CDA has its roots in critical science; van Dijk (1986) states that critical science goes beyond descriptions, superficial applications, and theoretical problems. The beauty lies in that it goes further into questioning responsibility, interest, and ideology, in order to explore social problems. Hence, the word critique stands for this type of questioning in which we seek to find the interconnectedness of things as cause and effects (Fairclough, 1985: 747). The main purpose behind this type of science is approaching those who are marginalized by analyzing those in power.

Consequently, critical discourse analysis goes beyond analyzing the linguistic elements in discourse. It focuses in the interconnectedness of language to the concepts of power and ideology to understand how language is used for dominance and discrimination (Wodak, 2001). Furthermore, in this type of analysis, language is viewed as a social practice and takes in consideration the social context of the discourse (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Most importantly language is understood to be “a medium of dominance and social force” (Habermas, 1977 p. 259). Therefore, CDA is suited to uncover the opaque intention behind the broadcast report.

3.1 Research technique: Systemic functional linguistics

Systemic functional linguistics was first introduced by Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday and ever since its introduction it has been used for critical discourse analysis. Halliday (1978) explains that discourse is a multidimensional process which is not only composed of lexicogrammatical choices but also by higher levels of functions like semiotics. In other words, the social, physical, cognitive, cultural, interpersonal and situational context play an important role in discourse choice (Haratyan, 2011).

Halliday (1978: 332) also highlights that this multidimensional process comprises three functions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational function refers to the speakers combining transitivity (grammar) and his/her voice to express “reactions, cognitions, and perceptions”. Within this function there are six processes that we use to communicate these are; material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioural, and existential processes. The material process indicates an action with a direct object while the mental is only used for perceptions and reactions. Verbal processes are used to exchange information or describe, similarly the relational process is used to identify or attribute characteristics. We also express physiological or mental behaviors through the behavioral process. Lastly, we use the existential process to present something that exist or happens.

The interpersonal function of language is the expressions of the individual’s “comments, attitudes, and evaluations in relation to the particular communication roles” (Halliday, 1978: 333). The communicative roles are informing, questioning, or giving commands. The third function presented by Halliday is the textual function in which language is organized coherently to help the listener or reader understand the message.

4. Results of the analysis

The analysis is divided into three sections, first the transitivity analysis in which I classify the data into the six processes. The second part of the analysis concerns the interpersonal function providing a modality analysis. The last part of the analysis specifically looks at the textual function in order to understand how content of the report was unified. Throughout the analysis I have divided that data between the discourse of “mirreyes de outlet” (participants) the discourse used by the reporter. This helps us better understand the opaque meaning behind the report. The interviewees are four young adults who are considered “mirreyes de outlet”; throughout the segment they received the following pseudonyms: Kike, Dalia, Xavier, and Inti. Table 1 illustrates the general characteristics of the report under examination and a complete transcript of the report can be seen in Appendix 1.

Table 1. General Characteristic of Discourse

Statistical Item	Reporter’s Discourse		Interviewee’s Discourse	
	No.	%	No.	%
Tokens	481	42	672	58
Types	304	63	389	57
Turn taking	34	52	31	48

4.1 Transitivity analysis

The transitivity analysis consists of understanding the processes that is used within the ideation function (Table 2 show the results of the analysis). Moreover, Table 3 displays some of the examples found in each of the aspects.

Table 2. Transitivity analysis

Statistical Item	Reporters' Discourse		Interviewee's Discourse		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
Material	9	21	20	36	57
Mental	2	5	18	33	38
Relational	3	7	0	0	7
Verbal	24	58	4	7	65
Behavioral	1	2	6	11	13
Existential	3	7	7	13	20

Table 3. Examples of process

Examples	Reporter's Discourse	Interviewees Discourse
Material	See, buy, arrive, meet, study, work, discover	Post, cruise, begin
Mental	Are, think, believe, feel, like	Forms of be
Relational		Resist
Verbal	Say, forms of be	Said, criticized, decided
Behavioral	Show off	wish
Existential	Forms of be, have, support	Forms of be

The participants mostly used the material process (51% of the time) to describe what they do. They express the following: “*ando comprando cosas en el antro* / I am buying things at the nightclub”, “*tengo una empresa* / I own my own corporation”, and “*estudie la carrera de derecho* / I went to law school”. As we can observe these quotes discuss their lifestyle by stating they go to nightclubs, owning a corporation, and having the opportunities to study. The second most used process is the mental, which was used a 33% of the time. They discuss their likes, believes and perceptions. For instance, Dalia suggests “*si no estás en la redes sociales no eres nadie* / if you are not part of social media you are nobody”. She believes social media has a high value, and explains that if someone is not part of it they become invisible. Another participant perceives appearances to be important and he states “*yo creo que como te ven te tartan* / people will treat you by the way you look”. Acknowledging that your value is measured through appearance.

The reporter on the other hand mostly uses the verbal process (58%) to provide information on the participants. However, if we analysis these quotes we can observe that most of them report the negative actions.

“*Publican su apartamento vida de lujo en la internet. Inti se pasea orgulloso por las calles de la ciudad de Mexico.* / They post their apparent luxurious lifestyle on the internet. Inti proudly cruises around the streets of Mexico City”.

In the first quote the reporter sheds light on the false luxurious lifestyle that they portray on the internet. While in the second quote they are referring to one of the participant as a proud individual who spends his time wondering the streets of Mexico City. Both of these quotes give negative impressions of ‘mirreyes de outlet.’

Furthermore, they use the relational process to identify them as people who only care about appearances.

“*Kike es amante de verse bien. A Javier Redondo lo vence la moda. La moda, la llamada boca de pato y lo excéntrico los define* / Kike is a lover of good looks. Javier loves fashion. Fashion, duckfaces, and the eccentric defines them”.

They characterize Kike as a person who loves to look good, then Xavier as someone who cannot resist fashion. But most importantly they label them as eccentric. Furthermore, the

reporter uses the material process (21%) to describe activities, other than these two processes the remaining did not have a significant percentage of usage.

4.2 Modality analysis

This part of the analysis is concerned with examining “comments, attitudes, and evaluations in relation to the particular communication roles” (Halliday, 1971: 333). The report’s purpose is descriptive, through the analysis of the verbs the results indicate that the participants are affirming all the time while the reporters affirms information 98% of the time (see Table 4). Throughout the eight minutes of the report there is only one question made by the reporter, therefore the interrogative mood is only used 2% of the time.

Table 4. Mood

Statistical Item	Reporters’ Discourse		Interviewee’s Discourse	
	No.	%	No.	%
Imperative	0	0	0	0
Affirmative	60	98	93	100
Interrogative	1	2	0	0

This helps us understand that the purpose of the report is to express a certain ideology about this group of young adults. The fact that we, the audience, do not have access to the inquiries may lead us to question whether or not these had a certain ideological bias.

Moreover, the results indicate that present tense was used the most within the reporter’s and interviewee’s discourse (see Table 5). The usage of present tense (reporter: 68%, interviewee 78%) affirms that the aim of the report was to establish this as a relevant social topic. The past tense was second most used tense (reporter: 15%, interviewee 10%), they only use it to describe the participants’ background and personal history. This is to ensure that the audience understands that they do not come from a privileged background, on the contrary they have had to work hard to maintain their position of “mirreyes de outlet”.

Table 5. Use of tenses

Statistical Item	Reporters’ Discourse		Interviewee’s Discourse	
	No.	%	No.	%
Present	36	68	68	78
Past	8	15	9	10
Infinitive	9	17	8	9
Future	0	0	3	3

Now I turn to explain the attitudes and evaluation by presenting the use of adjectives. As illustrated in the table 6, the participants and the reporter use mostly positive adjectives. This could mislead us into thinking that the positive adjectives are being used to describe “los mirreyes de out”. However, all the positive adjectives (reporter: 75%, interviewee 67%) are only used to depict places and things that appear in the report. For example; “*lugares exclusivos* / exclusive places”, “*vida de lujos* / luxurious lifestyle”, and “*sitios que sean de alto nivel* / high status places”. The negative adjectives (reporter: 25%, interviewee 33%) are used to describe the participants “*lo excéntrico los define* / the eccentric defines them”. Repeatedly the use of adjectives gives evidence that the report does not aim at giving a positive image of the participants.

Table 6. Use of adjectives

Statistical Item	Reporters’ Discourse		Interviewee’s Discourse	
	No.	%	No.	%
Positive Adjectives	12	75	9	67
Negative Adjective	4	25	4	33

The reporter is mainly describing the “mirreyes de out” as a group of eccentric people, who come from a marginalized background. Through their efforts they have come to higher positions, but still have to fake a luxurious lifestyle on social media.

4.3 Textual analysis

In this part of the analysis I shall present the organizational structure of the report. The organization also reveals information on the intention of the report. The first lines of the report are the following:

“Exhibición, egolatría, narcisismo, engreimiento y pose. Cada vez son más los que publican su aparente vida de lujo en la internet / Exhibition, egotism, narcissism, conceit and pose. More and more people post their apparent luxurious lifestyle on the internet”.

They start off by portraying a negative image on those who post a false luxurious lifestyle on the internet and call them egocentric, conceited and narcissist people. They keep this line safe by not mentioning who is responsible for this, anyhow its assumed that they are referring to “mirreyes de out”. This is also the section where they present background information of the participants.

In the second part of the report the participants disclose their usual activities. The activities that they mention are: going to popular nightclubs, luxurious restaurants, shopping, and visiting styling sites. All of this information is used to confirm the idea that they are concerned with their appearance and having a luxurious lifestyle. In the third part, the reporter asks them to talk about their personal history. All of them confirm that they do not come from a privileged background on the contrary they have to work hard in order to afford the image that they want to portray. Once more, this goes back to confirming they are not part of this selected and they have to work hard to keep up with false appearances.

After they have conveyed who they are, what they do and their backgrounds the report ends by trying to soften the negative image. The program’s host says “esta es la vida de esfuerzo de los ‘otros’ mirreyes / This is the life of effort of the other mirreyes”. Now they are trying to describe them as hard-working individuals who live a life of effort. However, after all of their discourse it is impossible to gain back a positive image of the participants. Most importantly they are using the word ‘other’ to set them apart from the rest of society.

5. Discussion

“It is precisely through the mundane and seemingly trivial practices of everyday life that ideology works most freely and effectively” (Farmer, 2003: 22).

Beyond the humorous labels and popularity of this social phenomenon this report portrays a social problem of dominance and inequities. Just as Farmer states even in the trivial practices of life such a watching a television report on a Sunday afternoon we are impregnated with ideologies which are intended to dominate society. The analysis makes it evident they are using public national TV to reinforce the use of labels and stereotypes. They are discussing stereotypes as if it were humorous and trendy to call people a certain name due to their economic status.

They are approving of class division and hierarchies by saying “*les dicen mirreyes de outlet porque no puede comprar más que ofertas* / they are called mirreys de outlet because all the can afford are sales”. Since this group does not have the economic status to afford brand prices they are marginalizing them and calling them “other” and “eccentric”. Fairclough and Kress (1993)

explain that media discourse naturalizes and neutralizes terms to employ power and ideology. This is exactly what is happening the TV host and reporter are neutralizing stereotypes and class labels.

According to Wodak (2001) language in mass media is meant to be transparent, neutral, disinterested, and an open space for public discourse. Nonetheless, this analysis shows none of these qualities, they do not give evidence of a non-bias approach to the participants.

Most importantly since all the report is affirmative there are dangerous ideologies presented. First, they promote the use of social media by including the following quote “*Es algo que está de moda, si no estás en las redes sociales no eres nadie* / Social media is trendy, therefore if you are not part of social media you are nobody”. They depict social media as trendy but they are also implicitly convincing people to be part of social media otherwise they are not part of the picture of society. It’s as if those who do not use social media are invisible individuals.

Furthermore, they are promoting the importance of physical appearance and luxurious lifestyles. They use the following quotes:

“Yo creo que como te ven te tartan. A mí me gustan muchísimo los relojes y todo lo que me guste me lo compro te trae ganancia aparte de que todas las mujeres se te quedan viendo. Sí realmente me gusta consentirme, tratarme bien / I believe you are treated according to your looks. I really like watches, and everything else I see and like I buy, it all gives you something in return, even women stare at you. I really enjoy pampering myself”.

In other words, they are letting us know that we are treated according to our looks. Therefore, they should be worried about buying objects that make us look good. The male participant even suggests that having expensive watches helps him have women’s attention. In a further statement the participants also give the impression that we should pamper ourselves.

6. Conclusion

Throughout this critical discourse analysis, it is apparent that what seems to be an innocent, humorous, and updated TV report result to reinforce the social divisions, stereotypes, and the importance of luxurious lifestyles. The transitivity analysis reports that the processes that were majority employed were the verbal, material, and mental. The reporter used a verbal process 58% of time, this was to voice the participants’ ideas, while the material process (28%) was used to describe the activities that ‘mirreyes de outlet’ perform. On the other hand, the interviewees reported their activities to do so, they used a verbal process (65%) but in addition to other processes they significantly used the mental process (38%) to discuss their ideologies. The report was scripted in an affirmative mood; the reporter used this mood 98% while the interviewee a 100% of the time. Correspondingly, most of the content was expressed in the present tense.

Considering the results, it is prejudicial that in a broken society, mass media is used to reinforce divisions. In Mexico 80% of the population is said to live in poverty and each day greater inequities exist among the country’s society (Feixa, 1998). The situation is unfortunate however, it is our decision to be aware of the situation and reject these ideologies that are trying to position themselves in our society. Most important there is a need to understand that we are all human beings, and no one has the right to label or stereotype us due to appearance or socioeconomic.

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A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Childish Gambino's Music Video "This is America"

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Abstract

The portrayal of African Americans in the United States has been approached throughout the years in different fields. Childish Gambino's song and music video "This is America" offers an interesting view regarding gun control in the United States, African American stereotypes and their representation in mass media. In order to propose an interpretation of Gambino's lyrics and video, I provide a multimodal discourse analysis using the visual semiotic framework (Machin, 2010) and the systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1978). The findings highlight the manipulated discourse that is present in the media regarding not only African Americans but other minority groups. This "new racism" (Littlefield, 2008) has an impact on the audience, which in turn perpetuates the negative ideas and stereotypes of the African American community.

Keywords: multimodal discourse analysis, African American.

1. Introduction

This study serves as a multimodal discourse analysis of the lyrics and music video "This is America". The song of the video was written by Ludwig Göransson, and Childish Gambino, stage name of the musician and actor Donald Glover. The music video was directed by Japanese-American director Hiro Murai. In order to approach the analysis, I will use Machin's (2010) Visual Semiotic Framework concerning the music video. For the lyrics, the components of the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) proposed by Halliday (1978), will serve as a referent. I will now proceed to offer the key aspects of the literature that support the discourse regarding the African-American culture.

1.1 African-American discourse in the United States

The African American culture has always been present in the mass media discourse in the United States. However, it is precisely the way that has been depicted the main focus of Childish Gambino's music video. Cartier (2014) considers that African-American culture has highly impacted the United States' pop culture, considering the presence of music genres such as hip-hop, jazz, and R&B. However, Carter (2014: 150) discusses the dichotomy of being black: "it is always cool to possess the vitality, originality, and magnetism black people as a whole seem to imbue, while accepting none of the pain, prejudice, and struggle the fact of actually having so much

discernible melanin entails”. It would seem that the perception of black people in terms of “how cool” they are can easily be changed.

- Representations of minority groups in mass media can have a negative impact by perpetuating stereotypes.
- Through his music, Childish Gambino offers a powerful criticism of the current situation of the African Americans in the United States, which can be interpreted through a multimodal discourse analysis.
- Different elements of the African American community have been accepted and celebrated, while others have been rejected and associated with violence and crime.

Littlefield (2008) considers that apparently the American society embraces minorities based on the representation of its communities in mass media, the efforts of the government and multiculturalism that the United States offers. However, Littlefield (2008: 676) defines these situations as “new racism”, which assumes that the social changes that took effect during the civil rights movement benefited African Americans and that, consequently, America has lived up to its promise of equality. Current strategies that highlight diversity initiatives but do not single out problems faced by Black Americans dilute the real issues and needs of African Americans.

Therefore, the idea of a multicultural American society based on the equal representation of all its members might not be what it is expected. After decades of the struggle of different social movements, it seems that the concern is now focus on the ways that minorities are portray.

1.2 African-American’s identity

It is necessary to comprehend the historical implications that have shaped the African-American identity. Eyerman (2011: 16-17) discusses its conflicted nature by stressing that, unfortunately, slavery plays an important role in both individual and the collective understanding of who they are:

It was slavery, whether or not one had experienced it, that defined one’s identity as an African American, it was why you, an African, were here, in America. It was within this identity that direct experience, the identification “former slave” or “daughter of slaves” became functionalized and made generally available as a collective and common memory to unite all blacks in the United States.

Although the variable of freedom has entered the equation, the effects of the situation in which most of the ancestors of many African Americans were brought into this continent still has an effect nowadays.

In this regard, Morgan (2002: 12) notes that the nature of this type of first contact situations “is not only to describe historical circumstances, but to contest the notions that the only way to describe African American culture is a problem -through the interpretation and supposed benevolence of the oppressors, intermediaries and onlookers and their descendants”. Therefore, living in the same context as their former oppressors has had particular consequences not only in the way that African Americans perceive themselves but most importantly how they are portrayed to the rest of the world.

Brown and Kopano (2014: 3) point out that “colonial masters are committed to preserving a role for colonized people as dominated, controlled, and exploited subjects”. Even though the authors recognize the influence that the African American culture has had in the popular culture, they further argue how often the media reaffirms white supremacy by conveniently using and controlling the cultural value of African Americans.

1.3 African-American's portrayal in mass media

Fujioka (2005: 451) points out the ethnic identity, which is “a group-based identity formed and developed through a variety of socialization processes, including both personal experiences [...] and mediated experiences”. In the latter, individuals are less likely to control the effect that their portrayals have on a society. Regarding the language, Morgan (2010: 251) discusses the African American linguistic variation. She mentions that Americans tend to “both criticize and fetishize the culture and language. The concrete result of this dualism is a dominant culture which describes African-American speech as bad, uneducated, unintelligible etc., while wantonly imitating and celebrating its wit, creative vitality, and resilience”. These aspects support the previously discussed idea of the instability that African Americans have faced for many years.

Allen (2001) claims that in the case of “African Americans, mainstream media as well as the Black-oriented (ethnic) media serve as one of the influential sources of information about in-group through which African American concepts and identity are developed and negotiated” (as cited Fujioka, 2005: 451). Frequently, there have been accusations of reinforcing stereotypes of even cultural appropriation especially regarding minorities in the United States. Yet, Ghandnoosh (2010: 1581) comments how the response of white individuals towards the representations of African Americans have changed over time: “these include shifts from parodies of African Americans, to race-based segregation of musical genres, to repackaging styles developed by African Americans for white performers, to mass marketing black artists to white audiences”. Moreover, it is mainly the latter, the one that has been widely recognized, slowly becoming a quite profitable industry.

Hirschman (1993) points out that “in societies such as the United States, which are characterized by unequal cultural power, ideology is one means by which dominant groups (e.g., whites, men) sustain and legitimate their power over other groups (e.g., African-Americans, Hispanics, women)” (as cited in Bristor, Gravois & Hunt, 1995: 48). Furthermore, Bristor Gravois and Hunt (1995) highlight that the portrayal of minorities is more likely to reveal more about the Americans. In this sense, Punyanunt-Carter (2008: 241) considers that “although the quantity of African American images on television has increased, the quality of these images has not”. This idea would confirm that in reality, there has not been much progress in the last decades regarding racism, except for the acceptance and popularization of certain aspects of the African American culture.

Stereotype theories claim that these ideas may be encouraged “by consistently seeing out-group members in stereotypical roles on television over a long period of time” (Dixon & Linz, 2000: 132). This represents an issue when a crime is usually attributed to individuals that fit certain stereotypes, mostly African Americans and Latinos. Dixon and Linz (2000: 132) consider that “if the perpetrators of crime on television news are largely people of color and guardians of law usually white, then viewers of news programs may conclude that people of color are evildoers who must be subdued”. Therefore, we encounter this dichotomy, where these stereotypes might result convenient when it comes to the pop culture industry, yet they are also used to continue to perpetuate wrong ideas. Dixon and Linz (2000: 4) conclude that this control of mass-mediated images results in “the subjugation of the masses, amplifying black self-degradation, and profiting financially from the media production”. All three aspects were discussed throughout this section concerning of the post-slavery situation, the construction of the African American identity and the profit yet stigmatization of the stereotypes in the pop culture and mass media.

I have outlined the theoretical analysis of the most relevant aspects regarding the framework that was used to approach the framework and the African American discourse that serves as the focus of the video and lyrics. I will now proceed with the methodology that frames the analysis.

2. Methodology

The approach that the present paper intends is based on the “Three-dimensional method of discourse analysis” of Fairclough (2013). In the same, a three-level analysis is provided: the text, which includes its description and analysis; its process of production and interpretation; and finally, the social explanation regarding the issue that is addressed in the source. I will offer a general over of the elements that support the three levels, in order to provide the concluding remarks concerning the social implications that the video highlights. I will start by exploring the literature of Critical Discourse Analysis.

2.1 *Critical discourse analysis*

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) originated in the 80's based on the work of Fairclough, van Dijk, Wodak and others (Van Leeuwen, 2015). According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997), CDA is concerned with language as a social practice, considering as crucial the context where the language is used, and taking an interest the relation between language and power (Wodak, 2001). Similarly, Leeuwen (2015: 1) claims that CDA “studies the role of text and talk in creating, maintaining, and legitimating inequality, injustice, and oppression in society. It uses discourse analysis as an empirical and rational foundation for doing so”. Therefore, in order to provide a proper analysis, both ideas suggest the need for understanding the context where it was created. In this sense, Wodak (2001: 2) points out that CDA “aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized and so on by language use (or in discourse)”. Furthermore, Wodak (2001) states that the current study research of CDA is heavily focused on institutional, political, gender and media discourses since such topics are conflicted continuously by precisely the issues that CDA aims to address.

Wodak (2001) highlights the concept of power, history, and ideology, as key elements in every critical discourse analysis. Wodak (2001: 3) continues stating that since every discourse is produced and interpreted in a specific time and place in history, the dominance variable plays an important role: “CDA makes it possible to analyse pressures from above and possibilities of resistance to unequal power relationships that appear as societal conventions”. Therefore, many of the texts can be seen as an act of creative resistance (Fairclough & Kress, 1993). As previously stated, different social and political factors surrounding the creation of a text need to be taken into consideration, since its creator might not only use to merely communicate or describe a circumstance but as a conduit to express an opinion and offer a critique regarding a given matter.

However, in recent years the communication has expanded beyond the written and spoken discourse. Therefore, in order to provide a systematic process to analyze any way of conveying an idea, the multimodal discourse analysis was developed.

2.2 *Multimodal discourse analysis*

According to Chan (2013: 70), multimodal discourse refers to “the study of the various methods used by humans to communicate (the discourse) including using voice, writing and ‘body language’ (the multimodalities)”. This model proposes to offer a valid analysis of new ways of communication that have slowly gained notoriety based on technology, art and other ways of expression. In this regard, O'Halloran (2011: 120) consider that Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA “extends the study of language per se to the study of language in combination with other resources, such as images, scientific symbolism, gesture, action, music and sound”. In this sense, any resource that is conceived to convey meaning can be properly examined.

O'Halloran (2011: 123) notes how this type of analysis gained popularity in the mid-2000s based on the increasing interest of different scholars to explore language in other resources

beyond the written and spoken discourse: “there was an explicit acknowledgment that communication is inherently multimodal, and that literacy is not confined to language”.

Regarding the semiotic analysis in music, Machin (2010: 3) states that “in the way that a linguistic might document the linguistic resources and structures available to create meaning in linguistic communication, we look for the kinds of semiotic resources and patterns available for communication in the sounds, images and worlds of popular music”. Therefore, it is possible to transfer the seminal work that many scholars have developed regarding CDA and MDA in order to provide an analysis of other forms of communication.

O'Halloran (2011) maintains that Halliday's (1978) approach supports the idea that the reality of culture is embedded with semiotic resources which can be sorted as systems of meanings. Therefore, the medium such as a newspaper, a television or a computer is only “the means through which the multimodal phenomena materialize” (O'Halloran, 2011: 121). Thus, finding the right approach, or a combination of several frameworks, it is possible to create a set of different elements that are adequate to explore any given semiotic resource. If needed, as in the case of the current analysis, Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) can be used in a source that provides a written form of discourse. Van Leeuwen (2015: 1) mentions that Halliday's grammar is based on “the principle that language simultaneously constructs representations of the world, realizes social interactions, and marshals these representations and interactions into texts and communicative events”. The following section provides a discussion of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics that will serve as the basis to approach the lyrics of the music video “This is America”.

2.3 Halliday's systemic functional linguistics

Haratyan (2011) establishes that in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) language as a social phenomenon is functional since it is based on the text structure, function and meaning of language. Wang (2010) notes how SFL is often regarded as the key foundation of Critical Discourse Analysis as well as other theories in pragmatics.

Haratyan (2011) begins an analysis of language in the social context where a particular lexico-grammatical choice is constructed under the influence of the social and cultural context. Meaning, central to SFL, is achieved through the linguistic choices in paradigmatic and the syntagmatic levels of discourse where the words are arranged in a clause or text. Its precursor comments that:

Discourse is a multidimensional process and text as its product not only embodies the same kind of polyphonic structuring as is found in grammar [...] but also since it is functioning at a higher level of the code, as the realization of semiotic orders above' language, may contain in itself all the inconsistencies, contradictions and conflicts that can exist within and between such high order semiotic systems (Halliday, 1978: 96).

The functions that Halliday (1978, according to Haratyan, 2011) proposes, are intended to represent the abstract metafunctions across languages:

- The ideational function is concerned with the experiential and the logical content of the text which provides an understanding of our experience of the world. It includes the concept of “transitivity” and “voice. The transitivity system includes the material process, the mental process, the relational process, the behavioral process, the verbal process, and the existential process.
- The textual function, regarding the cohesion and coherence of the text. These aspects are achieved through referencing (homophoric, exophoric, and endophoric categories); the substitution and ellipsis (to avoid the repetition using grammatical resources of the language); the use of conjunctions (to elaboration, extend or

enhance an idea). All these elements are combined in order to achieve the lexical cohesion of a text.

- The interpersonal function, meaning the social and power relations that a text conveys, through modality or indicative or imperative clauses.

The presence of these elements was determined through the analysis of the lyrics of the song. A detailed discussion is offered in the Analysis and Discussion chapter. I will now continue with the conceptual review of the approach that was used for the analysis of the music video in order to determine other relevant connotators.

2.4 *Visual semiotic analysis*

First of all, O'Halloran (2011: 130) suggests that "the multimodal analysis includes the interactions between the spoken language, kinetic features (including gaze, body posture and gesture) and cinematography effects (including camera angle and frame size)". Based on these aspects and due to the nature of the music video that this paper presents, the framework offered by Machin (2010) will be used.

Machin (2010: 3) proposes that "in the way that a linguistic might document the linguistic resources and structures available to create meaning in linguistic communication, we look for the kinds of semiotic resources and patterns available for communication in the sounds, images and worlds of popular music.

As previously established by Halliday, the music video of this paper serves as the semiotic resource of this analysis, which based on the current political and cultural context contains relevant meanings that can be examined. Machin (2010) recognized the work of Barthes (1973, 1977) and Halliday (1978) as the main source for this approach, where many of the aspects of their theory were adapted to be used in other sources of discourse. Understanding the idea that images can both denote and connote Machin (2010: 36) points out that:

- The more abstract the image, the more overt and foregrounded its connotative communicate purpose.
- Whether the communicative purpose of an image is primarily denotative or connotative depends to some extent on the context in which the image is used.
- What an image connotes may, in some contexts, be a matter of free association.

Machin (2010) considers the following aspects as the connotators that need to be taken into consideration when analyzing an image:

- Pose, in which these questions can provide a useful insight: to what extent do artists take up space or not? do they perform for the viewer or are they self-contained? Is there an emphasis on relaxation or intensity? to what extent do band members mirror each other or appear as individuals? Are they depicted as being intimate, standing in close proximity or is there some indication of distance? (Machin, 2010: 39)
- Gaze, which is based on Halliday's (1985) argument related to the focus of spoken discourse: offer services or goods, demand goods and services, demand information, offer information. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), the two last aspects can be identified in an image. Machin (2010) suggests that a 'demanding image' would suggest the viewer is being acknowledged. On the other hand, an 'offering image' might not have the same result. It is important to take into consideration that in Western culture up and down have could provide a meaning.
- Social distance, regarding the shots. A closer or a longer shot might indicate personal or impersonal situations respectively. Jewitt and Oyama (2001) also consider that a viewing position can have meaning potential looking up could carry power connotations, while looking down could signify giving away power.
- Objects and how they are represented.

- Settings, which can connote values, identities, and actions.
- Salience, which is concerned with features that are highlighted such as cultural symbols, size, color, tone, focus, foreground, and overlapping.
- Modality, which is based on modal auxiliaries using a scale of may (probable) to must (certain). Aspects such as the degree of the articulation of detail, background, depth, light and shadow, tone, color modulation, color saturation, and color differentiation are measured from maximum to minimum articulation of detail.

The elements of pose, gaze, social distance, objects and salience will be examined in the Analysis and Discussion section, where Machin's approach will frame the analysis of the music video. I will now proceed to review some relevant aspects of the social elements that the video addresses regarding the African American discourse in the United States.

3. Discussion of findings

3.1 Analysis of the lyrics

This section is concerned with the analysis of the lyrics of the music video This is America, by Childish Gambino. I used the Systemic Functional Linguistics proposed by Halliday (1978) to provide a grammatical analysis using the three metafunctions. Table 3 shows the analysis of the Interpersonal metafunctions, which categorize the declarative and the imperative mood.

Table 1. Interpersonal metafunctions

Declarative	wanna / want, know/ got, dancin' / is/ don't catch/ slipplin' up/ whippin up/ 'm living/ got/ gotta carry/ 'ma go/ 'ma go get/ get/ 'm/ gon' blow/ told/ 'm geekin' out/ 'm gon' get/ move/ gonna find/ checked/ owe
Imperative	go away/ dance/ shake/ tell/ go/ get/ watch/ know/ go tell/ get down

There are no interrogative clauses throughout the song. The lyrics navigate between the imperative clauses that represent the 29.41%, and the declarative which are the 70.58%. Therefore, the role that Gambino establishes with the interlocutor is of indicator or presenter of information. However, there is still a significant presence of demanding, which not only means that the social distance decreases, but that would put Gambino in a different position regarding power. Table 4 is concerned with the ideational metafunctions.

Table 2. Ideational functions

Material process	go, go away you <u>got</u> me <u>dancin'</u> <u>Dance</u> and <u>shake</u> the frame I <u>got</u> the strap I <u>gotta carry</u> 'em I <u>ma go</u> into this I <u>ma go get</u> the bag I <u>ma get</u> the pad <u>Get</u> your money, black man I <u>m gon'</u> <u>get</u> it I <u>got</u> the plug on Oaxaca They <u>gonna find</u> you that blocka One, two, <u>get down</u> <u>Drivin'</u> expensive foreigners I <u>kenned</u> him in the backyard
Behavioral process	-
Mental process	We just <u>wanna</u> party

	We just <u>want</u> the money I <u>know</u> you <u>wanna</u> party Police be <u>trippin'</u> now We <u>gon'</u> <u>blow</u> like yeah (straight up, uh) <u>Look</u> how I'm <u>geekin' out</u> Ooh, <u>know</u> that <u>Get</u> it Ooh, <u>work it</u> America, I just <u>checked</u> my following list and You mothaf***as <u>owe</u> me
Verbal process	Ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh, <u>tell</u> somebody Grandma <u>told</u> me
Relational process	Yeah, yeah, I'm so cold like yeah I'm so dope like yeah I'm so fitted (I'm so fitted, woo) I'm on Gucci (I'm on Gucci) I'm so pretty That's a tool
Existential process	This <u>is</u> America Yeah, yeah, this <u>is</u> guerilla No probably <u>ain't</u> life to a dog
*Material /Mental	<u>Don't catch</u> (material) you <u>slippin' up</u> (mental) <u>Look</u> (material) what I'm <u>whippin' up</u> (material)
*Material / Verbal	You <u>go</u> (material) <u>tell</u> (verbal) somebody

There is no presence of the behavioral process, which shows the lack of physiological and psychological behavior where no outcome is expected. Since this process usually requires one participant, it can be stated that Gambino expects from the interlocutor a higher participation, at least as the receiver of the information as the interpersonal metafiction suggests. On the other hand, the material process represents the 38.46%, the mental process the 28.20%, the verbal process the 5.12%, the relational process the 15.38%, and the existential process the 7.69. Both the material and mental process have the highest percentages, which suggest the presence of action and the perception or at least the cognitive reaction of a certain phenomenon. It is relevant to mention that within a sentence both material and mental process are repeated throughout the text a considerable amount of times: *Don't catch you slippin' up* and *Look what I'm whippin' up*, which can outline the phenomenon that Gambino perceives and the immediate call for action. There is also the link between the material and verbal process with the sentence *You go tell somebody*, which is repeated three times, which could imply the need to communicate the phenomenon in question. I will now proceed to outline the textual functions that were identified in the lyrics.

Table 3. Textual metafunctions

Referencing (exophoric)	Police be <u>trippin'</u> now I got the <u>strap</u> Yeah, yeah, this is <u>guerilla</u> Yeah, yeah, or I'ma get the <u>pad</u> I'm so <u>dope</u> like yeah <u>Look</u> how I'm <u>geekin' out</u> I'm on <u>Gucci</u> This a <u>celly</u> <u>Hunnid bands</u> I got the plug on <u>Oaxaca</u> They gonna find you that <u>blocka</u> America, I just checked my <u>following list</u> You just a <u>barcode</u> Drivin' expensive <u>foreigns</u>

	You just a <u>big dawg</u> , yeah No probably ain't life to a <u>dog</u> For a <u>big dog</u> Look what I'm whippin' up (<u>Slime!</u>)

The textual functions that were present thought the song include the exophoric reference. This suggests that Gambino heavily relies on what he assumes is shared knowledge among the listeners. Most of these references are within the African American variation of English such as *strap*, *dope*, *geeking out*, *blocka*, and *big dwag*. Yet, there are others such as *Gucci* and *following list*, which has to do with fashion knowledge and social media respectively. Surprisingly, there is one reference to Mexico (*Oaxaca*), when Gambino establishes a connection with what is assumed a Mexican drug dealer, issue that it is also mentioned through other exophoric references such as *guerrilla*, *pad*, and *humid bands*. Therefore, Gambino is strongly establishing a referential relationship between the African American culture and drugs.

In order to complement the information provided by Halliday's (1978) Systemic Functional Linguistics, I will now examine the participants based on the Van Leewen's (1996) inventory of the ways in which participants can be represented linguistically (Machon, 2010).

Table 4. Participants in the lyrics

Personalized/ impersonalized	*This is <u>America</u> Party just for <u>you</u> Don't catch <u>you</u> slippin' up <u>You</u> just a barcode <u>You</u> just a big dawg, yeah <u>We</u> gon' blow like yeah
Individualized/ collectivized	*This is <u>America</u> Get your money, <u>black man</u> <u>America</u> , I just checked my following list and You just a <u>black man</u> in this world
Nominalized	-
Functionalized	<u>Police</u> be trippin' now <u>Grandma</u> told me
Anonymous	Ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh tell <u>somebody</u> Look what I'm whippin' up (<u>Slime!</u>) You go tell <u>somebody</u> You <u>motha****as</u> owe me I kenneled <u>him</u> in the backyard <u>Girl</u> , you got me dancin'
Aggregated	* <u>We</u> gon' blow like yeah
Objectivated	Dance and shake the <u>frame</u>

The different actors and their importance in the lyrics have been established using the categories shown in Table 6. It can be established that Gambino uses anonymity and personalization, through the use of pronouns and participants that are loosely present such as *girl* and *somebody*. This can provide the interlocutors with a sense of social distance. Gambino does not name these actors, which is supported by the lack of participants in the nominalized category; or as I suggest, a deeper connection since you or somebody could really be anyone, including yourself. It can be assumed that this decision might be a strategy, in which Gambino is also addressing the depersonalization and dehumanization that gun violence has in the United States. When a tragedy occurs, the individuals of the society seems involved and concerned with the issue. Yet, as long as it is not yourself, or someone you personally know, there is the possibility of carrying on with your life. Therefore, people usually operate within this safe frame, a phenomenon that Gambino takes issue throughout the lyrics and music video. The only actors that are openly named

are *America* and *black man*. By naming them, Gambino ensures that the message is conveyed, by setting the context where the phenomenon that he addresses takes places and identifying at least one of the most important groups that have endured it: African Americans. There is also the presence of the grandmother figure, which is mentioned three times. It can be stated that it represents a figure of trust and support since *grandma* is the one in the lyrics that advises the black man to get his money.

I have proved an in-depth analysis of the lyrics of the video. I have identified the grammatical aspects and the actors that support the meaning that Gambino connotes and sometimes denotes in his song. I will now continue with the analysis of the most relevant aspects of the music video “This is America”.

3.2 *Visual semiotic analysis of the music video*

Using Machin’s (2010) suggested connotators for the analysis of music, images, and sound, I will provide a description of the most relevant aspects, including frames from the music video that exemplified the statements.

3.2.1 *Pose*

Apart from the dancing moves throughout the music video, there are three different poses that stand out. The first one is precisely the pose in which Gambino is introduced in the video (Image 1).

Image 1. Gambino’s introductory pose (Source: Childish Gambino’s “This is America”)

Gambino is shown facing away from the camera, full body shot, in a straight position with both arms on the sides. He does not convey a relaxed state, but as if he was waiting for something. Other frames have similar poses, yet there is one in particular where he is holding a gun, as shown in Image 2.

Image 2. Gambino’s resemblance to Jim Crow (Source: Childish Gambino’s “This is America”)

The pose might be stressed, referencing the conflicted character of Jim Crow. This could be a statement regarding the multiple stereotypes that have been used to represent African Americans.

3.2.2 *Gaze*

The video is characterized by the exaggerated facial expressions of Gambino, that fluctuate from cheerful (when dancing), to annoyed (when holding a gun or shooting). However, he always acknowledges the viewer by looking directly to the camera.

Image 3. Gambino's facial expression (Source: Childish Gambino's "This is America")

Image 4. Gambino's facial expression (Source: Childish Gambino's "This is America")

There is one particular shot where the camera faces up, showing children who are on their cellphones capturing what is happening. Since the children are looking down, it can be stated that they are in a higher social position, since they are witnessing from a safe place what occurs with Gambino.

Image 5. Camera facing up (Source: Childish Gambino's "This is America")

3.2.3 *Social distance*

Throughout the video, the camera offers long, medium and close shots. However, the latter is more present, creating a sense of intimacy.

Image 6. Medium shot (Source: Childish Gambino’s “This is America”)

The longer or medium shots are present to highlight the chaos in which the video develops, poses as previously discussed, or certain objects that will be addressed next. Moreover, some of the medium and long shots are reserved for some of the most relevant moments of the video.

Image 7. Long shot (Source: Childish Gambino’s “This is America”)

The body language and dance moves of Gambino and his dancers are meant to serve as a distraction, in order to reinforce one of the key points that Gambino addresses, which is the idealization of the African American pop culture while deflecting the attention from the violence related to gun control and other important issues.

Image 8. Gambino and dancers (Source: Childish Gambino’s “This is America”)

3.2.4 *Objects*

Some of the relevant objects that are featured in the video that will be discussed are guns, which appeared twice, the double chain around Gambino’s neck, and old cars which Gambino climbs on to dance. After being used, the guns are carefully wrapped using a red cloth, which can be understood as the lack of action of the American government to change the policies concerning gun control, regardless the loss of human lives.

Image 9. Gambino carefully handing the gun (Source: Childish Gambino's "This is America")

Based on the identity aspects regarding the impact of slavery previously reviewed, it can be argued that the double chain around Gambino's neck represents slavery and the golden accessories that are often associated with a rapper's stereotype.

Image 10. Double chain around Gambino's neck (Source: Childish Gambino's "This is America")

The presence of old cars might be a referent to the lack of progress concerning the situation of African Americans in the United States, an issue that was addressed as well in the discussion regarding their portrayal in mass media.

Image 11. Old cars featured in the music video (Source: Childish Gambino's "This is America")

3.2.5 *Salience*

The relevant aspects regarding the salience are the cultural symbols, the focus, the foreground, and the overlapping. Throughout this analysis, the cultural symbols present in the video have been addressed. They play an important role to convey the criticism that Gambino intends concerning the perceptions of African Americans.

Image 12. Singing choir feature in the video (Source: Childish Gambino's "This is America")

The focus of the viewer is always challenged by the overlapping elements that the video offers. However, this is also an important connotation in the video. Beyond Gambino’s actions in the video, it can be stated that it is precisely behind the singer’s choreography and overall presence where key situations take place mostly regarding violence and chaos and death.

Image 13. Dead body being dragged (Source: Childish Gambino’s “This is America”)

Gambino is the only character throughout the entire video who is shirtless. This is probably the most important aspect which can be analyzed thought salience. Following the movements of Gambino, the spectator is meant to split the attention between what really matters, and he is surrounded with, in the same way, that the choreography plays with the social distance, an aspect that has been discussed.

Image 14. Chaos behind Gambino’s presence (Source: Childish Gambino’s “This is America”)

Combine with the lyrics, the music video of “This is America” presents an interesting criticism to the representation of African Americans in the United States. Gambino seems to coincide with different aspects of the literature that state how there are particular elements of the African American culture that are embraced and celebrated, while others are not only rejected but used to portray a negative image. Gambino plays with both views in order to convey a strong message through music that includes historical key elements, violence, and the manipulation of mass media.

4. Conclusion

I have offered a multimodal discourse analysis of Childish Gambino’s video “This is America”. Using Machin (2010) Visual Semiotic Analysis and Halliday’s FSL (1978), I have explored the most important elements that Gambino uses in order to offer a social critique concerned with the current situation and portrayal of African Americans and the issue of gun violence in the United States. Wilson (1973) defines racism as “an ideology of racial domination or exploitation that (1) incorporates beliefs in a particular race’s cultural and/or inherent biological inferiority, and (2) uses such beliefs to justify and prescribe inferior or unequal treatment for that group” (as cited in Gravois & Hunt, 1995: 48). However, it seems that regardless of the idealized multicultural society that the United States tries to sell, it could be stated that there are still concerning aspects in the United States, not only regarding African Americans but many minority groups. With the presence of mass media and now social media, these matters have only

been accentuated, which in turn indicates that the obstacle of racism has never been overcome, but only evolved into what Littlefield (2008) calls “new racism”. The views of Gambino about the perpetuated stereotypes that mass media shares are only an example of the partial or misleading truths that are manipulated by a few and presented to millions. The discourse that mass media and social media uses represents a useful but sharp tool, which can both benefit or wound a society; hence individuals should oppose ideas that are based on hatred or racism by being critical of what they are presented, and what they are consuming as spectators.

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