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Tracking the Creative Process of Mikis Theodorakis' *Electra*: An Approach to Philosophical, Esthetical and Musical Sources of his Opera

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Abstract

Taking into consideration Mikis Theodorakis' autobiography, personal notes, drafts and sketches, several scientific studies about his musical work and by means of an analytical approach of his score for *Electra*, it seems that tracking its creative process demands a holistic approach including various musical and extra musical parameters. For this reason the aim of this paper is to present an overview of these parameters such as: (a) aspects of the Pythagorean theory of the Universal Harmony which influenced the artist's worldview and musical creation; (b) the artistic impact of the ancient Greek tragedy and especially of the tragic Chorus on his musical activity; (c) his long term experience in stage music, and particularly music for ancient drama performances; (d) his music for M. Cacoyannis' movie *Electra*; (e) the use of musical material deriving from previous compositions of Theodorakis; and (f) the reference to musical elements originating from the Greek musical tradition.

Keywords: Electra, Mikis Theodorakis, lyrical tragedy, Greek contemporary music, Greek opera.

1. Introduction

The tragic fate of Electra has been the source of artistic expression since antiquity. The story of the young princess seeking to avenge the assassination of her father Agamemnon, a death inflicted by his wife, Clytemnestra, and his wife's lover, Aegisthus, inspired painters, sculptors, authors, librettists and composers, theater and film directors. The myth of the Atreides provides topics as revenge, passion, obsession, oppressed sexuality, jealousy, hate, crimes and remains susceptible to updated political, social and psychological analysis and revision. As far as the operatic scene is concerned, even during the twentieth century, Electra still occupies the lyrical scene through Strauss's and Hofmannsthal's Freudian approach of the hero or more recent versions by Greek composers including Mikis Theodorakis (*Electra*, 1992-3) and George Kouroupos (*Pylades*, 1992). However, the purpose of this paper is to focus on the "lyrical tragedy" *Electra* by the Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis (b. 29/07/1925). Theodorakis, mostly renowned for his political activity, composed during a long and prolific musical career numerous song cycles, symphonies, oratorios, scores for stage-, film- and dance music (with most popular the music for *Zorbas the Greek*) as well as chamber and solo instrument music. Initiated to Greek ancient literature and philosophy since a very young age, he had been composing music for ancient

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drama performances since 1960. His stage scores concern many mythical and tragical figures as Phoenician Women, Ajax, Bacchae, Trojan women, Suppliants, Agamemnon, Choeforoi, Eumenides, Hecuba, Antigone, Prometheus bound, Oedipus rex, Medea, Lysistrata.[1] His first attempts to confront himself with the operatic genre occur in the late 80s with an "opera buffa" (Holst-Warhaft, 2005: 132), entitled *Kostas Karyotakis, I Metamorfosis tou Dionysou* (1986), commenting and based on the political situation in Greece. His following three operas were based on the ancient tragedies *Medea*, *Electra* and *Antigone* and especially in the case of *Medea* the composer wrote the libretto himself. Evidently, several questions rise concerning the particular choice (why Electra?), the influence of the Sophoclean model, and ancient tragedy in general, on the creative process and the musical means he applied in order to create this "lyrical tragedy". In order to enlighten the compositional choices, on a first level we will briefly discuss the main points of his philosophical ideas related to the creation of this opera. On a second level, we will focus on the ways the structure, content and essence of the ancient drama and in particular of the tragic chorus are reflected on the libretto. Moreover, we will examine the impact of his compositional experience in music setting of poems, in stage and film music and of the innovative way he perceives the enunciation of ancient tragedy's lyrical parts in this opera. Finally, we will discuss in what ways the composer's view on music's indivisibility is expressed in *Electra*.

- Tracking the creative process of Mikis Theodorakis' *Electra* demands a holistic approach.
- The selection of the subject of the opera was based on aspects of the Pythagorean theory of the Universal Harmony.
- The opera's libretto, overall structure and vocal parts were influenced strongly by the Sophoclean *Electra*.
- Theodorakis' long term experience in music for ancient drama performances played a significant role in the composition of *Electra* as well.
- The opera *Electra* expresses the compositional belief in the indivisibility of music.

2. Universal Law and human archetypes in *Electra*

In his notes for the presentation of his opera *Electra* in Athens in 1998[2] Theodorakis reveals about the choice of the specific topic that "the base was philosophical. I always considered tragedy as the highest level of spiritual conquest of man" (Theodorakis, 1998a). As it occurs in his autobiography (Theodorakis, 1986: 98-9), interviews (Theodorakis & Gouliamos, 2018: 46), personal notes (digitalized archives of M. Theodorakis – Megaron of Athens), documentaries,

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[1] 1960: *Phoenician Women*, directed by A. Minotis, 1961: *Ajax*, directed by Takis Mouzenidis, 1962: *Bacchae*, directed by A. Minotis, 1965: *Trojan women*, directed by Takis Mouzenidis (Festival of Epidaurus), 1966: *Lysistrata*, directed by M. Volanakis, 1977: *Suppliants*, directed by Sp. Evangelatos, 1979: *Horsemen*, directed by G. Lazanis, 1986, 1987, 1988: *Agamemnon, Choeforoi, Eumenides*, directed by Sp. Evangelatos (all *Oresteia* in 1990), 1987: *Hecuba*, directed by A. Solomos (Festival of Epidaurus), 1992: *Prometheus bound*, directed by Sp. Evangelatos, 1995: *Antigone*, directed by M. Volanakis, 1996: *Oedipus rex*, directed N. Haralambous, 2001: *Medea*, directed by Sp. Evangelatos. See also Panayiotou, 2009.

[2] In *concertante* form on 13 and 15 November 1998, in the Athens Megaron Hall. The opera premiered on 2 May 1995, during the celebration of Luxembourg-Cultural Capital of Europe. Musical direction: Jose Maria Florencio Junior, stag. dir.: Marek Weiss- Grzesiński, scenography: Andrzej Majewski, with the symphonic orchestra, choir, and ballet of the Polish opera. In the role of Electra: Eva Revidi-Ok. Prudnik – W. Nikolajenko, Clytemnestra: L. Tentzeri-Ewa Werka, Orestes: P. Athanasopoulos-Zb. Macias, Chrysothemis: Martha Arapi – J. Cortes, Pedagogue: F. Voutsinos- Bogd. Kurowski, Pylades: St. Beris-Piotr Friebe, Aegisthus: V. Hatzisimos – Sylv.Kostecki. The second performance took place on 13 May 1995, at Poznan, Poland. The third on 30 July and 1 August 1996 at Herodeion Theater, Athens and the fifth presentation on May 1999, at Rialto Theater, Cyprus. See also: http://www.mikistheodorakis.gr/el/music/ergography/opera/?nid=462.

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conference papers (Theodorakis, 1998; Theodorakis, 2007: 82-87) and recent studies (see references), a crucial aspect of his vision of the world and his creative trajectory is the concept of the Universal Law that supports the equilibrium between Universal Harmony and Chaos and directs human lives and existence. Theodorakis even as an adolescent believed in the idea of a creative force deriving from the Harmony of the Spheres and his beliefs became stronger and certain when he became familiar with the Pythagorean harmonic theory. The Universal Harmony is reflected accurately, according to the composer, through the coexistence of the Apollonian and Dionysian spirit; the equilibrium between these spirits leads to absolute harmony that can be found in the achievements of the Greek art, from tragedy till sculpture and architecture (Theodorakis, 2007: 85). As he believes, between the Universal Chaos and Harmony exist all kinds of contradictions-opposition of forces such as "time and timelessness, materiality and anti-materiality, existence and non-existence, beginning and end, harmony and chaos" (Theodorakis, 2007: 86). These contradictions influence the human fate as well. Through this prism the libretto of *Electra* constitutes a wonderful example of tragical material, of opposition and conflict. Everybody in this tragedy has good reasons, nevertheless this fact creates opposition. Electra is opposed to her mother and her mother's lover, because they killed her father. Clytemnestra, Electra's mother, was against her husband because he sacrificed her daughter Iphigenia in order to sail for Troy and begin the Trojan War. Clytemnestra is against Electra who accuses and insults her and Aegisthus in public. Electra disputes with her sister Chrysothemis because she does not seek to restore the injustice. Chrysothemis rejects Electra's plan to murder their mother because she is afraid of the consequences of a failed attempt. Orestes, Electra's brother, intends and succeeds to take revenge, opposing himself to his mother and her new husband. However, the two of them, Orestes and Electra, oppose themselves to the Universal Law because they commit matricide and homicide. Evil and good, right and wrong, love and hate and people forced to face those contradictions. Electra, according to the composer "is the chosen one, the one who should respect the natural Laws" (Theodorakis, 1994: 46).

However, another question seems to occur: Why the Sophoclean *Electra* prevailed over the Euripidian one in the compositional thought? We could assume that as in the case of Hugo von Hofmannsthal's and Strauss' *Electra*, the Euripidian *Electra* was considered quite dramatic, subjective and emotionally stressed to allow the formation of a psychological climax. As we may suppose, Theodorakis was familiarized with Euripides' *Electra* during the composition of the music for M. Cacoyannis' homonym film, despite the reductions and modifications that Cacoyannis inflicted to the original text. However, Theodorakis turns to the Sophoclean model. As Theodorakis says, Electra's personality and status are seductive; "She is so lonely, a beautiful girl, a princess, married to the shadow of her dead father whom she loves so passionately [...]" (Wagner, 2000: 443). This description matches the Sophoclean model. On the contrary, Euripides' *Electra* is not as innocent as the Sophoclean: she is not as helpless – she is married to a poor but noble man who respects her – and, additionally, she becomes the accomplice of Orestes to the murder of her mother. Electra's resentment against her mother reaches unhuman levels. She also accuses Aegisthus for his crimes even after his death. Consequently, her innocence and detriment are not as striking as in the case of Sophocles. The opposition and the contrast between the characters, between justice and crime, by choosing the Sophoclean *Electra* is magnified.

There are several other elements in this libretto that conform to the theory of the Universal Law. For example, Orestes' friend, Pylades, who is a mute character in the tragedy with no particular role, in Theodorakis' opera is an important character performed by a countertenor. Judging not only by the vocal attributes and symbolism but also by the supportive role of this character in Theodorakis' opera, we should consider Pylades' figure as a form of divine presence, as part of the Universe watching from close people's acts and making sure that natural laws are respected.

In a deeper level, the law imposes the solution of a moral problem by the murder of the murderers, but this solution – which is also opposed to the law – will not provide the end of a cycle, it will only reveal the beginning of a new one. The tragic fate of Orestes after the matricide will be continued through other tragedies. This happens because the Universe is timeless, the end means beginning. There are no heroes in M. Theodorakis' *Electra*, there are archetypes related to the history and existence of mankind. People like Electra and Orestes are no different than common people condemned because the Universal Law was violated. The composer does not aim at re-telling the story of Electra: "As long as the spectacle evolves, through the play the archetypes should get alive and function in a way that the spectator gets captivated. I wanted my tragedies [sic] to enter a different ambiance, entirely different, that has no relation with the French, Italian, Mozart's opera. A mystical atmosphere that will captivate you from the moment you seat on the chair, look and listen" (Archimandritis, 2007: 217). More than a faithful representation Theodorakis seeks to create a mystical, ritual, intemporal and universal representation of the myth's essence.

2.1 *Implications of Universal Harmony's theory on Electra's scenery and staging*

In his stage directions Theodorakis (25/6/1994) suggests also that this work could be also seen as religious drama, connecting the earthly and the divine dimension, the human and the superhuman, the earthly and the universal. As he notes, his "Electra should be hieratical" (Archimandritis, 2007). Even the scenery suggested by Theodorakis for the production of the opera at Luxembourg in 1995, supports the idea of anti-spatiality and anti-temporality, the intemporal and repeated contrast between man and natural laws. As Guy Wagner describes in his significant study on Theodorakis, the director "Marek Weiss Grzesiński, adopted an intemporal perspective in the direction of the lyrical tragedy, adhering probably to a stage direction of Theodorakis who judged that Mycenae [the place where the initial story was situated] should be transformed to a magical and supernatural place. Whatsoever the reason was, the stage set-up, reminded of spaceship, space station [...]" (Wagner, 2000: 434-435). We believe that the reason for this scenery is, on one hand, Theodorakis' will to show that the story of Electra, the represented archetypes as well as the actions taken by her and the other characters are part of an eternal cycle, repeating itself independently of specific time or place. This opera's libretto goes far beyond the story of Electra: it is a story about humanity, human fate and reason of existence. On the other hand, people in general are not able to perceive the Universal Harmony: it is a magical place, something incomprehensible and unreachable. The scenery enhances the contrast between the perishable humanity and the unmaterial Universal Law. Mycenae, according to the stage directions of the composer, could be represented as a meteorite, as a spaceship in constant communication with the universal center, the lights should underline the difference among Electra/Chorus and the other characters. The Chorus could be also seen as an incarnation of the Law. However, it would certainly demand a particular discussion -surpassing the limits of this paper – on *Electra's* staging and scenography in order to fully present the directions of the composer and enlighten fully his intentions. So, remaining within the limits of this presentation, we will proceed with the role of the tragic chorus in this opera and the experience acquired by his collaboration with M. Cacoyannis for his movie on Electra.

3. The role of the chorus

The tragic chorus as substantial part of the ancient drama and symbol of a nation or people in general, influenced early the compositions of M. Theodorakis and especially his conception of a new form of musical theater expressed by the *Song of the dead brother*, a "pop musical tragedy" according to the composer (Giannaris, 1983). The composer remarks: "[...] nowadays we watch the people becoming Chorus, we watch entire nations becoming Chorus. [...].

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The song is the choral part (*χορικό*). The mean that unites the people during their feasts or their sorrow." (Theodorakis, 1976: 51). In the *Song of the dead brother*, the composer uses the choral dance in combination with the collective song in order to ensure the passage from the personal to the general, "from the realistic action to the lyrical expression", following the example of the ancient drama (Theodorakis, 1976: 78). Consequently, the role of the chorus in his opera – both symbolic and dramatic – could not be sporadic or ornamental, despite the necessary changes imposed to the ancient text during the formation of the libretto.

Spiros Evangelatos, the librettist, reduced the original text, respecting however the Sophoclean verses. Consequently, the structure and content of the opera was strongly influenced by the tragedy. Theodorakis' *Electra* is divided in two acts with nine and seven scenes respectfully. The monologues of the initial text are shortened, the dialogical parts are favored -they express in an immediate and vivid way the conflicts between the characters- and the choral parts very abundant, at least for a contemporary opera. More than fifteen choral interventions in an opera of two and half hours in the 2006/7 shortened and revised edition (Schott, *Theodorakis: Electra. Revised and shortened version of the composer*, 2010) – the original edition (1992-3) included more parts – remind us well of the role of the ancient tragic Chorus. It should be noticed that, beyond the references to the tragedy, the formation of the choir reflects Theodorakis' democratic ideas. The fact that the chorus expresses the people, the public opinion and will – not surprisingly by a man with the political and social activity of Mikis Theodorakis – had a great impact on the choral parts of his *Electra*. Instead of a group of women, as in the case of both tragedies mentioned above, the composer adds a group of aged men and completes his four-voice choir. The choral parts in *Electra* are meant to be "popular": they intend to show the active participation of the people to political and social matters. They do not serve neither decorative nor intermission's purposes and they do not suppress the action. On the other hand, this democratic perspective leads Theodorakis to opt for a simple, clear and comprehensible choral writing. Theodorakis perceives the chorus as "principal character, [fact]…that is valid for his stage presence as well […]. For this reason, at a large part, the chorus remains monophonic" (Theodorakis, 1998b: 2). *Electra*'s chorus, is not a group of followers; They may be sympathetic – they mourn for Electra's fate, the fake death of Orestes, even the death of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus – but they do not applaud on every decision Electra makes. They recognize and accept the Universal Law as well as Electra's and Orestes' dilemma. Their sympathy is musically symbolized and communicated through the re-processing of musical material used previously in Electra's vocal parts.

4. Composing for M. Cacoyannis' *Electra*

As mentioned above, the approach of Electra's fate by the composer – on an artistic level – comes firstly with the production of the homonym film directed by Michalis Cacoyannis (starting Irene Papas). Cacoyannis based his scenario on the Euripidian version of Electra's story imposing several modifications and cuts while Theodorakis have been composing in Paris, between 1961-2, the music for the movie, for an ensemble including voice, piccolo, clarinet, baglamas (small bouzouki), *santouri* (Greek form of cimbalom), contrabass and percussion (the compositional drafts include more instruments). It was not his first attempt in the field of film music, but the first one on a cinematized tragedy considered afterwards quite successful (nominated for Oscar). The absence of speech in several parts of the film allows the music to act in a dramatic manner keeping pace with the action and (when necessary) the speech. "Cacoyannis' intention in Electra was to transfer the emotional content of the poetic lines to the movements and portrayals of the tragic characters themselves; the emotional is expressed visually while the poetical line is cut and distributed in the dialogue […]. The need for music in many scenes in *Electra* is so great that in its absence the scenes would have been eliminated: the music is so identified with the drama that it equals action. The result is a dramatic unity, the music reflecting the harsh, dry landscape – which is an integral part of the expanded ancient stage-and serving as

counterpoint to the action and emotion" (Giannaris, 1983). The role of the music in Cacoyannis' *Electra* goes far beyond the creation of a musical background or ambience as film music usually functions in other productions. For this reason, as we will demonstrate in a more analytical way in section 6 of this paper, many of the musical themes, melodic and rhythmic motifs, even instrumental choices and timbres reoccur in his operatic Electra.

5. Composing music for ancient drama performances

Theodorakis was greatly inspired by ancient drama since at least the 40s when he composed the symphonic *Prometheus Bound* (1946), without however faithfully following the Aeschylian text. Later, he confronts himself again with the problems of musical conception of tragedies (and in particular of the choral parts) through the composition of the orchestral *Oedipus Tyrannos* (or *Oedipus Rex*, *Ode pour orchestre à cordes*, 1958) and his ballet *Antigone* (1959). During the first half of the twentieth century, the lyrical parts of the tragedies – choral and solo, the so-called monodies (*μονωδίες*) – were disregarded and largely replaced by speech or collective rhythmic recitation (in the case of the choral parts) with a few exceptions as the performances directed by Eva Palmer-Sikelianou during the Delphi feasts (1927, 1930) or the stage music of Dimitris Mitropoulos, Menelaos Pallantios and Manos Hatzidakis for the productions of *Hippolytus* (1936), *Hecuba* (1955) and *Medea* (1956) respectively. In 1959, Theodorakis underlines the problem of the musical accompaniment in the new performances of Greek tragedy (Theodorakis, 1959) expressing the opinion that the music should be united "in a material way" with the cries of the chorus or the hero, or "dynamically" with the tension of the tragic moment. A year later, the collaboration of Theodorakis with Alexis Minotis, the famous director and actor of the Greek National Theater for the production of *The Phoenician Women*, brought a new dimension to the usual performances by adopting a singing enunciation (in alternance with the rhythmic) of the text performed by the Chorus. For the composer, figuring already among the Greek composers inclined to set to music contemporary Greek savant poems, the music for the ancient drama should be deriving from the text itself. On the occasion of the stage music for the *Phoenician women* he remarks that: "it is not the composer's task to support the recitation neither to create an atmosphere, but to 'listen' to this mystical music arising from the verses themselves" (Zahou, 2009: 72). Since the ancient Greek drama was an amalgam of poetry, music and dance, and the musical meters coincided to the poetical ones, the verses of a Greek tragedy demanding of musical setting could be more than the half, and, especially in the case of the *Phoenician women*, -according to Theodorakis- could reach approximately the 80% of the play (Zahou, 2009: 94). A new form of opera was then proposed to Minotis by M. Theodorakis: "we had discussed with Minotis and Paxinou the creation of a different kind of opera, not savant according to a European concept, but by simpler musical means, since there would be actors singing. The concept, however, would be the same [as in ancient drama]. I should use a large amount of symphonic sound, exactly as I did in *Axion Esti*, but not in such a large scale, that would disorient the people. [...] And that's what I did by inserting in my operas the symphonic sound – combined however with the return to tonality, and to the preponderance of melody" (Archimandritis, 2007: 215-6). Unhopefully, this suggestion was postponed and finally condemned by the political situation. However, Theodorakis' attempts, originating from the vision of a lyrically enunciated tragedy, lead him not only to aspire to a new musico-theatrical form, but also to preserve the unity of the triptych speech-song-drama in the vocal parts of his operas. "In all my three operas, my major concern was to convert the text to melisma-song [...]. I did not consider the speech detached-isolated, on the contrary I was integrating the speech in a general context which was affecting decisively the final formation of the melisma-song. To speak with terms of occidental music, my recitativo [sic] did not have the characteristics neither of the simple musical recitation nor of the aria" (Theodorakis, 1998a).

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The creation of a musico-theatrical form able to provide the catharsis, adapting the symphonic sound but giving also preponderance to the melody, was a reason that dictated Theodorakis' return to tonality and melodic lyricism in order to compose his operas (Archimandritis, 2007: 216). The harmonic aspect is influenced too by this tragedy-centered compositional view as far as the Chorus accompaniment is concerned; the thin orchestral sound (sometimes rudimentary) allows the choral parts to be intelligible. On the contrary, during the vocal ensembles, the harmonic texture becomes more complex because, according to the composer, "all opinions must be heard" and "in order to understand the "logic" of one the essence of the other should be understood as well" (Theodorakis, 1998b). As the logic of one does not exclude the opinion of the others, the orchestra acquires as well a dramatic role. Consequently, simultaneous but distinct harmonic layers may evolve in parallel with vocal ensembles or *solo* sections.

6. The indivisibility of music

Mikis Theodorakis designed a map of his compositions clearly demonstrating the indivisibility of his musical poetic, the organic connection and harmony among the various stages and achievements of his creative activity. We should note that the concept of indivisibility for the composer applies to music in general and not only to his compositions (Folkerts, 2015: 224). A far as his repertoire is concerned in particular, every composition is regarded as part of a whole that does not exclude forms and genres, past and present, traditional elements and new possibilities of expression. *Electra* is not an exception. As it occurs in his map, the compositional process leading to the operatic *Electra* is connected to the homonym film (1962) and ballet (1979), the ballet *Antigone*, 1958/1959, the cycle of songs *Faces of the sun* (1986), a vocal piece based on a poem of Kostis Palamas entitled *For a dead woman* (1992), a cycle of songs on poems of Paul Eluard and shows a more distanced relation with the *Ballades* (1973) and a more recent *Small rhapsody for piano*. The strongest attachment, and apparently the most conscious one, is obviously to the film music as it will be shown. In this case, the influence of the traditional music is evident not only in the use of melodic motifs and rhythms, but also in the timbre and the orchestration. The sound of conventional European instruments is combined with the traditional one provided by Greek popular instruments such as the *santouri* and *baglamas* partly in an attempt to approach the sound of an ancient Greek lyre, aulos or tympanon (percussion). These elements reveal on one hand the relation between the music of the film and the experience of Theodorakis through ancient drama's music setting. It should be noted that byzantine chant and traditional music were considered as the natural continuation, the natural successors of ancient Greek music or the means to achieve a realistic archaistic sound fitting to ancient drama representations. On the other hand, Theodorakis is renowned for his innovative idea to reconcile the popular instruments to the symphonic, an idea realized already – despite all reactions – in his *Epitaph* (1962). However, more than 50% of this film music was to be transferred in another context, the one of the opera *Electra,* and this insertion was realized in a harmonic and functional way in relation with the newly composed material. For example, the piccolo's melodic line, heard while the sun rises on the day of the crisis in the film (Cacoyannis' *Electra*, draft, no 102), occurs (in a variated form) in the melodic line of *Electra*'s entrance; It gives the impression of a summoning to the gods. The same melodic line was preceding *Electra*'s entrance, probably because she is connected to the universal light and justice, in the 1998 production,[3] but was eliminated in the newest revision (*Electra's* score, Schott, 2010). In that later, it sounds at the beginning of the second act (scene 1) where justice will be accorded and the light of the Universal Harmony will rise. Another example is provided by the initial musical theme of the movie (Figure 1), reminding of the second chromatic

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[3] 3 CDs, conducted by Mikis Theodorakis, with the St. Petersburg State Academic Capella Orchestra & Choir, intuition Classics (2000).

mode of byzantine (church) chant or the *kartzigar* makam. The theme is firstly enunciated during the assassination of Agamemnon in the movie, consequently, is combined with revenge. Its ascending motifs lie beneath several instrumental parts of the opera e.g. after Electra's description of Agamemnon's murder to the chorus (fourth scene, bars 72-4). Its conclusive motif will reappear in a variated form (bar 109) at the same scene, by the horns, delivering a "suspicion" of vengeance.

The integration of material from the film's suite seems conscious and dramatically connected as it may be deducted by the "transferred" – from the movie to the opera – symbolisms and connotations. As mentioned above, this suite was destined also to an *Electra*, written by Euripides and reviewed by Cacoyannis, but the initial story has no great differences in comparison to the Sophoclean. There are however 'involuntary' intertextuality in Theodorakis' *Electra*. As the composer remarks: "there are themes which I did not wish to leave in the dark and which returned by themselves. When I compose a melodic line, at a certain point in time I am unconsciously led to a theme which is not new, but suddenly there. Thus, there are themes based on works from 1942 in my newest pieces" (Wagner, 2000: 441). An example can be provided from the eighth scene of the first act (bars 265-319). The theme comes from a song of the *Faces of the sun* cycle entitled "On half moon" (*Με μισό φεγγάρι*). The composer develops the main theme with rhythmic modifications and creates a dialogue-duet between Clytemnestra, who was just informed about Orestes' (fake) death, and Orestes' Pedagogue, who pretends to be a friend from a friendly state, Fokida.

Theodorakis in his compositions often combines occidental and Greek motifs, modes, scales, rhythms, instruments. As we have noticed, the Greek musical elements borrowed from the movie suite were incorporated in the symphonic language of the lyrical tragedy. The dramatic context, after all, calls for diversified textures which could underline the continuous opposition and conflicts between the characters and the psychological alternance from despair to joy, from peacefulness to murder. A motif from the monophonic byzantine hymn of the vespers entitled *Gentle light* (*Φως Ιλαρόν*) in the second byzantine mode with harmonic elaboration, initiates Electra's prayer (act 1, scene 5, bars 422-437: I believe, yes, I believe…). The peace of the scene is followed by the barbaric, military sound of the following musical theme: The chorus is prophesying the return of Justice (beginning of scene 6, act 1).

Although dramatic contrast and rupture demand for diversified musical textures and colors between the scenes of the opera, the composer uses musical themes and motifs as leitmotifs or repeats them in order to underline what must be done, the real purpose of the action. For example, the musical theme of Chrysothemis (act 1, scene 5, bars 220-229) – closely related to a motif from the movie (when Electra promises to help Orestes take revenge using an axe) – enunciates in the opera Clytemnestra's dream preconizing her death (lento, espressivo). It is transformed in a furious attack by Electra (allegro vivace) trying to convince Chrysothemis to reject her mother's offerings to Agamemnon's grave and to offer hers instead. The hope of Orestes' return appeases her grief and after a short prayer, Chrysothemis is consenting to her sister's will with a reminiscent form of the same theme (from bar 489). The theme returns through Electra's desperate mourning for her brother. According to the composer's notes in the revised edition (see score, 2010): "in the finale of the first act, Electra sees the moment of vengeance: the death of Aegisthus. When at the end of the work the scene will be repeated, Electra must give the impression that the facts taking place in front of her eyes were already experienced. That is the reason why the finale of the first act and the end of the work coincide." In a connective manner for the drama as well, the melody of the piccolo mentioned above, reappears e.g. when the name of Orestes is referred in the libretto. The chorus as well retakes the melodic lines of *Electra* in order to show his consensus. If, at the beginning, everything seems to scatter in different directions, the notion of a thematic nucleus, however, is to be found. This happens probably in analogy with the center of the Universe from where all kind of incongruous forces emerge without nevertheless destroying its balance.

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7. Conclusion

Reaching at this point of our approach on Theodorakis' *Electra*, we may conclude that in order to track the creative process leading to its fulfillment a holistic approach is necessary. However, the research should not only focus on the composer's musical creation, as Guy Wagner suggested in his study, but also on several other aspects of apparently non-compositional importance (see Figure 3). As it was shown, his philosophical thesis about the Universal Law and the meaning of the human life played a particular role in the selection of the operas' theme, the creation of the libretto, the scenery-staging and the macrostructure of the work. In addition, his experience and artistic visions connected to the music for ancient drama performances, his concern for optimizing the lyrical, dramatical and political role of the tragic chorus, as well as his activity in setting the tragic verses into music lead to a series of compositional choices defining the esthetic result of his opera. From a musical point of view, *Electra* expresses the compositional belief in the indivisibility of Music through the combination of heterogeneous, new or old, personal or traditional musical material, structures, timbres and forms without however compromising the coherence of the opera.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix

Figure 1. M. Theodorakis music for Cacoyannis' *Electra* (only piccolo and stone)

Figure 2. *Electra*: M. Theodorakis, Act 1, scene 4, bars 72-4 (strings only)

Figure 3. Musical and extra-musical axes forming the creative process of Theodorakis' *Electra*

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Evita el Drama (Avoid Drama): A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of a XXI Century TV Advertisement

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Abstract

Throughout history, machismo has permeated in many different sectors of society. Sometimes it is almost imperceptible. For that reason, this multimodal discourse analysis combines features of a functional grammar model by Halliday and certain principles of critical discourse analysis to determine the construct of a washing powder TV advertisement launched in Mexico in 2018. The results show that advertisements tend to be sexist and promote machismo behaviors, gender violence and the normalization of those in a subtle way. Publicity is a source that plays an important role in shaping the reality of society.

Keywords: machismo, gender violence, sexist publicity, normalization.

1. Introduction

This paper is aimed to analyze a washing powder TV advertisement of the brand Ariel, which was launched in Mexico in 2018. The advertisement shows the roles of a typical family inside the household. However, machismo in the advertisement is easily observable. For that reason, I will start by providing a conceptual framework in which distinct terms will be defined, like machismo in Mexico, the stereotype of the Mexican mother as a domestic worker, and the normalization of machismo in TV advertisements. Later on, I will describe the methodology used to carry out this analysis, which is multimodal discourse analysis (MDA). It involves a Halliday's functional grammar model, some features of critical discourse analysis (CDA), and some principles to analyze visuals. Then the analysis will be conducted with the help of the mentioned tools, to finish with general thoughts about the role of this kind of publicity in Mexican society.

1.1 Machismo in Mexico: A general overview

In 1950, in his master piece *El Laberinto de la Soledad*, Octavio Paz portrays different aspects of the general conceptions of the Mexican woman and the *macho*. According to Paz, the Mexican woman has a cosmic and social significance: in her daily life, her function consists of making prevail law and order, pity and sweetness. She is the selfless mother. On the other hand, the author states that the Mexican macho is aggressive, impassible, invulnerable, violent, arbitrary, unpredictable, not a coward. In other words, he is power. Paz suggests that resentment is the basis of the macho's character. Machismo, then, could be defined as a belief in male

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superiority. Even when Paz's book was first published 70 years ago, the general conceptions of the Mexican woman and the macho still prevail in different sectors of society, in terms of seeing women as inferior to men.

> • The analyzed advertisement promotes machismo behaviors and gender violence.
> • The focus of the advertisement is not the product per se but an adolescent's behavior.
> • Sexist publicity prevails on Mexican TV.

Lewis (1964) stated that the Mexican macho is the man who is dominant, brave, boasts many sexual exploits, has a complex of Don Juan. From his proud and vanity, he sees the woman as an inferior being, and enjoys humiliating and denigrating her. For him there is no more feeling, no more reason than his own. The macho thinks he is the one who must command and be obeyed (Lewis, 1964). While the Mexican woman, according to this author, should limit herself to be sweet and submissive to please the men (her father, brothers, boyfriends, husband, in general any men in her life). This vision of the roles of the Mexican macho and the Mexican woman indicates that the woman is seen merely as an object that is there to the service of the man, who is considered as the only one that matters. This situation is visible in different contexts in the Mexican society it is not limited to age, race or ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

Taking into account the previously mentioned works and some others, Lugo (1985) defines machismo as a series of behaviors that exalt the virility, violence, the ostentation of sexual potency, the ability to drink alcohol, physical superiority, and the use of brute force. In general, machismo is the magnification of the masculine and the he contempt of the constitution, the personality and the essence of the feminine. In that regard, machismo is the reproduction of unfair power relations between man and woman.

A more recent definition of machismo in Mexico is the one provided by Moral and Ramos (2016). They define machismo as an ideology that defends and justifies the superiority and dominance of men over women; exalts masculine qualities, such as aggressiveness, independence, and dominance, while stigmatizes feminine qualities, such as weakness, dependency, and submission. This definition takes up the features addressed by other authors and concentrates them into a clear conceptualization of machismo.

1.2 *The stereotype of the Mexican mother as domestic worker*

Throughout the world history, women have been in charge of the domestic chores, work for which they are not remunerated. The main reason why women are responsible for the domestic work at their homes is the gender differentiation (Pedrero, 2004). This means that historically, regardless socioeconomic class, age or generation, race or ethnicity, societies have assigned different roles for men and women in their daily lives based on their gender. But what is gender?

Sometimes the words *sex* and *gender* are confused and used interchangeably. Newman (2002) states that:

> "sex" is defined as the biological status of a person as either male or female based on anatomical characteristics, whereas 'gender' is used to refer to socially constructed roles and cultural representations. "Gender role" refers to the socially ascribed characteristics and expectations: attitudes, behaviors, beliefs and values associated with being male or female in a particular culture. (p. 353)

This indicates that the specificities of what a woman and a man are supposed to do, to believe, and how they must behave depend on what society establishes. In this regard, Rendón

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(1997, as cited in Pedrero, 2004) indicates that the sexual division of job has been seen as something natural. It has always been there and cannot change without violating a social and almost immutable order. However, nowadays it has been considered that it is time to change that vision of gender roles.

Pedrero (2004) argues that social organization attributes women the responsibility of the domestic work. She also mentions that in the field of psychology, domestic work is associated with alignment, domination and subordination (by the woman, I would add). Here again it can be demonstrated how thanks to the role of women at home as domestic workers, and the features that this involves, the beliefs, behaviors and attitudes of machismo are reinforced. The main functions of domestic work are (Campillo, 2000; Pedrero, 2004):

- Providing housing: cleaning it, doing maintenance works, fix the house, furnish it, equip it, doing the paperwork in order to purchase or rent a house or an apartment, etc.
- Providing nutrition: planning the meals, getting the ingredients, prepare the meals, serve them, washing the dishes, etc.
- Providing clothing: doing the laundry, ironing, sewing, purchasing clothes or getting fabrics and confectioning clothes, etc.
- Taking care of: the kids, the sick, the elders, or any members of the family who require constant support.
- And some additional activities: transportation, shopping, planning and control of finances, among others.

Nowadays in Mexico, women are still mostly in charge of carrying out the majority of, if not all, these activities. Apart from that, some of them have extra domestic work. Meaning that they have works for which they are remunerated, plus what they do at home.

1.3 *The normalization of machismo in TV advertisements*

In this section, I will address the different ways in which women and men are represented on TV advertisements. As stated above, because of machismo, currently the Mexican woman is seen as inferior in relation to the man, and she is subordinated to him. This establishment of gender roles has been perpetuated by the societies of the world through generations and it is easily identifiable in almost every social context. An example of this is publicity. This paper focuses specifically on a TV advertisement.

Machismo has been present in publicity since decades ago, even before TV was a mainstream means of communication. It could be argued that advertisements follow the norms established by society. Advertising makes women the target of marketing strategies, because women are the conservator of values and the main agent of consumption, given their dual status as buyer of articles for their own use and for the use of others (Blanco, 2005). In Mexican TV advertisements, machismo can be noticeable throughout various characteristics that fit such norms. Ječmínková (2010) points out some features than can be observable in advertisements and that fall into machismo behaviors; for instance:

- the woman represents a 'good' mother and wife,
- but, at the same time, women are used as seductive characters,
- women appear overall in advertisements of feminine beauty or of household cleaning products,
- they also appear in advertisements of food products, not as a consumer but as the one who serves the others.

In summary, the woman is understood as a maid, what depicts sexism in publicity (Ječmínková, 2010). All these aspects shown on TV advertisements contribute to the perpetuation and reinforcement of normalization of machismo in society.

However, the way in which women are represented in publicity is not the only factor influencing the normalization of machismo, but also the way men are portrayed. The representation of men on media shows that in general they have an aggressive attitude towards the others. This normalization of machismo and the aggressive attitude of men seen in publicity lead to the normalization of gender violence.

Gender violence is the product of the ideology of machismo. Expósito (2011) defines it as physical or psychological coercion exerted on a person to vitiate their will and force them to perform a certain act. In other words, in a gender violence scenario men tend to be the abusers, while women are the abused. This again is based on the idea of machismo that indicates that women men are superior to women.

The normalization of gender violence as on media as in real life contexts, is due to the social convention of machismo. Meaning that this is a cultural phenomenon that establishes that society accepts abusive behavior patterns without being aware of it (Expósito, 2011). This situation does not help people to develop their critical thinking and question the customs that have been passed down from generation to generation.

In this regard, TV plays a major role. Núñez (2005) states that the fact that the viewers do not question the gender stereotypes that constantly appear on TV shows and publicity depends on two main factors. The first one is that TV has made the audience to be used to interpreting from their own experience and environment instead of thinking critically. The second influencing factor is the relationship between the viewers' everyday lives and TV. Núñez points out that TV is the device that best reproduces the social reality, people and their situations. The author adds that the place TV occupies at the privacy at the homes or, in other words, at the inside of society, what makes TV one of the most powerful media. Then, it could be argued that TV is a highly influencing transmitter of messages which contributes to the prevalence of stereotypes, in this case, gender stereotypes.

2. Methodology

In this section, I will describe the methodology used to carry out this multimodal discourse analysis. As its name indicates, MDA entails various discourse analysis approaches. In this case, I will use a Halliday's functional grammar model to analyze the meanings through the language choices of the text. I will also make use of CDA in order to analyze the text and the interactions that reflect relations of power in it, and to analyze the visuals appearing in the commercial.

2.1 *Multimodal discourse analysis*

Multimodal discourse analysis is an approach to analyze either written or spoken discourse in relation to the semiotic elements around the discourse. MDA studies the use of language "in combination with other resources, such as images, scientific symbolism, gesture, action, music and sound" (O'Halloran, 2011: 1). Since this paper is an analysis of a TV advertisement, its text and the aspects surrounding it are not the only features to analyze, but also the visual elements of the advertisement. To that end, besides CDA, a MDA will be used.

Similar to CDA, MDA considers the context as a unit of analysis, known as well as situation type. First, it will be necessary to analyze the use of the language in terms of Halliday's

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functional grammar. This "means that priority is given to the view 'from above'; that is, grammar is seen as a resource for making meaning — it is a 'semantic' kind of grammar. But the focus of attention is still on the grammar itself" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 31). Therefore, grammar has to be analyzed as the means to convey meaning.

Halliday (1978) developed a model to determine semantic features by semiotic elements, which could be adapted for carrying out a MDA. The model indicates:

> The situation type is a semiotic construct which is structured in terms of *field*, *tenor* and *mode*: the text-generating activity, the role relationships of the participants, and the rhetorical modes they are adopting. These situational variables are related respectively to the *ideational*, *interpersonal* and *textual* components of the *semantic system*: meaning as content (the observer function of language), meaning as participation (the intruder function) and meaning as texture (the relevance function). (p. 125)

Table 1 explains the roles and relation of the semiotic construct and the situational variables.

Table 1. Functional model of language

Feature of context	Function of language
field: what the text is about	*ideational metafunction*
tenor: the relationship between speaker/writer and listener/reader	*interpersonal metafunction*
mode: how the text is constructed	*textual metafunction*

Note. Source: Ewing, 2001, p. 3.

Through the analysis of these elements it is possible to determine how the language choices (the use of particular vocabulary and specific grammatical features) of any text contribute to create meaning.

MDA contemplates different aspects to be analyzed in the conveying of meaning, known as levels of language. Those levels are the purpose of the text, which depends on each particular situation; the semantic level (meaning), the lexicogrammatical level (words and structure), and the graphophonic level (sounds and symbols) (Ewing, 2001). In summary, MDA takes into account as units of analysis the language choices in a text, the meaning of the text and its impact on the interlocutors, as well as the semiotic features that appear along the message. Since this paper is aimed to analyze a TV commercial, the features to analyze visual semiotics will be discussed in the next section.

2.2 *Critical discourse analysis*

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a way of analyzing either written or spoken texts and their impact on society, from a sociopolitical stance. The aim of CDA is to display how language is used to establish power and dominance of some social groups over others. In accordance to van Dijk (1993):

> Power involves *control*, namely by (members of) one group over (those o) other groups. Such control may pertain to *action* and *cognition*: that is, a powerful group may limit the freedom of action of other, but also influence their minds. Besides the elementary recourse to force to directly control action (as in police violence against demonstrators, or male violence against women), 'modern' and often more effective power is mostly cognitive, and enacted by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to *change the mind of others in one's own interests*. (p. 254)

The power that certain groups exercise over others takes many different forms. It implies influencing on the way certain individuals act or think. In addition to power, there is the dominance factor. Dominance is "the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality" (van Dijk, 1993: 249-250). According to van Dijk (1993), the main difference between power and dominance is that, unlike power, dominance "may be enacted and reproduced by subtle, routine, everyday forms of text and talk that appear 'natural' and quite 'acceptable'" (p. 254). What, in relation to this paper, happens through media and advertising. Van Leeuwen (2015) states that:

> Critical discourse analysis (CDA) studies the role of text and talk in creating, maintaining, and legitimating inequality, injustice, and oppression in society. [It uses] an empirical and rational foundation for doing so. It seeks to promote awareness of this aspect of language use and to argue explicitly for change on the basis of its findings. (p. 1)

In this sense, it could be implied that CDA seeks to demonstrate social inequality promoted by the most powerful groups in society. Wodak and Meyer (2011) argue that "particularly the language of the mass media is scrutinized as site of power" (p. 6). Thus, CDA turns in a suitable tool to analyze discourse used in media, in this case on TV.

Experts in the subject have suggested that in order to carry out a CDA, it is necessary to take into account different aspects. In the first place, that it is a multidisciplinary approach. Second, not only the language used in a text is analyzed, but also the context, and the relationships between the text and social cognition, the text and power, the text and society and culture, and the role of the text in constructing power relations in society (van Dijk, 1993; van Leeuwen, 2015; Wodak & Meyer, 2011). It is important to contemplate these elements because this way it would be possible to determine the role of a text in a specific group of the society.

2.3 *Visual semiotic analysis*

The visual semiotic features to analyze through this paper are the sequence that appears on screen, the characters and their actions. Bignell (1997) asserts that advertisements are designed to shape our perception of reality. The function of advertising goes beyond selling products, they also create structures of meaning (Williamson, 1978, as cited in Bignell, 1997). In other words, advertisements influence significantly on the way we experience the social world. The aim of advertisements is:

> to engage us in their structure of meaning, to encourage us to participate by decoding their linguistic and visual signs and to enjoy this decoding activity. Ads make use of signs, codes, and social myths which are already in circulation, and ask us to recognize and often to enjoy them. (Bignell, 1997: 33)

By means of publicity, companies show us an 'ideal' world and create us an internal and unconscious desire to live a life similarly to what is portrayed in advertisements, so that we feel we are able to belong to that 'ideal' world. This way, some behaviors as machismo and the relations of power are perpetuated without the audience even noticing it.

Another semiotic aspect that is relevant in the analysis of visual advertisements is the gestures used in the TV advertisement as a source to deliver a message. Kendon (2013) sees gestures as actions performed with the body that may or not come along with verbal expressions as part of the discourse in order to convey meanings. The author adds that gestures can be used to extend, enrich, supplement, or complement spoken utterances; and that the meanings of gestures are generally governed by social conventions.

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3. Discussion of findings

The advertisement to be analyzed next is a TV commercial launched in Mexico in 2018. The product advertised in the commercial is washing powder. The brand is Ariel. The commercial will be analyzed under the parameters of MDA. I will analyze the dialogue based on Halliday's model of functional grammar and from a CDA perspective. Later on, I will analyze the semiotic features, meaning the visuals and gestures.

3.1 *Description of the TV advertisement*

In this section, I will provide two brief descriptions, one of the advertisement and another one of the context in which the advertisement was launched:

- The scenario: It can be seen that the advertisement takes place at a home. It seems to be the house of a middle-social class family.
- The characters are a 40-year-old (approx.) mother and a 17-year-old (approx.) male adolescent.
- The actions taking place in the advertisement: the mother carries out the domestic work, while the son gets dress.

The commercial was launched in Mexico in 2018. Based on what previously discussed about publicity directed to women, it could be argued that the advertisement is targeted to Mexican housewives.

3.2 *Analysis of the dialogue*

I will analyze the dialogue using a MDA methodology. I will take into account Halliday's model of functional grammar in combination with a CDA perspective. The dialogues will be presented in Spanish as they are in the original advertisement, together with a translation into English. Table 2 shows the advertisement's situation type:

Table 2. Advertisement's situation type

Feature of context	The dialogue as the text		
field	a male adolescent complains to his mother for not having washed his shirt		
tenor	inside the advertisement: mother and son outside the advertisement: seller and customer		
mode	15 explicit verbs + 1 implicit = 16 verbs		
	Mood	Verbs used	%
	Declarative	14	87.5%
	Imperative	1	6.25%
	Interrogative	1	6.25%
	Total	16	100%

The field describes the general situation taking place in the advertisement: a family's common routine inside the household. The tenor indicates the relationship of the characters, meaning mother and son; as well as the relationship between the interlocutors in the social context which are the company and the audience. In this case it could be implied that the speaker is the washing powder company and the listener are Mexican housewives. The 87.5% of the verbs used are in declarative mode. This shows that most of the statements used are facts. Apparently, there is no opportunity to question the message. Tables 3, 4 and 5 specify the ideational meaning of the text.

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Table 3. Verbs used in the text

person	by the mother		by the son	
	times used	*%*	*times used*	*%*
1st	1	6.25%	3	18.75%
2nd	-	-	1	6.25%
3rd	8	50%	3	18.75%
	9	56.25%	7	43.75%
Total of verbs 16 (100%)				

In total the actors in the advertisement use 16 verbs, 9 by the mother and 7 by the son. The mother utters 56.25% of the total of verbs, while the son utters 43.75%. This means that the interaction between the participants is sort of balanced. However, the mother is the character who uses the higher number of verbs.

Table 4. Verbs used by the mother

person	subject	times each subject was used	% each subject was used
1st sing	herself	1	11.11%
2nd sing	-	-	-
3rd sing	her son	5	55.55%
	washing powder	2	22.22%
1st pl	-	-	-
2nd pl	-	-	-
3rd pl	dramas	1	11.11%
	Total	9	99.99%

This table focuses on the total of verbs uttered by the mother. The mother makes use of the first person only once, what represents the 11.11% of the total of subjects mentioned, against the 88.88% of times that she utilizes the third person in singular. From the eight times she uses the third person, in five the subject is her son, more than the half of the total of subjects uttered.

Table 5. Total of verbs used by the son

person	subject	times each subject was used	% each subject was used
1st sing	himself	3	42.85%
2nd sing	his mother	1	14.28%
3rd sing	shirt	2	28.57%%
1st pl	-	-	-
2nd pl	-	-	-
3rd pl	girls	1	14.28%%
	Total	7	99.98%

Regarding the sons' interventions in the advertisement, the person that he uses more times is the first person in singular.

The analysis of these data shows that the focus of the utterances expressed along the advertisement is the son rather than the washing powder. This coincides with what explained by Bignell (1997), being that the center of attention in advertisements are nor precisely the products, but other features appearing on the screen. What companies sell are not the products per se, but

ideas of a wanted lifestyle. This functional grammar analysis demonstrates the marketing strategy discussed above about publicity conceiving women as the buyers of products for serving others.

Now, I will analyze the utterances of the text from a CDA stance, through a table in which I will include the original utterance in Spanish, a translation into English and the critical analysis. The utterances said by the mother will include at the beginning a "M", while the ones by the son, a "S:" for English and a "H" for Spanish.

Table 6. A CDA of the utterances of the advertisement

	Utterance in Spanish	Translation into English
1.	*M: Mi hijo cambia de novia como de calzones*.	M: My son changes girlfriend as he does with his knickers.
CDA	Comparison of women with knickers portrays women objectification. It is necessary to highlight that the pragmatic use of the word "*calzones*" in Mexico has to do with things which have a low value.	
2.	*M: Se cree todo un galán.*	M: He sees himself as a ladies' man.
CDA	This indicates that the man who 'has' many women is admired = He is supposed to have some characteristics of what is understood in Mexico as a macho	
3.	*M: Pero ¡uy! si descubría su camisa recién lavada con olor a sudor…*	M: But gee! if he found his just laundered shirt smelling of sweat…
CDA	She will suffer a negative consequence if her son finds out that she did not do well her job. According to the name of the advertisement (*Evita el drama* – Avoid drama), it can be implied that the negative consequence is drama.	
4.	*H: ¿La lavaste, mamá?*	S: Did you wash it, mom?
CDA	The son wants to make sure his mom has fulfilled her obligation, even when he seems physically able to wash his own clothes.	
5.	*M: Sí!*	M: Yes!
CDA	The mother raises her tone of voice, in a way that lets the hearer know she obviously did her job.	
6.	*H: ¡La necesito ahorita!*	S: I need it now!
CDA	The son complains that his mother did not do her job on time as it is supposed to be. He portrays a demanding and aggressive attitude, characteristics of a macho. Note. In the functional grammar analysis, this utterance was taking as imperative because of what it implies.	
7.	*H: ¡Apesta!*	S: It stinks!
CDA	The son shows himself overbearing and emphasizes that his mom either did not do her job or she not do it well.	
8.	*H: Y es de la suerte.*	S: And it [shirt] is lucky.
CDA	He gives the shirt a high value. It is important.	
9.	*H: Con esta me ligaba a todas.*	S: With this [shirt], I used to tie all of them [girls].
CDA	He again demonstrates an attitude of Don Juan, like a macho.	

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10.	*H: Ahora ninguna me va a pelar.*	S: Now, none is going to look at me.
CDA	However, this utterance means that he actually cannot conquer a girl by his own. He needs the help of a clean and lucky shirt.	

11.	*H: Me veo viviendo contigo hasta los 40 como el loco ese de los gatos.*	S: I can see myself living with you till my 40's, like that crazy man of the cats.
CDA	By means of this utterance, it can be implied that if his mother does not do well with the laundry, he will not be able to 'tie a girl', consequently, he will not be able to become an independent man.	

12.	*M: Estos dramones ya no me pasan desde que probé Ariel.*	M: These huge dramas do not happen to me anymore since I tried Ariel.
CDA	The mother assumes that using Ariel is the solution for not being mistreated by her own family.	

13.	*M: Con sus [del detergente] perlas saca manchas difíciles y de sudor.*	M: With its [the washing powder's] pearls, it removes stubborn stains and sweat.
CDA	This suggests that the advertised product is highly effective.	

14.	*M: Lo guapo lo sacó de mí.*	M: He inherited the handsomeness of me.
CDA	The intention of this utterance could be, at the end of the day, saying something positive about the mother. However, the center of attention is still the son.	

15.	*M: Ariel es poder.*	M: Ariel is power.
CDA	Probably the purpose of this last utterance is to make the audience, in this case housewives, feel empowered, by using the word "power", which in itself carries a great burden of meaning. However, power is the least thing given to women in this advertisement.	

Throughout the advertisement, it can be observable that the adolescent behaves as a macho and the woman is there to serve him, assuming the gender role that has been historically established by society.

3.3 *Visual semiotic analysis of the advertisement*

In this section, visual semiotics, meaning the visuals appearing during the advertisement, will be described and analyzed. The focus of attention will be the actions performed by the actors, including their gestures. I will analyze each of them separately. I will start with the name of the advertisement:

Note. The title of the advertisement. Source: Comerciales en Like México, "Ariel. Evita el drama", 2018.

The title of the commercial is '*Evita el drama*' (Avoid drama). Considering the whole advertisement, the meaning of the title could be interpreted as: "avoid to be mistreated. Do right your job!".

The second feature to be analyzed is mother's role. I will describe and interpret her specific actions.

Note. Mother cleaning up the house. Source: Comerciales en Like México, "Ariel. Evita el drama", 2018.

The advertisement takes place in a house of a middle-class family. The mother, a woman around her early 40's approximately:

- The mother does the domestic work.
- She picks up dirty laundry in what seems to be a study room.
- Then, she gets into the adolescent's bedroom to continue to pick the laundry up.
- When the adolescent starts speaking, the mother performs his speech, meaning that she already knows what is going to happen for not doing well her job, what reflects that this is a recurrent situation.
- Almost at the end of the advertisement, the mother fixes her son's shirt collar. This shows the adolescent's incompetency to do simple things as washing his clothes and reinforces the conception that who has to be behind her children's image is mom.
- Finally, the mother caresses her son's cheek, but he seems not to like it due to his facial expression, while she maintains a smile on her face. This gives the idea of a submissive mother, because it does not matter how bad the mother is treated, she will always be there with a smile on her face. In the end, it is a pleasure for her to be dedicated to the well-being of her family. Messages like this support the conception of the role of the mother as a domestic worker, while adds a meaning of enjoyment to that role.

The following feature is the adolescent's role. I will analyze his role, actions, gestures and attitudes.

Note. Aggressive adolescent. Source: Comerciales en Like México, "Ariel. Evita el drama", 2018.

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He is a male 17-year-old (approx.) adolescent:

- The moment he appears in the advertisement, he looks at himself in the mirror with a vain attitude, seen through his body-language.
- When he directs to his mother, he portrays an aggressive attitude. His body-language and gestures suggest confrontation. He frowns and his fists are clenched.
- He looks annoyed while his mom fixes his shirt collar.
- His last facial expression shows rejection, while his mom caresses his cheek. His attitude demonstrates a complete disrespect for his mother.

In summary, it could be concluded that this specific advertisement is publicity targeted to Mexican housewives belonging from low to middle-classes. Because thanks to the establishment of gender roles and the normalization of machismo in Mexican society groups, it is assumed that women are obliged to do the domestic work in their houses, without questioning this thought.

4. Discussion

In conclusion, bearing in mind that advertisements try to reflect the reality that a society would like to be part of, this advertisement reinforces gender roles and gender inequity by presenting the woman as the one in charge of domestic work. She is not only in charge of domestic work, but the other members of the family get annoyed if she does not do it or if she does it wrong. This, at the same time, contributes to the normalization of machismo and gender violence. Although there are some people who think that machismo does not shape a society to make it *machista*, but machismo is what shapes publicity; Ječmínková (2010) affirms that machismo in publicity influences machismo behaviors perpetuate in society. Therefore, the authorities should regulate the policies of publicity that are related to gender inequity and gender violence. Machismo and its normalization in publicity display two types of relations of power and dominance: power of men over women and the power of media over society.

5. Conclusion

This MDA was aimed to analyze a washing powder advertisement launched in Mexico in 2018. The analysis was made with two main sources. Halliday's functional grammar model was to analyze the meanings conveyed by means of the language use in the text. The text, the visuals and gestures were also analyzed having as a basis the principles of a CDA perspective. It was concluded that machismo and gender violence have been part of the Mexican lifestyle throughout history, that sometimes it is difficult to identify sexist publicity, which also affects the relations of power between men and women.

Acknowledgements

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Analyzing the Visuals and the Message
Sent in the INAI Spot in Mexico

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Abstract

The use of media has been used for several purposes, such as entertainment, leisure activity, or as mean to communicate. Currently, federal institutions have employed media with the purpose of being in touch with people. In this case, through radio and video spots the INAI tries to send a message that comforts and reliefs the population in Mexico. In order to discuss such message, I analyze the discourse in the radio spot and the pictures used in the video. The former is examined by the systemic functional linguistics provided by Halliday (1978) and the latter with the Machin's (2010) visual semiotic framework. The findings portray a discourse that pretends solving the problematic situation the country already faces. However, there is not a solid conclusion only a pretentious scape of the responsibility of other federal institutions.

Keywords: discourse analysis, media, INAI, messages, SFL.

1. Introduction

In Mexico, social media has been broadcasting several spots in radio and TV through the years to fulfill what people demands from the government institutions. This paper aims to scrutinize the message sent in the *INAI* (Instituto Nacional de Transparencia, Acceso a la Información y Protección de Datos Personales) video. The video is presented to the Mexican audience in two different formats: the first as a spot in the radio and the second as a video in TV and as an advertisement in the TV and internet. The message sent by the INAI attempts to solve possible questions that people may have regarding the federal budget and how is spent. To approach the analysis, I will mainly use the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) proposed by Halliday (1985) as referent in the analysis of the discourse. The video and images on it will be approached through the Machin's (2010) visual semiotic framework. The paper will present a brief introduction of the context of Mexico and what the INAI represents to clarify what is the purpose of the message. Then, the methodology employed in the analysis will be discussed and followed by a discussion of the findings. Finally, the paper will close with a brief conclusion.

1.1 *Political discourse in Mexico*

Mexico has experienced challenging scenarios during the years due to the socio-political conflicts that emerged from the government. In this case, the main stakeholders are the Mexican people. To understand this claim, it is relevant to explore how people is approached by

the political parties. According to the statistics taken from the Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL) in 2018, there exists 27.4 million of people who are not considered as low-social income nor vulnerable. This represents the 21.9% of the total population in the country. In a broadened perspective, 52.4 millions of people live in poverty, 9.3 millions more live under extreme poverty conditions, 8.6 millions are vulnerable because of their incomes, and 36.7 million are people who the government considered them as vulnerable because of the social lack.

Furthermore, in 2019 De Las Heras Demotecnia conducted a survey collecting data in regard to the main worries of Mexican people. The results highlighted that 34% of the people interviewed were concerned with the health system, 26% stated that security played an important role, and only 12% said that economy area needs to be addressed urgently, a fewer percentage mentioned that education has been neglected. Regarding the last point, the INEGI (2015) pointed out that the average educational level in Mexico is 9.1 academic grades. This means that the Mexican children instead spending an average of 12 academic grades enrolled in the educational system, (3 years in kindergarten, 6 years in primary, and 3 years in secondary school), most of them have only study 9.1 years of literacy.

This situation makes the construction of a thematic discourse for the government. Therefore, the federal and state politicians attempt to establish a link or bound between the Mexican people with the development of social programs, characters, modifications in laws, discourses that try to become in promises only to re-vindicate its composition as a keystone to reach to the Mexican people. The combination of all these perceptions coming from an unsatisfied society was an opportunity for the new President and its cabinet to demonstrate a change. Torcal (2003) relates this disenchantment with old Mexican mandatories due to the democracy consolidation they had at the time when they rule.

Otero (2018) remarked that the current Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) self-proclaimed to his mandate the Fourth Transformation (4T). The 4T pretends to solve and overcome some of the difficulties from previous years and decades. However, Otero (2018) states that to achieve such challenges, the government will require to do an extensive work to fulfill all the objectives presented before its official selection. The 4T tries to eradicate two main problems: (1) the corruption, and (2) impunity. To manage them, several proposes arose. For example: the austerity project that influenced diverse institution all around the country with the purpose of diminish the financial investment, and the improvement of certain institutes, as in the case of the *Instituto Nacional de Transparencia, Acceso a la Información y Protección de Datos* (INAI). The latter will be explained in detailed in the following section.

1.2 *What is the INAI and what does it represent?*

Politicians have tried to depict themselves as people who care and consider the willing of society. To accomplish this goal, different sexennial periods have offered and constructed organizations that address the problems that society lives with. According to the CONEVAL (2018) between 2008 and 2016 there had been more than 1000 social programs. Some of these programs did not continue over the time, but some of them are still valid, such as: *Aportaciones a la Segurida Social* (APPS), *Secretaria de Hacienda y Crédito Público* (SHCP), *Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología* (CONACYT), *Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social* (IMSS), only to mention some. However, even when these programs support and assist certain sectors of society, incongruences seem to exist because people do not perceive their contributions as necessary. To provide information about the multiple programs in Mexico, another institution emerged as a way to bridge this gap, the IFAI/INAI.

It is relevant to mention that the INAI was previously named as IFAI (Instituto Federal de Acceso a la Información y Protección de Datos). According to the official webpage of the Mexican Government, the IFAI was founded in 2002 and worked for 12 years and its main objectives were:

> The fundamental objectives of this body are: to promote and disseminate the exercise of the right of access to information, resolve the refusal of requests for access to information and protect personal data in possession of the agencies and entities of the Federal Public Administration. (Machinelly, 2011: 1)

The objectives from the IFAI were similar to the INAI's. However, the reason of having this transition between these two programs was the publication of the *Ley General de Transparencia* released in 2014. Based on the information published in the official webpage of the Mexican Government, the INAI is described as:

> The Autonomous Public Body in charge of facilitating and guaranteeing people's access to public information and access to and protection of personal data, promoting a culture of transparency in public management and government accountability to society. (Secretaria de Función Pública, 2020: 1)

Based on the above, the IFAI presented similar purposes as the INAI, but with minor differences. Its mission, vision, and objectives were the principal modifications this institute showed. The INAI created and approved more than 50 strategic programs that are used to facilitate its new legal functions (INAI, 2017). Thus, the INAI presented a solid beginning beneath society by stating its main purpose, which is: to permit people have access to the information and how the money taken from the taxes is invested.

Finally, the INAI attempts to represent and provide clear paths regarding information. Its creation and improvement came as a necessity from the government to be accountable on how the investment of taxes is followed, if the hospitals have enough medicine for the people's treatment or to know if politicians are working against the insecurity. The INAI broadcasted a spot in radio, TV, and on the Internet to establish bonds between the government and people. However, the INAI's message is more influential through the media because if the same discourse were depicted in written ways or orally, it would not be as efficient as in the TV or Internet. This is the potential media has when sending messages and will be approached in the follow theme.

1.3 *The influence of social media in Mexican society*

Through history, Mexico has moved and forward-thinking in term related to technology, science, education, and social media. However, the advances cannot be compared with more developed countries. For example, Hopf (2016) mentions that "Mexico, despite being a developing country, uses social media at a higher rate than countries with greater Internet penetration" (p. 45). This means that even when the country is still technologically evolving, Mexican people spend a considerable amount of time in social media compared to other countries. According to We are Social Singapore (2016) presented data that listed Mexico as one of three more eager countries concerned with the use of Internet in Latin America. Thus, the role of social media started to become more relevant and popular over the years not only for the citizens, but for the government as well. Based on Hopf's (2016) words:

> Mexico's government officials have also recognized the power of social media. @PresidenciaMex is "the most active of all world leaders' accounts with an average of 68 tweets per day," per Twinplomacy data. Likewise, the same report cited @EPN, President Enrique Peña Nieto's account, as "the most followed Latin American leader and the ninth most followed worldwide." Mexico's president uses his Twitter account to promote official initiatives such as #PactoporMexico, #WEF (Word Economic Forum) or energy reform, #ReformaEnergetica. (p. 32)

Based on the above quote, it is evident that the Mexican government has an active role in regard to social media. The use of hashtags in Twitter works as an attempt to foster initiatives that link the political parties and the rest of people who lives in Mexico. Moreover, the large number of followers the ex-president Enrique Pena Nieto had, it demonstrates the fame and impact social media depicts in society. The transition between political purposes and other type of announcements in the media are described by McClenehgan and Ragland (2002). The authors suggest that to enhance the value in communication regarding democracy, public services and community, broadcasting media should not be restricted to commercial ads or announces.

Following these lines, Parkinson (2002) claimed that the use of media can be misunderstood and negatively affect to those who listen the message. For example, he says that the message from the politicians' debates are commonly confused in the media. The participants focus more on the opinions rather than debating, *per se*. The little attention given to social issues or institutions, and the irrelevant ideas given by them, it shows the power and importance of the social media. In this scenario, Parkinson (2002) analyzed the lack or plethora of ethics that media can depict on the real intentions from the message sent. Therefore, several political parties have realized the relevance for increasing the number of people who follow them through social media and how they can receive their messages in such platforms.

The outstanding upsurge of the use of new means has shaped the way people obtain information. Radio and TV are still sources used by people to be informed regarding the situation in Mexico, but social media has played a greater role. An example of this is given by Garcia-Murillo (2010) who states that the impact of Facebook or YouTube has when corruption is exposed in social networks. He also suggests that those scenarios can make politicians to be aware on how the public eye perceived them. In this case, Ramírez-Placencia (2015) mentions that:

> States and organizations have established imperative actions to decrease corruption through ICT like creating virtual portals for showing information about public expenses or electronic sites for denouncing bribery and nepotism acts. But along the time, these actions are kind of limited, because usually people do not trust government authorities and they do not consult frequently this spaces. (p. 38)

In the previous quote, it is inferred that the government has tried to consolidate way to accomplish a sort of acceptance from the Mexican people. An example of this, is the INAI. The institution has sent messages in more updated ways. For instance, in the YouTube platform there is an advertisement when people wait for watching a video. In a superficial viewpoint, the INAI discourse can be interpreted as a proper option for the new government to leave the acts of previous sexennial periods. Nonetheless, scrutinizing the message under a more critical scope can shed light on a different message, which will be presented in further sections.

2. Methodology

Analyzing texts either in written or spoken means requires a degree of complexity. Whether the process is not cautiously developed, the level of credibility could be questioned by the audience. Therefore, the text in the INAI spot will be scrutinized using Halliday's (1985) SFL while the visuals will be examined through the Machin's (2010) framework to highlight the relevant elements implicitly shown. To provide an objective construction of the analysis, the following section will briefly describe the main elements in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

2.1 *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)*

Having critical perspectives regarding the analysis of areas such as semiotics, pragmatics, psycho, and sociolinguistics started to become a trend since the last three decades. At

the time, a prestigious group of scholars (Teun van Dijk, Norman, Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen & Ruth Wodak) discussed theories regarding the discourse analysis from a critical approach. As part of a paradigm, CDA distinguishes among other due to a series of particular characteristics. Wodak and Meyer (2008) mentioned that the deconstruction of pre-established believes, the self-reflection in research, and the language and power relation are the basis in CDA. Over the years, this paradigm began to be used as a way to highlight circumstances where the context is a crucial part of the problem to be approached. According to Wodak (2001) CDA "aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized, and on by language use (or discourse)" (p. 2). Carrying out this type of analysis has permitted to perceive and comprehend in different ways the discourses of diverse fields, such as: the academic institutions, politics, gender, and media discourse. Wodak (2001) mentions that is vital to consider that:

> It is important to stress that CDA has never been and has never attempted to be or to provide one single or specific theory. Neither is one specific methodology characteristic of research in CDA. Quite the contrary, studies in CDA are multifarious, derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds, oriented towards different data and methodologies. (p. 5)

Taken into consideration this claim, CDA presents a multidimensional approach to analyze the same text or discourse, but under different conditions. By doing so, whoever that opt to work with it has the opportunity to scrutinize or criticize the discourses. Moreover, the diversity of the methods applied in this approach match with the conception given by van Dijk (1993) stating that CDA "shared perspective on doing linguistics, semiotic or discourse analysis" (p. 131). These points of view are intertwined with the diverse basis of the text within the discourse, the field to work with, and what it is attempted to explore under the scope.

In sum, CDA entails a variety of characteristics that permits its user to raise awareness of the context of the subject to be studied. The relationship between power and society, historical point of view of political moments, the uneven and unclear messages broadcasted through the gender and media, are elements discussed under such terms. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) mention that the context of the language is because is part of the social practice. However, CDA has expanded its branches and diversification in most recent years through the addition of new areas such as: multimodal discourse analysis, political discourse, dispositive analysis, sociocognitive approach, among others. Following this line, there exists a framework proposed by Halliday (1985), which will be further explained in detailed in the following section.

2.2 *Halliday's SFL*

As described in the previous section, there exists new branches concerned with the interpretation of the language, but there is one that distinguishes among others, the Halliday's (1985) SFL. According to Almurashi (2016), this approach has been utilized in diverse fields, such as: literature, linguistics, and applied linguistics. The use of SFL has taken a relevant part in global contexts and because of its principles, Wang (2010) mentions that is part of the core of CDA. The peculiarities of CDA and SFL lies on the analysis of the next aspects: (1) context, (2) semantics, (3) lexico-grammar, and (4) phonology.

Matthiessen and Halliday (as cited in Almurashi, 2016) described the first feature as "one of the central concerns, because it is integral to the overall process of making meaning. In fact, when language occurs in a context, it will relate to or is linked to a number of context" (p. 72). This element gives sense to the language because of their different subsystems folded in each. For example inside them, there are the context of culture and situation, and within it there are strands such as: the field, tenor, and mode. Based on Haratyan (2011), and Matthiessen and Halliday´s

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(1997) words, the previous characteristics are used to create text and, thus, meaning to the language.

The union of these elements fits with the purpose of the paper, which is to scrutinize a spot broadcasted by a federal institution, the INAI. The kind of language will be processed under the four aspects shown above. By doing so, it is possible to analyze how the language was constructed and distributed through the spot. The importance of (co)constructing the term 'language' through these aspects lies on how it has evolved on its own meaning.

In sum, SFL is approached as a vital source in the analysis and interpretation in diverse fields of study. However, there are frameworks or approached that have an emphasis on different elements, as in the case of visuals or semiotics. The next section addresses and describes the Machin's (2010) framework that was a salient source in the analysis.

2.3 *Machin's framework*

Under all the different emerging branches from a CDA paradigm, the analysis of pictures is relevant to obtain more in-depth information regarding a distinctive subject. It may seem that every post or advertisement can be scrutinized, but the results can vary depending on the framework to be employed. Correspondingly this claim, Machin (2010) says that "we look for the kind of semiotics resource and patterns available for communication in the sounds, images and worlds popular music" (p. 3). By doing so, the field of semiotics and visuals can be approached under characteristics that can shed light on more particular details such as the colors and its communicative functions and dimensions within it. Regarding the matter of colors, Machin (2010) says when talking about colors, people evoke emotions and associated them to different moments of their life. These feelings can have the same communicative functions as language (Halliday, 1978). Kandinsky (1977) also declares that "color has two kinds of value. These are the direct value which is the effect it has on the viewer and the associative value" (p. 61). These conditions permit an analysis of six features that will be used in this paper, they are: (1) hue, (2) brightness, (3) saturation, (4) purity, (5) modulation, and (6) luminosity.

The above elements are essential to provide a better understanding of the video portrayed in the INAI's spot because as it has been said before, this paper will scrutinize the possible divergent messages coming from a federal institution. Thus, working with the Machin's (2010) framework is useful due to the images from the video shows several colors and little attention is given to the background cues and icons instead focusing on straight pictures with a political content. The discussion of the apparently hidden messages will be centered in the next section.

3. Discussion of findings

This part of the paper will discuss the finding concerned with the INAI video and will be presented in two sections. The first relates to the analysis of the discourse used in the video and how it pretends to bridge a problematic that is lived in the country through the use of verbs cautiously 'selected'. The second part is an analysis of the images presented in the video and how they impact on the audience's reception and perception of the message.

3.1 *Analysis of the discourse of the INAI spot*

This section is concerned with the analysis of the message of the video from the INAI. In order to scrutinize the text, SFL proposed by Halliday (1978) was employed. Such work was mainly focused on two frames: (1) context, and (2) semantics. The text to analyze comes from the

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INAI and belongs to the Mexican federal sector. The message aimed to reach to the whole country through the radio and as an advertisement in the media (TV and internet). Because of the lack of information of the spot, the INAI will be considered as the subject who wrote and directed the message. To understand the frame carried out, Halliday and Hasan (1989) define that:

> (1) The field of discourse refers to what is happening, to the nature of the social action that is taking place.

> (2) The tenor of discourse refers to who is taking part, to the nature of participants, their statuses and roles.

> (3) The mode of discourse refers to what part the language is playing. (p. 12)

Having presented these three terms, the following Table depicts the analysis of the INAI spot from a situational context approached.

Table 1. Field, tenor, and mode frames

Field	Maintenance of institutional system of beliefs, political ideologies (4T), and two social classes group (Mexican people and Mexican federal institutions).
Tenor	Authority (for example, the INAI is the institution holding authority, and specialist) to the audience. Audience is perceived as unseen and unknown (like readership), but there exists a relationship institutionalized through the problems (INAI to Mexican people).
Mode	Through visuals, the message is written and told aloud. Public act (radio, TV, and Internet). The text is persuasive with rational and ideal arguments.

Based on Table 1, the field is thus the maintenance of an institutionalized systems of belief applied to the Mexico current situation. The political field attempts to make contact with the people through the concept that there exists the INAI, which is a federal institution that enhance the clarification and resolution of doubts in the country. At the same time, this assumption seems to divide context in two parts. The first one is concerned with the people who is questioning what is happening. The second portrays the government as a 'savior' that establishes that under this sexennial term most questions are solved. This ideology is attached to the political speech from the 4T in regard to *"No (vamos a) ocultar nada, no (vamos a) ser tapadera de nadie"*.

The tenor is that of an authority to an audience. The INAI introduces itself in the message as an authority in different senses. For example, it holds authority above other federal institutions (i.e. hospitals, public security, and public works), and is an authority on politics. As an authority, the INAI gives for granted and assumes that several people in the country cope with problems and doubts regarding the different aspects of Mexico. It is in this scenario where the INAI tries to establish a relationship with the people. Although it does not know the diversity of public comprised in the audience, and cannot foresee who would listen or watch the message, there is still a relation imposed by Mexican culture. Over the years, political parties are supposed to be the responsible to look after the welfare of the country. Therefore, it is presumed that the government has the obligation to support and help all the Mexican people.

Finally, the mode is that of a text that was written and can be seen in the video and it is read aloud by a narrator. The message is broadcasted as a public act on the mass media in a mean of conversation. When talking, the people react and show their doubts about what the government is doing and the INAI appears as a mediator that foster them to keep asking and reaffirming the people's rights to ask. This is important because this institution tries to send its message with a rational and ideal discourse.

In order to provide a solid support to these claims, the use of semantics will be used. Even when the video has a short length, its main discourse is focused on two settings which are: the existential and ideational. The former is mentioned in the *field* frame above, and portrays its

connection with the fact of having an institution in charge of the Mexican population's doubts. This is supported by the following verbs and phrases employed in the discourse: *para eso están, tiene, deben*. These verbs denote believes related to the ideal function of the government and the rational thinking concerned with questioning. Moreover, the verbs also establish a relationship between the problems that exist in the Mexican context and the way they seem to be unsolved.

The ideational term is mentioned in the *tenor* frame. The principal relation is presenting the INAI as an authority. The power given to this institution comes from the government and attempts to be a 'savior' for those who are scared or do not feel secure enough to ask about what is currently happen in Mexico. This is demonstrated through the use of verbs and phrases such as: *preguntar, preguntales, pregunta a los …, el INAI defiende tu derecho, el que pregunta, no se que equivoca*. Thus, the role of the INAI suggest to encourage people (who may be considered as A) to ask the federal authorities (who may be considered as B) or in other words, sends A to B. However, what comes after will be discussed in the conclusions.

3.2 *Visual semiotic analysis of the videos*

Once the analysis of the message was approached, the visual part will be scrutinized using the Machin's (2010) framework that emphasizes six characteristics previously mentioned. In addition, images will be included to have a better understanding of the process, which will be carried out through the levels aforementioned.

3.2.1 *Hue*

Machin (2010) claims that hue "has meaning potential due to the association and symbolic associations of the color itself" (p. 67). He also mentions the use of this term to connect ideologies and concepts based on the context: for example, Itten (1974) and Gage (1993) say that there are colors that are associated to abstract concepts such as: purity, science, truth, angry. Under these concepts, it can be appreciated that few colors are used in the video. For example: pink and orange, which are employed to represent women in the spot, as shown in Image 1 and 2.

Image 1 & 2. Use of colors for women (Source: INAI)

What is more remarkable is the contrast presented when questions are made and answer. In this case when the video presents interrogative statements, the background color changes to black and white, which represents doubts and fears regarding situations lived in the country (See Image 3).

Image 3. Representation of dark background when using interrogative statements (Source: INAI)

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In order to solve the questions, the background changes on the opposite colors scale. The background turns from black to white, as an attempt to represent clarity and trustworthiness as it is referred in Image 4.

Image 4. Representation of light background when answering questions (Source: INAI)

The letters that were in clear colors change to blue trying to provide wisely solutions to what has been stated before.

3.2.2 Brightness

When analyzing pictures or videos, the role of brightness plays a relevant role. Machin (2010) suggests the potential of this frame "rests on the fundamental experiences we have with light and dark" (p. 62). It is not new the symbolic meaning that lies on these two aspects, but for long years it has been proved darkness is commonly associated with negative thoughts while light with positive ones (Whitehead & Wright, 2004; Low & Lawrence-Zuñiga, 2003). The INAI video displays two main tones, light and dark. According to the familiar association, the video depicts the questions in a way that can be perceived as negative. Evidence of this can be demonstrated in the black background that is used when interrogative statements are show as in the example of Image 3 and in the Image 5.

Image 5. Example of interrogative statement with a dark background (Source: INAI)

The questions concerned with problems in Mexico such as: the insecurity women lives with, the absence of medicine that hospitals face, and how the taxes are invested in public works. The interrogatives portrayed through the black background make an emphasis on problems, violence, negative perceptions, and disease in Mexico. However, the background changes into bright and white when the INAI attempts to answer those questions. Having a bright background reflects positive thoughts, a cure or simply a resolution for these aspects as in Image 4 and 6.

Image 6. Use of bright background when giving solutions (Source: INAI)

In this case, the use of brightness aims to settle the interrogatives as part of a problematic and the INAI as the answers for them. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) refers the use of dark tonalities as ignorance or lies. While light tones refers to the use of reason and truth. Thus, the use of brightness in the video tries to frame the two sides of a coin. On the one side, ignorance, problems, and doubts are shown with a dark background. On the other hand, the solution of those prerogatives are solves with the use of a light background that evokes clarity.

3.2.3 *Saturation*

While hue and brightness have denoted a relationship between colors and perceptions, saturation is used to represent the emotional temperatures. Machin (2010) says that "a highly saturated color can mean a maximum intensify of feeling, whereas a pale color can mean toned down, neutralized or subdued" (p. 63). Thus, the more saturated the pictures are, the more adventurous or exuberant can be perceived while the lower degree of saturation is, the tendered and milder, the energy can mean. The video of the INAI shows a combination of high and low levels of saturation. On the one hand, the low tones in the video transpires the hectic situation lived in the country or at least the concerns that Mexican people have, as shown in Images 7 and 8.

Images 7 & 8. Examples of low tones regarding saturation (Source: INAI)

Following the same lines, the use of pale colors can be related to negative emotions or even a subdued perception such situations. On the other hand, high saturated palettes of colors reflect the intensity or necessity for solving the already mentioned problems. These process is done through the change of saturation depicted on the Images 4 and 6 previously. The kind of contrast regarding saturation is managed in order to pre-establish the regular situation lived in the country under a negative frame and the inclusion of the INAI as a solution or even as the institution that solves the questions the country may have.

3.2.4 *Purity*

Understanding images may be a complex task because of the ambiguity and multiple perceptions of the same subject of analysis. In order to examine visuals through this frame, Machin (2010) suggests that "purity can mean simplicity and certainty, whereas hybridity can mean ambiguity and uncertainty, contamination and complexity" (p. 64). Examples of purity can be seen in arts and it reflects an ideology. In the case of the INAI, it is opted to show pictures by a short time, which are also easy to identify. Moreover, the video attempts to be simple and certain as a reinforcement to the aspects in regard to modulation. Under a more detailed analysis, it can be said that the use of such simplified pictures has the purpose of avoiding the audience spend so much time on what is depicted on the background. The INAI does not want people focus on complex pictures or background. Therefore, the representation of women in the spot (Image 1 & 2), a person who seems to work in the countryside (Image 7), a person showing preoccupation about medicine are represented through simple pictures (Image 8). In the video, the INAI tries to illustrate the problems with simple images that do not require complex or critical thinking.

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3.2.5 *Modulation*

In order to analyze images, modulation takes a crucial part in the process. Following the use of this frame, according to Machin (2010) "this technique is typical of advertising and is used to connote cleanliness, simplicity, and certainty" (p. 66). Additionally, Machin and van Leeuwen (2007) mentioned that bringing morality and idealization of the pictures can be done through modulation. This frame function is described as "the scale that runs from a fully modulated color-for example, a blue that is richly textured with different tints and shades, as in paintings-to a flat color, as in comic strips or paintings" (p. 65). Regarding the INAI video, it can be claimed that it is attempt to be as clear, certain, and concise as possible. The use of flat colors recalls to simplicity and avoids the use of complex textures that may distract the audience form what the video tries to present. The modulation presented in the short clip also works as a comparison between what may be considered as 'good' and 'bad'. In this case they are represented with the high and low modulation in the pictures.

3.2.6 *Luminosity*

As the last part of the analysis, luminosity portrays a more unreal and fantastic perceptions of the images to explore. "Luminosity has a long history of being associated with the unworldly glow of magic and supernatural beings or objects" (Machin, 2010: 67). The use of this frame represents a more opened vision towards the analysis by prioritizing the luminous aspects of the video. The video plays with this aspect by using contrastive tones in during the questions and the answers, such as the cases of the aforementioned pictures. For example, when the questions are presented in the video, the use of luminosity decreases and gets low. The use of the pale palettes evokes negativity as mentioned in previously frames. On the opposite, at the time the questions are answered, the degree of luminosity increases and is used to reflect the positive aspects that the INAI wants to achieve. The role of luminosity presented in the video, follows the same patterns regarding 'good' against 'bad'. The latter is presented by the problems or doubts emerging from the current situation in the country while the former is reflected as possible solutions given by the INAI.

4. Conclusion

Throughout this paper, I have offered an analysis of the discourse of the INAI message broadcasted in diverse media. Machin's (2010) visual framework and Halliday's SFL (1978) were applied to scrutinize the main elements within the text and the images. The analysis of the first aspect indicates that the INAI suggest and promotes people's right to ask questions.in addition, this institution defends people and assumes that all their questions and answers will be answered or solved. However, there is no evidence enough that demonstrate that this happen. Supposedly, the INAI assumes that the questions "should" be replied. In real context, people needs to realize an extensive and hard paperwork only to find the answers. Regarding the visual frame, the images attempt to connect with the audience by including simple and familiar content on them. I consider the INAI when tries to catch the attention of the audience with the semiotics, it could be associated with the concepts the new government nowadays is implementing. In sum, the INAI presents an idealized message in its spot that questioning is something good and they will defend this practice. This message set the notion that they are against the frauds and corruption that Mexico has lived before. However, this idealistic message do not consider scenarios where the answers are pendent or simply unsolved and this is a reality that Mexico constantly faces. Therefore, even when this institution contributes to defending and encouraging people to ask, it should be provide clear guidance or demonstrate the results rather than work as an intermediate between the people and the rest of federal institutions.

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Acknowledgements

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