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**DON'T MESS WITH A WITCH:  
POWER RELATIONS, GENDER AND SUBCULTURAL ISSUES ON  
WITCHES' REPRESENTATION IN THE MEDIA.**

Dissertação submetida ao Programa de Pós-graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina para a obtenção do Grau de Mestre em Inglês.

Orientadora: Prof.<sup>a</sup>, Dr.<sup>a</sup> Viviane Heberle

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*This is dedicated to the witches out there.*

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Thank you all.

## ABSTRACT

### DON'T MESS WITH A WITCH: POWER RELATIONS, GENDER AND SUBCULTURAL ISSUES ON WITCHES' REPRESENTATION IN THE MEDIA.

by

Felipe Antônio de Souza

Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

2016

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Considering the increasing media interest and the creation of trends in relation to the theme of witches, the present study aims at analyzing representations of witches in recent media. For that, the research analyses an episode from the hit TV series *American Horror Story: Coven* (2013), the video game *Bayonetta* (2009) and fashion advertisements from the alternative clothing brand *Kill Star*. Grounded on a critical discourse analysis perspective, the study investigates the context of situation, forms of nomination of social actors (van Leeuwen, 2008), power relations in discourse with the aim of transitivity system (Halliday, 1985), and power relations in visuals, with the support of the grammar of visual design (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006) as well as gender and issues of subcultures. Results suggest that the new image of the witch sets a break from ancient representations and no longer carries social stigmatization; on the contrary, it implies power and free will, since the power of witches does not rely only on magical skills. However, the use of discursive frameworks also demonstrate that these representations, despite being constructed as powerful and independent, still perpetuate some gendered notions in discourse.

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## **RESUMO**

### **NÃO MEXA COM A BRUXA: RELAÇÕES DE PODER, GÊNERO E QUESTÕES SUBCULTURAIS NAS REPRESENTAÇÕES DE BRUXAS NA MÍDIA.**

por

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Considerando o crescente interesse da mídia e a criação de várias tendências com relação ao tema de bruxas, o presente estudo visa analisar representações de bruxas na mídia recentemente. Para isso, a pesquisa analisa um episódio da nomeada série de TV *American Horror Story: Coven* (2013), o jogo *Bayonetta* (2009) e anúncios de moda da marca de roupas alternativa *Kill Star*. Fundamentado na perspectiva da análise crítica do discurso, o estudo investiga o contexto da situação, formas de nomeações de atores sociais (van Leeuwen, 2008), relações de poder no discurso com o uso do sistema de transitividade de Halliday (1985), relações de poder nas imagens, com o suporte da gramática visual bem como questões de gênero e subculturas. Os resultados sugerem que a nova imagem da bruxa representa uma quebra comparando com representações antigas e não mais carrega estigmatização social; ao contrário, implica poder e vontade própria, uma vez que os poderes das bruxas não se limitam mais apenas à habilidades mágicas. No entanto, o uso de estruturas discursivas também demonstram que apesar de tais representações serem construídas como poderosas e independentes, ainda perpetuam noções engendradas no discurso.

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## LIST OF FIGURES

### CHAPTER II

Figure 2.1. Framework of a communicative event (CDA)	12
Figure 2.2. Process types in the Transitivity System	14
Figure 2.3. Social Actor Network	16
Figure 2.4. Representational Meaning Diagram	17
Figure 2.5. Interactional Meaning Diagram	18
Figure 2.6. Compositional Meaning Diagram	19
Figure 2.7. Malleus Maleficarum, Venetian edition (1576)	23
Figure 2.8. Estado fadórico das bruxas (Franklin Cascaes)	26

### CHAPTER III

Figure 3.1. Screenshot 1	47
Figure 3.2. Screenshot 2	48
Figure 3.3. Screenshot 3	49
Figure 3.4. Screenshot 4	50
Figure 3.5. Screenshot 5	50
Figure 3.6. Screenshot 6	51
Figure 3.7. Screenshot 7	52
Figure 3.8. Screenshot 8	53
Figure 3.9. Screenshot 9	53
Figure 3.10. AHS – Coven Minotaur	56
Figure 3.11. Mean Girls (2003)	58
Figure 3.12. Mean Girls (2003) Wear Pink	59
Figure 3.13. AHS - Coven: Bitchcraft	59
Figure 3.15. Bitchcraft	60
Figure 3.16. Fashion of AHS – Coven website	61
Figure 3.17. Bayonetta	64
Figure 3.18. Screenshot 1	76
Figure 3.19. Screenshot 2	77
Figure 3.20. Screenshot 3	77
Figure 3.21. Screenshot 4	78
Figure 3.22. Worldwide Bayonetta cover (2009)	79
Figure 3.23. Japanese Bayonetta cover (2009)	80
Figure 3.24. Screenshot 5	81
Figure 3.25. Screenshot 6	82



Figure 3.26. Screenshot 7	83
Figure 3.27. Bayonetta's Cosplay	85
Figure 3.28. Bayonetta Fanart 1	86
Figure 3.29. Bayonetta Fanart 2	87
Figure 3.30. Kill Star Logo	88
Figure 3.31. Photograph 1	89
Figure 3.32. Photograph 2	90
Figure 3.33. Photograph 3	91
Figure 3.34. Photograph 4	91
Figure 3.35. Kill Star F-word	92
Figure 3.36. Kill Star Imperatives	94
Figure 3.37. Kill Star Unisex Clothing Collage	95
Figure 3.38. Kill Star Male Models Collage	96
Figure 3.39. Kill Star Squad Goals Photoshoot	97
Figure 3.40. Goth Alice T-Shirt, "...weirdos" Collage	98
Figure 3.41. Katy Perry, Lorde and Madonna on Grammy	99

## LIST OF TABLES

### CHAPTER III

Table 3.1. Analytical Frameworks	30
Table 3.2. AHS: Coven - Social Actors	34
Table 3.3. Dialogue 1: Fiona and the doctor	39
Table 3.4. Transitivity Processes in Dialogue 1	40
Table 3.5. Dialogue 2: Fiona and Cordelia	41
Table 3.6. Transitivity Processes in Dialogue 2	43
Table 3.7. Dialogue 3: Zoe and Kyle	44
Table 3.8. Transitivity Processes in Dialogue 3	46
Table 3.9. Bayonetta - Social Actors	65
Table 3.10. Dialogue 1: Bayonetta and Rodin	70
Table 3.11. Transitivity Processes in Dialogue 1	71
Table 3.12. Dialogue 2: Bayonetta and Jeanne	71
Table 3.13. Transitivity Processes in Dialogue 2	72
Table 3.14. Dialogue 3: Bayonetta and Luka	73
Table 3.15. Transitivity Processes in Dialogue 3	75
Table 3.16. Kill Star F-word Table	92
Table 3.17. Kill Star Imperatives Table	94

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>01</b>
1.1. Initial Remarks	01
1.2. Context of Investigation	04
1.3. Significance of the Research	05
1.4. Objectives and Research Questions	06
1.5. Method	06
1.5.1. Data Selection and Criteria	07
1.5.2. Procedures for the Analysis	08
1.6. Organization of the Thesis	09
<b>CHAPTER II – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis	10
2.2. Systemic Functional Linguistics	13
2.2.1. Context of Situation	13
2.2.2. Transitivity System	14
2.3. Representation of Social Actors	15
2.4. Grammar of Visual Design	17
2.5. Media and Gender Studies	19
2.6. Witchcraft Representation	22
2.7. Subcultures	27
<b>CHAPTER III – ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>30</b>
3.1. TV Series: American Horror Story - Coven	32
3.1.1. Context of Situation	32
3.1.2. Social Actors	34
3.1.3. Power Relations in Discourse	38
3.1.4. Power Relations in Visuals	47
3.1.5. Sociocultural Practices and Gender	54
3.1.6. Subcultural Issues	57
3.2. Video Game: Bayonetta	62
3.2.1. Context of Situation	62
3.2.2. Social Actors	65
3.1.3. Power Relations in Discourse	69

3.1.4. Power Relations in Visuals	76
3.2.5. Sociocultural Practices and Gender	83
3.1.6. Subcultural Issues	84
3.3 Fashion Advertisement: Kill Star Clothing	88
3.3.1. Context of Situation	88
3.3.2. Power Relations in Visuals	89
3.3.3. Power Relations in Discourse	92
3.3.4. Sociocultural Practices and Gender	95
3.3.5. Subcultural Issues	96
3.4. General Discussion	100
<b>CHAPTER IV – CONCLUSION</b>	<b>102</b>
4.1. Final Remarks	102
4.2. Research Questions Revisited	102
4.3. Limitations and Suggestions	104
4.4. Pedagogical Implications	104
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>105</b>

## CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INITIAL REMARKS

Taking in consideration Halliday's (1985) notion of language as a system of meanings that constitutes human culture, the concept of social-semiotics may be used to describe language within a social structure. In broad terms, "language continues to be more salient and more important in a range of social processes" (Fairclough et al., 2011, p. 359). The advent of new forms of producing and interpreting meaning in communication is making social-semiotics extend its boundaries to digital media. Kress and Hodge (1988) summarize their view of Halliday's *Language as Social Semiotic* (1978):

We see communication essentially as a process, not as a disembodied set of meanings or texts. Meaning is produced and reproduced under specific social conditions, through specific material forms and agencies. It exists in relation to concrete subjects and objects, and is inexplicable except in terms of this set of relationships. Society is typically constituted by structures and relations of power, exercised or resisted; it is characterized by conflict as well as cohesion, so that the structures of meaning at all levels, from dominant ideological forms to local acts of meaning will show traces of contradiction, ambiguity, polysemy in various proportions, by various means. So for us, texts and contexts, agents and objects of meaning, social structures and forces and their complex interrelationships together constitute the minimal and irreducible object of semiotic analysis (1988. p.: viii).

Accordingly, increasing attention is being paid to studies in Multimodality, in which communication takes place with the help of a range of semiotic modes besides verbal language. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996; 2006) have developed a system of analysis for visual images based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), entitled the Grammar of Visual Design (GVD). This new mode of

semiotic analysis uses several resources to understand meaning in visual texts. Also, considering Fairclough's (1989) concept of language as a social practice, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can support and improve the analysis of verbal and visual modes of communication, since it provides tools to highlight issues of meaning and ideological issues in texts, both visually and verbally.

Studies on the representation of women in mass media (TV, newspapers magazines, advertisements and others) have been carried with the use of the tools of SFL, CDA and GVD (Lorenset, 2010; Bernardon, 2005, Böhlke, 2008; Courtney & Whipple, 2006). However, studies on the representation of witches and witchcraft lie within religion and occultism areas, and are often explored in anthropology (Berger, 2005; Helen, & Douglas, 2007). Therefore, to my knowledge, there is not much literature about these representations through the theoretical perspective of social semiotics, particularly in multimodal media texts, such as in movies, advertisements and video games. Due to the increasing interest of topics related to witches in movies, fashion, music and even video games, this research aims at investigating the representation of witches in the media (specifically on TV, fashion and video games).

According to the online Oxford Dictionary, the most popular definitions for witch are: (1) *"A woman thought to have evil magic powers, popularly depicted as wearing a black cloak and pointed hat, and flying on a broomstick."*; (2) *"A follower or practitioner of modern witchcraft; a Wiccan priest or priestess."*; (3) *"A girl or woman who is bewitchingly attractive."* While for witchcraft is: *"The practice of magic, especially black magic; the use of spells and the invocation of spirits."* In spite of the differences among the definitions, almost all of them define the witch figure as a woman. Hanciau's (2004) study distinguishes concepts between sorcerers and witches. According to the author, witches were considered to have a pact and/or connection with the devil, while sorcerers were magic practitioners who were still liable to Christianity, thus still tolerated in society. Zordan (2005) states that the witch image is ambiguous and was often adapted to fit into different ideologies. This image can vary from a young attractive lady to a hideous old woman, and what really lies behind the witch representation through the centuries is the way many people see a woman with powers (whether supernatural or not).

By means of a brief contextualization of witchcraft culture through the centuries, it is possible to create a map of very different

representations in distinct contexts throughout time. Some studies even place these changes within a specific location in which witchcraft is part of the cultural folklore, such as in Eastern Gelderland, Netherlands in Frijhoff's (1991) study. In the meantime, for decades witchcraft has also been linked to the empowerment of women and, nowadays, to feminism (Salomonsen, 2002). Aguiar (2001) investigates the connotations between the representation of women in literature and History books, exploring the representation of the bitch/witch. According to the author, the bitch/witch is the woman who rebels against traditional patriarchal female roles where she feels exiled.

Nowadays, plenty of personal women's blogs on the Internet have been arguing that the 'bitch' is the new 'witch', when referring to women's rights and the slang swear-word for women. On the other hand, in conservative countries, it is still possible to observe statements that can enforce this connection, such as the following quote by the influent American politician Pat Robertson (1992) in a lecture on Equal Rights Initiative in Iowa, where he claimed a conservative opinion against the movement:

Feminism is a socialist, anti-family, political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, it is also very common to see online campaigns in personal blogs in which the word 'bitch' is associated with the empowerment of women and freedom of expression, such as '*Bitch*' as an acronym for "Being in total control of herself", as an attempt to weaken the pejorative term. This research assumes the extreme importance of the Internet as means of propagation of these media texts. All the media types investigated here have their advertising and dissemination shared on the internet.

Since memorable witch characters as the *wicked witch* from *Wizard of Oz* (1939), the representation of witches has been changing through time. In fashion, there is a current and new trend of occultism symbols in clothing that have become very popular among teenagers. Clothing brands such as *Kill Star*, and TV shows like *American Horror Story* explore the symbolisms of witchcraft, creating trends all over the

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved on [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Pat\\_Robertson](https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Pat_Robertson)

Internet that can be seen in social networks such as *Tumblr* and *Instagram*. Part of these trends is the term “*bitchcraft*”, referring to the new century adolescent witch. On the other hand, in video games witches have been present for a long time. They have a tendency to be represented as scary and evil in childish games and more sexualized in teenager oriented video games, sometimes even as the protagonist, such as in the game *Bayonetta*.

Witches are also present in language expressions such as “*the witching hour*”<sup>2</sup> and “*witch-hunt*”<sup>3</sup>. According to the urban dictionary some definitions for the expression “*the witching hour*” include: a time deep into evening, a period of the night where people should stay indoors and a calm period before a storm; while “*witch-hunt*” as a language expression may be defined as a campaign against an individual guided by doubtful reasons and/or the act of chasing and searching women sexually.

Another point to consider is the marginalization (social exclusion) that witches have suffered throughout History. Therefore, it is interesting to reflect on how the image of the witch, that used to carry pejorative connotations, has been brought to mainstream cultural entertainment and fashion industries, carrying new and different representations. It is also important to mention that the terms ‘witch’ and ‘witchcraft’ do not necessarily imply a women, or a female ritual practitioner. Although most of the craft literature refers to men as sorcerers or warlocks, the denomination ‘witch’ can be used to refer to men as well.

## 1.2 CONTEXT OF INVESTIGATION

I have always been interested in the study of occult sciences and even witchcraft. After graduating in English and researching in the area of discourse analysis, I realize how much influence and impact the media has upon society and how the representation of people (participants of social practices and social events) is a political and ideological tool for the capitalist system. With that in mind, in my Master program I have decided to join my childhood and teenage years’ interests with some structural and factual knowledge that the graduate program could provide. Therefore, as a member of the research group

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<sup>2</sup> <http://pt.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=witching+hour>

<sup>3</sup> <http://pt.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=witch+hunt>



NUPdiscurso (*Núcleo de Pesquisa Texto, Discurso e Práticas Sociais*), I saw the possibility of investigating the different semiotic resources used in mainstream representations of witches through a multimodal analysis of visual and verbal texts in the media.

As mentioned earlier, to the best of my knowledge, no research has been conducted using these tools to analyze multimodal media texts in which witches are represented. Within the area of discourse analysis, I will guide my analysis through a critical perspective to highlight and uncover ideologies and to investigate the connections between the text, the discourse practice and the social practices.

According to Fairclough, CDA offers a framework for the analysis of “communicative events”, focusing on three dimensions: the text, the discursive practice and the social-cultural practice (Fairclough, 2010). The text is the actual production, which can be in written, oral or in any multimodal form. The discursive practice is related to processes of text production and consumption, the relationship between who says something and who is the target audience, and the sociocultural practice is the social and cultural goings-on which the communicative event is part of. In relation to multimodal studies within critical discourse analysis, van Leeuwen (2008) shows concern about the importance of semiotic tools to analyze both visual and verbal texts:

The point is important for critical discourse analysis for, with the increasing use of visual representation in a wide range of contexts, it becomes more and more pressing to be able to ask the same critical questions with regard to both verbal and visual representations, indeed, with regard to representations in all of the "media" that form parts of contemporary "multimedia" texts (p. 25).

### **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

The dissemination and speed of information on the internet among people all around the world have led researchers to pay attention to possible fads and trends, especially in social networks. Also, as mentioned before, not many studies explore the representation of witches in the media, therefore, it is important to investigate them into social semiotics in order to have a better understanding of media impact, considering the broad range of ages that the media can reach.

Also as a researcher of the NUPDiscurso, which is concerned with the analysis of sociocultural practices in contemporary society, I believe it is also important to raise awareness in relation to the choices of media companies (movies, video games, fashion industry) in terms of the way representations are portrayed in the media and sold to the market.

## **1.4 OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present study aims at analyzing witches' representation in different media, more specifically a TV series, a video game and fashion advertisements. The objectives of this study are:

- To contextualize the data within Halliday's context of situation;
- To identify and classify the social actors in each representation;
- To carry out a linguistic analysis of the verbal and visual texts of those representations highlighting the power relations among the participants;
- To discuss issues of gender and sociocultural practices involved in each representation;
- To explore subcultural issues derived from each media part of the object of the study.

The following research questions will guide the study:

- (1) How are the participants identified in relation to social actors?
- (2) How are power relations among participants built through visual and verbal modes?
- (3) What sociocultural practices and gender issues do these representations explore?
- (4) What items of subcultures are related and created from each media analyzed?
- (5) How is the image of the witch represented in the media lately?

## **1.5 METHOD**

This section explores the method, as well as practical strategies to gather the data and how I will conduct the analysis.

### **1.5.1 DATA SELECTION AND CRITERIA**

In this research three media are explored. They are categorized as: TV series, Video Games and Fashion Advertisements. The data is diversified and shows different types of representation in recent times (2009 to 2015).

#### **TV Series: American Horror Story: Coven**

I will analyze the first episode from the third season of the TV series. The selection will take the script of the episode to gather the actors nominations, the transcription of dialogues and screenshots for visual analysis from the episode. Released in 2013 the third season explores the theme of witches and carries several different representations. The main reasons for this selection are: 1) the TV series presents witches from different ages in different social contexts and also, 2) the chosen episode became famous on the internet and created trends in fashion and language use.

#### **Video Game: Bayonetta**

I will analyze the first game of two, up to this moment, released in 2009. I will use the verbal text from the in-game cinematic parts, that is, the non-interactive filmic scenes, where nominations among the participants can be observed, as well as screenshots from the game and the premiere trailer and the two versions of the official covers for visual analysis. The main reason for the selection is due to the fact that the game is one of the most successful games portraying a female witch character as protagonist. Thus, the analysis could explore several issues within her representation.

#### **Fashion Advertisements: Kill Star Clothing**

For the visual analysis, I will analyze photographs from advertisements' photoshoots from 2010 to 2015, where the theme of witches and witchcraft are more explicit. For the verbal analysis, I will take the texts in the clothes. I have selected this particular clothing brand because *Kill Star Clothing* has a vast public on social networks. Thus, the analysis could explore trends and issues of fashion and aesthetics of witches' representation.

Concerning the specific data, in order to explore the social actors, I investigate the use of nominations of witches through the TV series episode and the video game narrative. In relation to the verbal analysis, in both TV series and video game sections, I take two dialogues from female witches with a men and one with another female witch that I consider the most relevant for this study, while in the Fashion ads section, I explore the verbal text within the clothing prints. In relation to the visual analysis, for the TV series, I take screenshots from the episode in scenes where the angles (low, high) are explicit in order to explore power relations, as well as in the game analysis, with the addition of screenshots that focus on the protagonist's physical attributes. For the Fashion ads analysis, the images are advertisements from different clothing collections and the criteria concerns the different types of representation of the participants in them. Lastly, concerning gender and subcultural issues, I explore sociocultural practices extracted and derived from each medium type.

### 1.5.2 PROCEDURES FOR THE ANALYSIS

The data involving these representations will be analyzed under the light of Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Social Actors framework, Grammar of Visual Design with support from gender studies and theories related to subcultures. The categories used from the frameworks above are:

- (1) Halliday's context of situation and the transitivity system.
- (2) Social Actors categories: *Functionalization*; *Identification* (classification, relational identification and physical identification) and *appraisement*.
- (3) Representational, interactional and compositional meanings from the grammar of visual design.

The discussion will also be based on critical discourse analysis, gender and subcultures studies in order to carry a discussion involving such themes.

## **1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

The study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents the initial remarks, context of investigation, significance of study and the method, with the data selection and criteria. It locates the thesis within the academic field and also exposes the object of study and the motivation for the research. The second chapter carries a description of the theoretical frameworks that will be used in the research. They are: Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Grammar, The Representation of Social Actors, the Grammar of Visual Design, Media and Gender Studies, Witchcraft Representation and Subcultural Issues. The third chapter analyses each media according to the framework selected and presents a discussion of the main findings. The fourth chapter concludes the study with the subsection of limitations and suggestions for further research and pedagogical implications.

## CHAPTER II – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

*"Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect."*

Mark Twain

This chapter is intended to contextualize the study and explain the analytical frameworks that I will use throughout the research. In a first moment I show the theoretical and methodological frameworks for the linguistic and multimodal analyses of the study, namely Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Representation of Social Actors and the Grammar of Visual Design. Secondly, I present the theoretical frameworks related to the social issues of the context of the study, including: Media Studies and Gender, Witchcraft Representation and Subcultures.

### 2.1 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Critical discourse analysis (hence CDA) is a perspective to look at texts in order to raise awareness and uncover ideologies, establishing connections between the text, discourse practices and social practices. According to van Dijk (1998) Critical Discourse Analysis is a field that concerns the study of visual and verbal texts that may reveal discursive sources of power, inequality and bias. The main objective of CDA is to “make people aware of how language is used to dominate or reinforce social inequalities, such as those between people of different ethnic, economic, social or intellectual groups, and to analyze changes taking place in social organizations” as pointed out by Heberle (2000, p. 117). Fairclough (2010) defines CDA as:

Discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power

and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (p. 93).

Critical discourse analysis can thus raise awareness of how language is used, especially in media texts and how it can influence people (Fairclough, 1989). The 'critical' in CDA corresponds to what is beyond the text, extending its meanings to analyze social issues, such as power relations. Fairclough (1989) claims that power relations and ideologies are connected since there is a dependence on both issues in discourse. Based on Foucault (1981), Fairclough also claims that discourse has a significant role in the construction of power relations and authority since different discourses produce different kinds of truth.

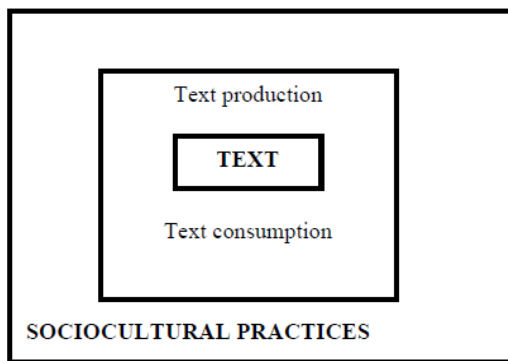
Moreover, CDA addresses social problems, studying the power relations within discourse, since discourse both reflects and constructs society and culture and carries ideological principles in it. Fairclough (2003) defines ideologies as "representations which can be shown to contribute to social relations of power and domination" (p. 9). There is also an increasing concern among discourse scholars on expanding the elements of analysis to both visual and verbal features of texts. Regarding multimodal studies within the field of critical discourse analysis, van Leeuwen (2008) emphasizes the importance of semiotic tools (both visual and verbal) used in most contemporary texts:

The point is important for critical discourse analysis for, with the increasing use of visual representation in a wide range of contexts, it becomes more and more pressing to be able to ask the same critical questions with regard to both verbal and visual representations, indeed, with regard to representations in all of the "media" that form parts of contemporary "multimedia" texts (p. 25).

In that sense, mass media texts are great examples of texts to be analyzed using such frameworks, since they are often multimodal and are responsible for the spread of several ideologies in society. Fairclough (1995, p. 67) claims that media texts usually carry power and domination through discourse, that is, they show arguments to sustain their ideas and convince the readers. Another analytical procedure and social theory of language is Halliday's Systemic

Functional Linguistics (1985), which is often used by CDA analysts as an analytical tool to explore meanings in texts.

Concerning Fairclough's framework of communicative events, it is possible to classify the social theory in three dimensions: the text, the discursive practice and the social-cultural practice. The text refers to the production, that is, the instance of language in use, which can be in written, oral or multimodal form. Analysis of text involves linguistic analysis in terms of vocabulary, grammar, semantics, the sound system, and cohesion-organization above the sentence level (Fairclough, 1995, p. 57).



**Figure 2.1. Framework of a communicative event (CDA)**  
(Fairclough, 1995, p. 59, see also Fairclough, 2010, p. 133)

The discursive practice is related to the text production and text consumption, the relationship between who says something and who is the target audience. Fairclough (1995, p.60) mentions that "discourse practice straddles the division between society and culture on the one hand, and discourse, language and text on the other". The last subdivision is the sociocultural practice, which refers to the social and cultural goings-on which the communicative event is part of. Fairclough (1995) states the three aspects of the sociocultural context of a communicative event: economic (i.e. the economics of the media), political (i.e. power and ideology in the media), and cultural (i.e. social values).

It is common for critical discourse analysts to use several analytical categories from Systemic Functional Linguistics (hence SFL) to carry analysis of texts. It is, thus, a central assumption of CDA and SFL that "speakers make choices regarding vocabulary and grammar,



and that these choices are consciously or unconsciously principled and systematic” (Fowler et al., 1979, p. 188).

## 2.2 SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS

Systemic Functional Linguistics (hence SFL) focuses on investigating language as a social system of meanings constituting human experience (Motta-Roth & Heberle, 1994). In this research, I will focus on Halliday’s theories of context of situation and the transitivity system.

### 2.2.1 Context of Situation

The term *context of culture* is used in the analysis of the use and adaptation of culture of the participants and the shape of language according to the specificities of each particular culture (Butt *et al.*, 2001). In the *context of situation*, Halliday proposes the division into field, tenor and mode. Martin (1992) explains Halliday’s (1985) characterization as follows:

“Field – the social action: ‘what is actually taking place’, refers to what is happening, to the nature of the social action that is taking place; Tenor – the role structure: ‘who is taking part’, refers to who is taking part, to the nature of participants, their statuses and roles, and; Mode – the symbolic organization: ‘what role language is playing’, refers to what part language is playing, what is it that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in the situation” (pp. 499 – 500).

Halliday also proposes the division of three general metafunctions of language: ideational, interpersonal and textual. The author states that this functional organization of language "determines the form taken by grammatical structure". (Halliday, 1970, p. 166.). The ideational metafunction reflects the content of the field, concerned with building and maintaining a theory of experience and how we represent reality through language. The interpersonal metafunction is related to the choice of words and grammatical structures that may highlight the relation among the participants; it is related to tenor and interactivity. The textual metafunction, which relates to mode, tends to explore the

organization of the information manifested in a text by means of both the interpersonal and the ideational metafunctions (Halliday, 1985).

### 2.2.2 Transitivity System

This study will have the support of the transitivity system in order to analyze the verbal text of the data. The use of transitivity system is relevant since it explores the representations and ideational meanings present in texts. Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) argue that the use of language consists on the production of events and such events may represent the experience that the participants are experiencing in interaction through discourse. There are several types of processes in which the significance of the experience may be revealed and explored. They are: material, mental, verbal, relational, existential and behavioral.

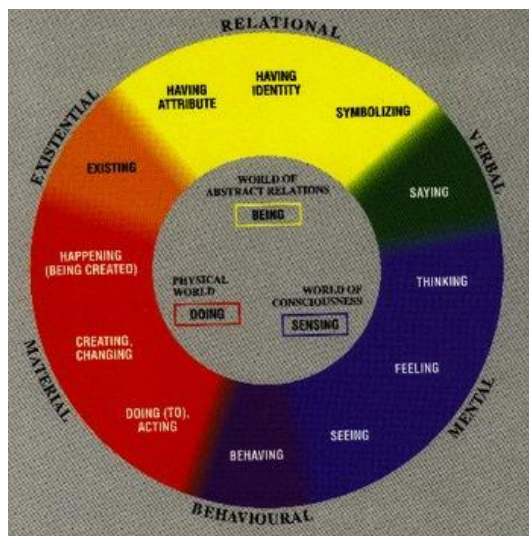


Figure 2.2. Process types in the Transitivity System<sup>4</sup>

**Material** processes explore ‘doings’ and ‘happenings’ in the clause. They usually represent action verbs.

Example: She **walked** home very fast

<sup>4</sup> Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael\\_Halliday](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Halliday)

**Mental** processes are related to internal experience, encoding meanings of perception and cognition.

Example: I **thought** that they were all wrong

**Verbal** processes are verbs related to speaking or saying something

Example: Calm down – **said** the police officer.

**Relational** processes serve to identify, characterize and connect elements in the clause

Example: The bird **is** very calm, she explained.

**Existential** processes represent existence and are construed with the use of 'there is/was'

Example: **There is** no such thing as romance nowadays.

**Behavioral** processes express physiological verbs and behaviors

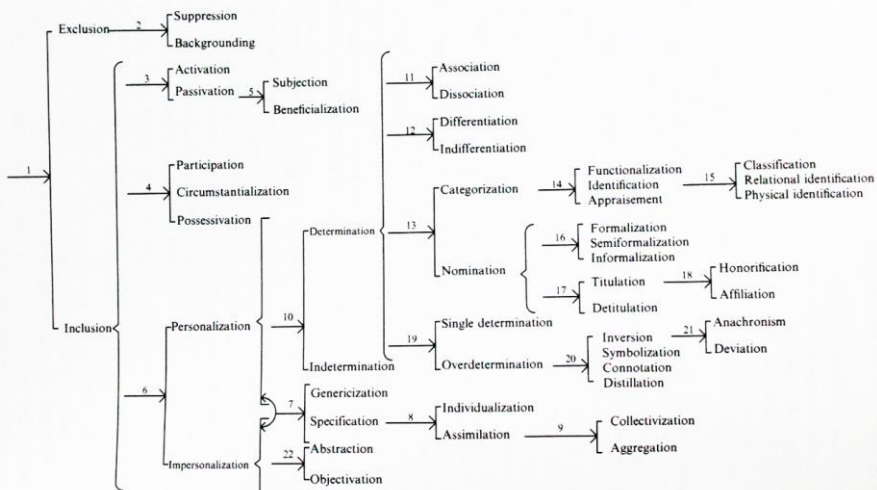
Example: She **sighted** and waited patiently.

The use of transitivity system to analyze text helps to investigate the experience of participants and then, explore ideational metafunctions of the object of study. However, it is also important for the analysis the way the participants are identified in the discourse, which will be explored in the next section.

### 2.3 REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL ACTORS

The representation of social actors is another important tool to analyze meaning in texts. Inspired by Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, van Leeuwen's (2008) theory investigates the participants of a social practice, which can be represented in many different ways. Such representations are categorized into the framework in order to have a structural approach to identify the role of participants in the context of discourse. McConnell-Ginet (2003) argues that the way we call one another, identify and label ourselves by names is of extreme importance since social labeling helps the creation of gendered identities and social relations in social practice.

The starting point of the theory regards the inclusion or exclusion of participants. Included participants have prominent roles, while excluded are backgrounded or even suppressed. The following table represents the social actors network with all the possible aspects of representation. In this research, I mainly focused on Functionalization and Identification.



**Figure 2.3. Social Actor Network**  
(van Leeuwen, 2008, p.52)

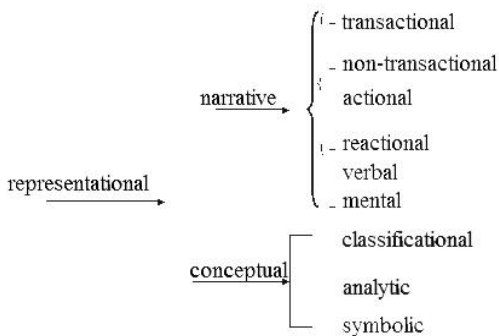
Categorized social actors lie under three subdivisions: functionalization and identification and appraisalment. Concerning functionalization, social actors are identified in terms of activity, an occupation or role. In relation to identification, social actors are identified in relation to what they are and they may be classified in the following subcategories: classification (major categories such as age, gender, class, etc.), relational identification (personal relation to others, i.e. “her daughter”, “his friend”) and physical identification (physical characteristics i.e. “that skinny guy”). In relation to appraisalment, “social actors are appraised when they are referred to in terms which evaluate them as good or bad, loved or hated, admired or pitied” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 45).

The use of this framework helps to realize how the participants are being represented in the discourse, not only linguistically but as in reference to the social context. Thereby it is highly relevant for this study, since besides the representation of witches, I will also investigate possible ways they are being identified and represented. Also relevant for this study is to investigate the visual meanings. Thus the next section presents the analytical framework to explore meaning in visual images.

## 2.4 THE GRAMMAR OF VISUAL DESIGN

Based on Halliday's (1985) systemic functional linguistic concepts and on O'Toole (1994), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) developed a visual grammar. With the use of SFL in the grammar of visual design, it is possible to critically read a text not only in a verbal mode but also in a visual one. The ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings in Halliday's SFL become respectively: representational, interactional and compositional.

The representational meaning is related to what is happening in the image. In verbal texts, this meaning is related to the ideational metafunction, which concerns the perception of the world. Representational images are usually divided into narratives and ceoncepts. Narrative images are made up of participants and an action that is realized by vectors. On the other hand, conceptual images usually represent objects and their various parts.

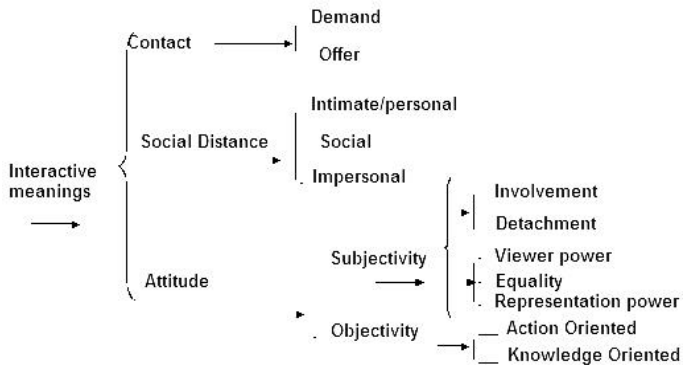


**Figure 2.4. Representational Meaning Diagram**

(Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996 Diagram by Prof. Len Unsworth).

Interactional meaning refers to the relation that is set up between the image and the viewer. Several aspects of interactional meaning are integral to the description of its interaction, such as mood, modality, perspective, social distance and others. Since interactive meanings are relevant to investigate notions of power in visuals, and this study investigates power relations, I will focus on the interactional

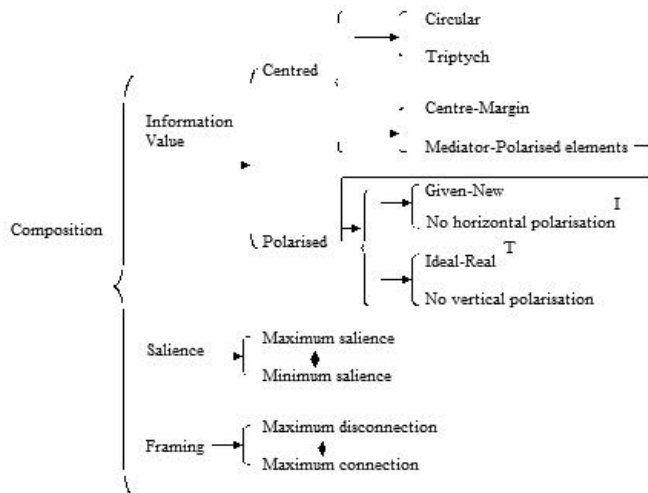
meaning in most of the analysis, although I may use other metafunctions as support.



**Figure 2.5. Interactional Meaning Diagram**

(Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996 Diagram by Prof. Len Unsworth.)

The third meaning is the compositional, which is related to the way the information is distributed in the images. In SFL, compositional is the textual metafunction, and in both frameworks it serves to highlight the coherence of the text (verbal or visual). The compositional meaning includes the following subdivisions in order to analyze the structure of the image: information value, salience and framing.



**Figure 2.6. Compositional Meaning Diagram**

(Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996 Diagram by Prof. Len Unsworth.)

The three meanings are significant to understand and analyze visual images critically. In relation to this study, the main focus will be around the interactional meaning, since it highlights visually the relations of power between viewers and the objects in the images.

## 2.5 MEDIA AND GENDER STUDIES

As a rising topic in critical discourse analysis, the study of media from a linguistic point of view is highly important in order to uncover issues of meaning in texts. Since the last two decades, more and more studies have been conducted with the focus on both visual and verbal elements. At the *Programa de Pós Graduação em Inglês* (PPGI) from *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* (UFSC), several studies have been conducted from a multimodal perspective with the focus on both visual and verbal elements. These studies analyzed mass media texts, such as magazines (Grimm, 1999; Bernardon, 2005), newspapers (Ferreira, 2003), comic books (Veloso, 2002; Abreu, 2012), advertisements (Almeida, 2006; Ferreira, 2011), websites (Lorenset, 2010), and video game covers (Souza, 2010), among others.

An important interdisciplinary theory commonly present in research of media texts is the use of gender studies perspectives, as

illustrated in the studies by Bernardon (2005), Lorenset (2010) and Almeida (2006). Gender is an area of study that has produced relevant results to questions of sex differences, social identities, and social relations (Cranny Francis et al, 2003; Heberle, 1997, Caldas-Coulthard, 1996). Thus, the use of gender theories when dealing with the representation of women and men in media is very significant in critical discourse analysis.

Media texts aimed at a specific gender, such as women's magazines, are valuable material to analyze these aspects, since they tend to reproduce biased norms of behavior of how people are supposed to act based on their gender. Abreu (2012) claims that "these gendered discourses, which circulate in everyday activities, generate several naturalized ideas that end up influencing people, including the producers of media texts, who may not be aware of their sexism" (p. 28). Butler (1990) claims that 'gender' is a performance we, as social actors, do through our daily lives and not something stable we are born with:

Gender is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free floating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed (1990:24, 25).

In this sense, gender is the result of a performed social identity of individuals. Swann (2002, p.47), discusses aspects of gender in language by pointing out the increasing focus of researchers on "plurality and diversity amongst female and male language users, and on gender as performative – something that is 'done' in context, rather than a fixed attribute". According to the author, the notion of gender and identity is challenged when these issues are seen as context-dependent.

Therefore, there is a need to study such topics within perspectives that concern not only the text as a product, but the whole socio-cultural context. Iedema and Caldas-Coulthard (2008) see this



notion of gender and identity as a constant changing factor in our lives. According to the authors, people may have different stereotypically masculine and feminine traits, since they are socially constructed.

Several scholars have contributed to expand this academic field in Brazil by carrying out studies that deal with gender issues through a critical discourse analysis perspective. Figueiredo's (1995) study on women's magazines highlights that the articles compared for the analysis of her research perpetuate a conservative and sexist discourse towards women's behavior and sexuality. Furthermore, Heberle's (1997) doctoral thesis on editorials of women's magazines explore different ideological realizations performed by men and women on society represented in texts constructed by textual and contextual features. Thus, it is possible to examine media texts within gender studies and look at different aspects of the construction of identities, sexualities and ideologies in each text.

The use of gender studies to analyze female representation in video games is also increasing nowadays. Such studies usually focus on possible sexism involving either female players with their identity as gamers and female representations in the game (female characters and storylines). Although there is an increasing amount of female players and consumers of video games (Anderson, 2015), there are still several problems in relation to the way female characters are represented and depicted in the games. Video games culture has always presented a conservative and sexist way of representing women in fixed and stereotypical roles, including these examples: the damsel in distress (Mario Bros, 1983), the hypersexualized heroin (Bayonetta, 2009, Tomb Raider, 1996), the background decoration, the grudging witch (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998).

In several games, especially in RPGs (role-playing games), female characters occupy supporting roles, such as healers, helping male characters along the game. Another common representation in game is the portrayal of women as Goddesses or divine figures. In this sense, their representation usually fits into the 'mother' archetype. Although several video games have female protagonists, at analyzing their storylines it is possible to notice some patterns in relation to social actors and action. Their storylines are usually family-related (a mother, a daughter, a sister) and if the protagonist is not family-related or divine, she often tends to have her attributes and physical appearance exaggerated (big breasts, sexualized body) in order to call attention (representing no longer the mother, but the 'bitch'). Nowadays, it is

possible to observe a concern (Sommers, 2014) regarding whether women's representation on video game may or may not perpetuate a culture of sexism and misogyny.

Lastly, all the points mentioned above related to the analysis of different media are of great importance for my research. Grounded on notions of subculture trends with the linguistic analytical procedures, I will also analyze some advertisements from editorials of clothing brands that work with witchcraft aesthetics and lifestyles. Thus, the next section will focus on witchcraft representation, that is, the main features which have made witches popular in books, movies, literature, for example, presenting a brief contextualization of the first witch representations and their meanings until nowadays.

## 2.6 WITCHCRAFT REPRESENTATION

Hall (2005) emphasizes the importance of studies on visual representation since "the image - whether moving or still and whether transmitted by a variety of different media - seems to be or to have become the prevalent sign of late-modern culture" (p. 6). He states that even the meaning of the word 'representation' connotes a 're' presentation of something that already exists, which is an idea he tries to subvert, since representations can create new meanings. Furthermore, the focus on representations in media studies can somehow try to fill the gap between the distortion of what researchers think the meaning of something is and the form being represented (Hall, 2005). Taking this notion through the perspective of critical discourse analysis, it is also possible to investigate ideological issues that lie beneath media texts and can somehow propagate and perpetuate problematic representations in the media.

Now taking the topic to the object of study. By saying the word "witch" or naming somebody a witch, what comes to our minds? Probably a pejorative response. Now try "witchcraft"... even worse, since witchcraft is usually related to curses and the actual power of witches - the reason for the fear. In order to contextualize one of the first representations of witches and witchcraft, we have to go back in time around two thousand years ago to Celtic Europe.

Several history books illustrate the first reference to witches as people who celebrated the earth, prayed for the forces of nature and worked with herbs, being denominated as healers. Hall (2005) states the paradox within the power of healing and claims that witches were

honored and feared at the same time, since the same power of healing could also represent the power to curse. In the beginning of Christianity, although witches were not hunted yet, churches recommended that people should be wary of and keep away from witchcraft, as pointed out by Willian Monter (2002).



Figure 2.7. *Malleus Maleficarum*, Venetian edition (1576)<sup>5</sup>

In 1231, the Catholic church started the inquisition. In the 13th century, witches began to be persecuted because it was stated that witches were people who had made a pact with the devil and/or evil forces. Around the year of 1320 the inquisition had spread all over Europe and witches were persecuted and killed. During all the 14<sup>th</sup> century the witch-hunting was very common in all of Europe, and witches were identified as devil-worshippers. Thousands of people were burned and hanged. However, it was only in 1486 that witchcraft was officially described in a historic document: the *Malleus Maleficarum* (*the witch hammer*), a book written by two Catholic monks with

<sup>5</sup> Retrieved from

[https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficheiro:Malleus\\_Maleficarum\\_edi%C3%A7%C3%A3o\\_1576\\_Veneza.jpg](https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficheiro:Malleus_Maleficarum_edi%C3%A7%C3%A3o_1576_Veneza.jpg)

guidelines on how to hunt witches. This was the first time the word ‘witch’ was used to nominate only women (Hall, 2005).

In 1604 in England, the practice of witchcraft had finally become a capital crime. On the other hand, at the same time in London, witches were represented in theaters for the first time in Shakespeare’s famous play *Macbeth*, being represented on stage by three prophet witches with a cauldron. Hall (2005) points out that in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with the arrival of the puritans in the United States, the city of Salem hosted a local hysteria. Salem, which nowadays is part of a touristic and historical route as one of the main geographic points related to witches, was the stage of deaths of around twenty people accused of practicing witchcraft, most of them women.

In the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century with the advent of Illuminist movements, witch-hunting was over in Europe and America. As Illuminist ideologies preached rationality, it was considered foolish to believe in witches or any type of magic. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the act of witchcraft became something ludic and impossible by the realistic eyes of the time, thus, any person who stated they were a practitioner, according to an English law at that time, could be arrested for being a forger. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the image of the witch started to be linked to mockery, and several paintings illustrated witches with exaggerated features and out of any beauty standard. In children’s literature, witches started to be present and were portrayed as villains that could curse adults and eat children, especially in fairy tales.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there is one of the most popular witches represented in film: the *wicked witch* character from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). This revengeful and messy witch, created a strong stereotype with her green skin, pointed chin and nose and a scary laugh. Despite the creation of this “negative” stereotype, it is important to note that there is also a good witch in the film: the film makes this distinction between a bad witch and a good witch.

Thereafter, the representation of witches varied drastically in the media. Another example of memorable witches in cinema are the ones from fairy tales, such as the *evil witch* from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*<sup>6</sup> (1937), who although she could transform herself into an ugly old lady, was a woman obsessed with vanity and self-appearance. In the 80’s and 90’s, movies like *the Witches of Eastwick* (1987) and *Practical Magic* (1998) showed beautiful women as witchcraft

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<sup>6</sup> The Disney movie from 1937.

practitioners, turning away from the common stereotype. In the fantasy-comedy *Hocus Pocus* (1993), three different caricature of witches were represented.

Berger and Ezzy's (2007) study on *Teenage Witches* explores the creation of a new image of witches that has arisen from movies such as *The Craft* (1996), *Practical Magic* (1998), and TV series like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997) and *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* (1996). The study argues that these young witches use witchcraft and magic to gain control over their lives, to deal with everyday problems faced by any ordinary teenage girl and, last but not least, fight evil.

In addition to the three witches of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, several witches are also well-known in literature. The character *Hermione Granger* in the *Harry Potter's* books was a phenomenon among teenagers all over the world. As of the first representation of a teenager witch, the character's main feature is her intelligence over any other attribute. The use of magical skills also represent power over ordinary people. In the *Harry Potter's* books, being a witch is a gift that unenlightened Muggles (normal non-magical people) lack (Berger & Ezzy, 2007).

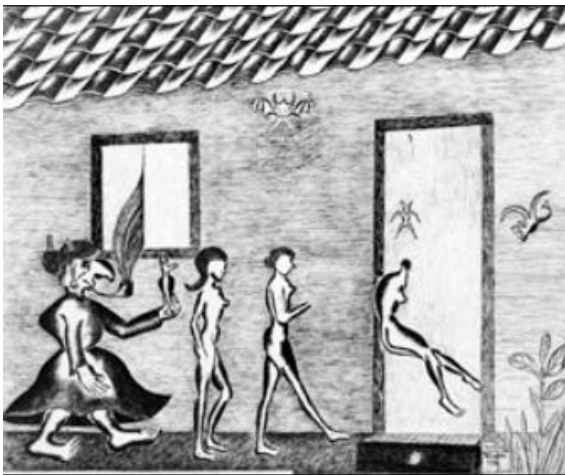
In video games, several representations of witches occur, for instance, the witches from the game *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* (1998) *Koume* and *Kotake*, perpetuating the monstrous hideous type with nature superpowers, and *Bayonetta* (2009), the object of study in this research, a sexy protagonist who shapeshifts into animals, uses firearms, and performs magical attacks with her hair. The character is highly sexualized due to the over exposure of her physical attributes. Beyond the representation in history, films, literature and video games, witches can also be an important figure for the culture of a place.

Salem is not the only town known as a mystical city that has been the home of witches during centuries. The place in which I am conducting my research, and where the *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* (UFSC) is located, *Florianópolis*, is coincidentally known as "*ilha da magia*" (*magic island*). Plenty of local legends help the creation of this city's nickname and the witches are one of the most important of them. With that in mind, Sonia Maluf (1993) from UFSC wrote her master thesis on witches of *Lagoa da Conceição*, a fisherman district located in the heart of the city.

The research, grounded on social anthropology, interviewed several native people from the village asking about the stories about the place in order to analyze the folklore and the discourses created around

the witches. They are usually mentioned as faith healers and almost always as elderly. In the last chapter, the thesis explores the witch figure and the discourse of power. According to Maluf (1993, p. 165), the witch “represents to men a threat between two complementary plans, its figure threatens man’s masculine identity, as it moves between the masculine and feminine universe”<sup>7</sup>. This correlation is due to the fact that a witch seems to escape from stereotyped social models constructed by gender differences of men and women roles in society. Maluf (1993, p. 165) also mentions that issues of sexuality are also a risky factor about the fear of men: “the image of the witch is identified as a sexually dangerous woman for men, since they have already initiated their sexuality and are not subject to any masculine authority, like a father, husband or a brother”<sup>8</sup>.

The witches of *Florianópolis* have also been presented in the local literature: the stories of *Franklin Cascaes* stories, a famous name in the literature of the city, who described the witches of the island in the book *O Fantástico na ilha de Santa Catarina* (Cascaes, 2012). The images of witches are also present at Carnival parades and at local historical monuments such as museums, representing a popular image in the folklore of the city.



**Figure 2.8. Estado fadórico das bruxas - Franklin Cascaes (1960)<sup>9</sup>**

<sup>7</sup> Free translation from Portuguese to English.

<sup>8</sup> Free translation from Portuguese to English.

<sup>9</sup> Retrieved from *O Fantástico na Ilha de Santa Catarina*, Franklin Cascaes (2012)

In relation to social groups, specifically subcultures, the theme of witchcraft is emerging among young adults in different parts of the world, considering the dissemination of such trends in social networks in recent years. In relation to social groups linked to witchcraft culture all around the world, it is possible to distinguish two lines: the nature witches and the urban witches. The nature witches are related to the Wiccans, a neo-pagan religion. Nature witches form a subculture that shares interests in nature elements (earth, fire, water, air), healing herbs and beliefs related to natural phenomena (sun and moon). They believe that they are practitioners of witchcraft for the good and well-being of people, personal development and self-awareness. On the other hand, the urban witches have to do mainly to with aesthetics. This trend is inspired by the Gothic culture based on its aesthetics (dark clothes, etc.) and explores themes of witchcraft adapted to fit mainstream culture.

## **2.7 SUBCULTURES**

Themes related to occultism, such as supernatural beings and witchcraft have been disseminated in mass media in the last years. Although such themes are imbued in TV, movies, music and fashion, one of the best ways to notice their popularity is by analyzing social groups known as the “subcultures”. According to the Cambridge English Dictionary, subculture is “the way of life, customs, and ideas of a particular group of people within a society that are different from the rest of that society”. Such groups usually share the same interests in relation to music, beliefs, ideologies, among others.

O’Connor (2004) argues that subcultures are ways in which people live out and understand a complex social structure. Concerning age, subcultures of youth groups are usually connected to common tastes (music genres, aesthetics, etc.). The similar tastes create an identity for the groups. The study of youth subculture consists of studying elements from these groups, such as its aesthetics, language and behavior.

Hebdige (1979) explores how the representation of such social practices happens. The author states that “Social relations and processes are appropriated by individuals only through the forms in which they are represented to those individuals. These forms are, as we have seen, by no means transparent. (p. 13)”. The importance of subcultures for the social development of society is huge. They function as a way of calling

attention to marginalized groups, giving them voice to achieve rights and break from traditional lifestyles. Clarke, Hall, Jefferson & Roberts (1993), in the book *Resistance Through Rituals*, explain that:

Sub-cultures, therefore, take shape around the distinctive activities and ‘focal concerns’ of groups. They can be loosely or tightly bounded. Some sub-cultures are merely loosely-defined strands or ‘milieux’ within the parent culture: they possess no distinctive ‘world’ of their own. Others develop a clear, coherent identity and structure (p. 13).

Several movements started as subcultures as a way of group identification and also for political reasons in order to achieve rights, public respect and to fight against prejudice, such as the gay culture and the hip hop culture which were grounded as resistance subcultures in the past and nowadays have an influence on mass media content (Blair, 1993). One of the reasons for such influence is the increasing number of members and the economic aspects of becoming a target group for consumerism.

Several times the term subculture is confused with the term counterculture. The Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary defines counterculture as a “subculture whose values and norms of behavior differ substantially from those of mainstream society, often in opposition to mainstream cultural mores”, that is, although several subcultures started as movements against the mainstream<sup>10</sup>, the term subculture is more embracing and can gather different kinds of groups, for instance the movie/book fans (the *Trekkies*, a subculture of *Star Trek* fans, or the *Potterheads*, a subculture of *Harry Potter* fans).

Although the creation and popularization of a subculture has to do with the acknowledgement of different concepts and behaviors that are uncommon in mainstream culture, frequently what we see is the cultural appropriation by companies in order to promote and sell goods which possess elements of certain subcultures. David (1996) state that businesses are interested in capitalizing on subcultures in search of ‘Cool’, since these subcultures represent what may be new trends for consumption habits.

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<sup>10</sup> mainstream represents the prevalent values, attitudes and practice of society as a whole. In this research, I will be using the term mainstream also to illustrate the main current of cultural trends, as opposite to counterculture and subcultures.



Some subcultures, such as the punks, which started as an anarchist movement, have been adapted to mainstream culture, having its ideology promoted and sold as fashion clothing, for instance. Usually, when a subculture is swallowed by the mainstream only its aesthetics, that is, its visual elements are preserved. Another example is the witch/witchcraft subculture. It was originally formed by people who call themselves actual witches, but now the groups are increasing due to several trends in media that explore this theme.

Another point to consider nowadays is the dissemination medium of most information on subcultures: the internet. Social networks such as *Tumblr*, *YouTube*, *Pinterest* and *Instagram* are filled with pictures and videos of different lifestyles. Businesses have started paying attention to this new kind of propagation and selling strategies. Thereby, it is possible to state that there is a thin line between subcultures and mainstream culture, or in other words, a gap of time until a subculture value is incorporated into the mainstream for economic purposes. In view of this appropriation, there are authors who claim that, motivated by capitalism, there is no distinction between these cultural groups anymore. Francois (2013), for instance, states that:

To a certain extent, "mainstream" is dead, and we're experiencing a new era of "many-stream mainstream." We need to focus on subculture; as technology becomes a "life force," subcultures become the main bone of contention for brands as networks rise through cultural mash-ups and phenomenons. They are some of the most dynamic places, fertile environments in which people shape, influence and even lead the next big societal changes. They are where we find inspirations as human beings and they can help brands to develop a shared sense of purpose (para. 4).

Undoubtedly, social media, and specifically social networks, have a tremendous power of influence on fashion trends and fads, especially among teenagers and young adults. Several movements that have their roots in the past are now remastered and adapted into this century. Media influence on society has been a constant topic among scholars in human sciences. Linguists, as mentioned before, have used several tools to analyze media in order to raise awareness about how the media influence people.

### CHAPTER III – ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides the analysis and the discussion of the findings. As a matter of organization, I will divide the analysis into each of the different medium types I analyze in the research, as follows: (1) TV Series, (2) Video Game, and (3) Fashion Advertisements. I will analyze each medium using the frameworks mentioned earlier in order to offer a clear understanding of the data. Below is a table with the analytical frameworks and what I expect to analyze in each section.

**Table 3.1. Analytical Frameworks**

<b>Context of Situation</b>
The context of situation, inspired by Halliday (1985), explores a contextualization of the object of analysis. In the thesis, the context refers to Field, Tenor and Mode in relation to each specific medium.
<b>Social Actors</b>
This section explores the nomination of the actors in discourse. I use van Leeuwen's (2008) framework of social actors to analyze nominal groups (specifically nouns and adjectives) that identify participants in the specific texts.
<b>Power Relations in Discourse</b>
This section explores relations of power in verbal texts. From a critical discourse perspective, I explore the text's linguistic choices that may indicate power among participants and the use of the transitivity system in order to highlight the ideological meanings of the interaction.
<b>Power Relations in Visuals</b>
This section, based on visual grammar, explores the relations of power in visual images. I work with elements from the representational, interactional and compositional meanings of visual grammar for the analysis.

<b>Sociocultural Practices and Gender</b>
Grounded on Fairclough's notions of social practices, this section explores issues of gender that the object of study may carry.
<b>Subcultures Issues</b>
This section explores some forms of social manifestation that are derived from the object of the study and which may be considered practices of subcultures.

### 3.1 TV SERIES: AMERICAN HORROR STORY – COVEN

In order to contextualize the object of study, I explore the three variables of the context of situation provided by Halliday (1985): field, tenor and mode. For better contextualization of the data I will use Fulton's (2005) adaptation of Halliday's context of situation for the analysis of films. In short, she states that the field explores the context of the film (in this case a TV series), the tenor explores the characters and the relationship among them, and the mode concerns the actual plot in a chronological sequence and the organization of the content.

#### 3.1.1 CONTEXT OF SITUATION

In terms of field, American Horror Story, often abbreviated as AHS, is an American horror television series created and produced by Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk. The series is broadcast on the TV channel *FX* in the United States and on *Fox* in Brazilian cable TV. The series has a total of 5 seasons up to this moment. Released in 2013, the third season explores the theme of witchcraft, named *American Horror Story: Coven*<sup>11</sup>. The season has mostly female characters of different ages, ethnicity and social classes. In this study I work with the first episode of the season, entitled "*Bitchcraft*".

Regarding tenor, the main characters of the season, the ones which I analyze for the study are:

*Zoe Benson*: A teenager that finds herself a witch when she accidentally kills her boyfriend after they engage in sexual intercourse. She is sent to *Miss Robichaux's Academy for Exceptional Young Ladies* to learn how to deal with her abilities under the supervision of *Cordelia Foxx*;

*Cordelia Foxx*: The idealistic headmistress of *Miss Robichaux's Academy*, a master of potion work and daughter of the Supreme witch *Fiona Goode*;

*Fiona Goode*: The Supreme Witch of the Salem Coven. As a powerful witch, she fears no one and wants to live forever. She returns to *Miss Robichaux's Academy* in order to help her daughter instruct the teenage witches;

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<sup>11</sup> *Coven*, according to the Oxford online dictionary, is "a group or meeting of witches".

*Madison Montgomery*: A Hollywood starlet, witch and student at *Miss Robichaux's Academy*, who is seemingly self-centered and egotistical. She is gang-raped in the first episode in a fraternity party.

*Kyle Spencer*: One of the only male protagonists, Kyle is the leader of his school's Kappa Lambda Gamma fraternity. He dies in a bus crash caused by Madison after his friends raped her. He comes back to life in zombie-like form due to a spell cast by Madison.

In relation to mode, according to Fulton's (2005) adaptation of context of situation for films, the mode is responsible for the plot since it carries the organization of the narrative. The first episode introduces most of the characters and sets the mood of the narrative that will take place along the season. The following plot was retrieved from the official Wiki page<sup>12</sup> of the third season of the series regarding the first episode "*Bitchcraft*":

*"Zoe Benson plans to have sex with her boyfriend for the first time, but something goes horribly wrong when the loss of her virginity leads to the discovery of a hidden power. Zoe learns she is a descendant from Salem and is in fact a witch. Her unique power causes violent hemorrhaging and certain death to whomever she has sex with. Fearing their daughter may become a hazard to the ones around her, Zoe's parents send her to a mysterious all-girls private school in New Orleans that teaches young witches how to survive in the modern world. Upon arriving, she meets her classmates: Madison Montgomery, a spoiled brat teenage movie star, who can move objects with her mind, Nan, a girl with Down syndrome, who can hear the thoughts of others, and Queenie, a witch from Detroit who descends from one of the only African-American lines of Salem witches: she is a human voodoo doll who can transfer her own wounds onto someone else. The school is owned and run by Cordelia Foxx. After a young witch named Misty Day is burned at the stake, Cordelia's estranged mother, reigning Supreme and most powerful witch of her generation, Fiona Goode, arrives to ensure their protection. However, Fiona also has her own agenda: finding a way to regain her youth. Zoe and Madison go to a local fraternity party only for it to end in tragedy when Madison is drugged and gang-raped by several frat brothers. She then takes quick and lethal revenge against them. Zoe later kills the last surviving frat boy by using her new power".*

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<sup>12</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Horror\\_Story:\\_Coven](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Horror_Story:_Coven)

### 3.1.2 SOCIAL ACTORS

Having briefly provided the context of situation, now I will analyze the representations of the characters. Grounded on the scheme of categorization from van Leeuwen (1996)'s framework, I will explore the three types proposed by the author: *Functionalization*; *Identification* (classification, relational identification and physical identification) and *appraisalment*. I will divide the analysis into: Categorization (when someone categorizes someone) and Self-categorization (when the character categorizes him/herself). The following utterances (more specifically nouns and adjectives, in bold) represent the categorizations that appeared in the episode, followed by the type and a brief discussion of the findings.

**Table 3.2. AHS: Coven – Social Actors**

<b>Categorization</b>
<p>1. <i>[In the beginning of the episode when Zoe is being taken to the Academy.]</i></p> <p>Zoe: “So apparently I’m a witch. It runs in my family, but it doesn’t show up in every generation, or in every girl like my <b>cousin</b> Amanda, she’s just <b>bulimic</b>.”</p> <p>Categories: <b>cousin</b>: identification: relational identification; <b>bulimic</b>: appraisalment.</p> <p>Zoe gives an example of someone from her family who is not a witch. She uses the relational identification ‘cousin’ (family ties) and mentions that she is bulimic, referring to this as apparently her only problem.</p>
<p>2. <i>[When Myrtle goes to Zoe’s house to take her to the Academy]</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Myrtle: “We’ll handle it from here.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Zoe’s Mother: “Can’t I drive her to the station?”</p> <p>Myrtle: “She’s our <b>daughter</b> now, Nora. You’ve done all you can. A long good-bye would only make things worse.”</p>

Category: **daughter**: identification: relational identification.

Myrtle talks to Zoe's mother when she takes Zoe to the Academy. The use of the relational identification 'daughter' refers to the role of mother which has passed to the witches now. It also states that Zoe's mother has played her role as mother up to that point.

3. *[When Cordelia introduces a brief History of the Academy]*

Cordelia: *"In 1868, Marianne Wharton, a **prominent matron**, early **suffragette**, **author** of several popular children's books and, as it happened, the reigning **Supreme** of that time."*

Categories: **prominent matron**: identification: relational identification; **suffragette**: functionalization; **author**: functionalization; **Supreme**: classification.

Cordelia explains to Zoe who Marianne Wharton was. She is first mentioned in a relational identification 'matron', which concerns her role in her family. Afterwards she is mentioned by her functions in society at that time 'suffragette' and 'author'. Lastly, she is classified as 'Supreme' (Supreme witch), considering the Coven as an institution.

*[When Cordelia explain to the girls about the witches of this generation]*

Cordelia: *"Today, so many families know nothing of their ancestry. Too many girls aren't lucky enough to have found us or weren't identified in time for us to have found them. Like that **poor Cajun girl**, just outside Lafayette a few months back. Misty Day. She **wasn't much older** than any of you. And **she had a gift**, the power of resurgence."*

Category: **poor**: appraisalment; **Cajun<sup>13</sup> girl**: classification.

Misty Day is first mentioned with the classification *Cajun girl*, that is, a social-geographical nomination with the appraisalment 'poor' in order to state that she was a victim. In this specific case, by saying "*she wasn't*

<sup>13</sup> According to the Oxford online dictionary, Cajun relates to "a member of any of the largely self-contained communities in the bayou areas of southern Louisiana formed by descendants of French Canadians".

*much older than*”, Cordelia connotes a categorization defined by age, that is, classification. The second utterance “*she had a gift, the power of resurgence*” implies her power and function as a witch, therefore a functionalization.

5. *[Fiona enters the kitchen when the girls are watching news and talking about the death of several college boys in a fraternity party]*

Fiona: “*What are we talking about? The **college boys**? Taken in the prime of their lives. Such a tragedy. Almost makes you want to cry, doesn't it? But, then, the world's not gonna miss a **bunch of assholes in Ed Hardy T-shirts.***”

Categories: **college boys**: classification; **bunch of assholes**: appraisalment; **in Ed Hardy T-shirts**: identification: physical identification.

This dialogue occurs when Fiona gives her opinion about the death of the boys in the fraternity party. She uses the appraisalment ‘bunch of assholes’ and the physical identification “in Ed Hard T-shirts’ to show she despises the boys.

6. *[Fiona, then, approaches Madison and questions her about the way she killed the college boys with her magical skills]*

Fiona: “*A bus flip? That's not easy. But you were a **sloppy, little witch bitch.***”

Madison: “*Go to hell, you **stupid hag.***”

Categories: **sloppy, little witch bitch**: appraisalment; **stupid**: appraisalment; **hag**: identification: physical identification.

An exchange of appraisalments takes part in this dialogue. Fiona appraises Madison as ‘sloppy little witch bitch’ due to the fact she was irresponsible in using her magical skills, while Madison appraises Fiona in relation to her physical appearance ‘hag’ and the appraisalment ‘stupid’.

7. *[After Fiona meet the girls from the Academy]*



Fiona: *"Now, I've read all your files. You're never gonna become great women of our clan sitting around here at Hogwarts under the confused instruction of my **daughter**. We're going on a field trip."*

Category: **daughter**: identification: relational identification.

In order to diminish Cordelia's role in the Academy, Fiona uses the relational identification 'daughter' to connote a certain inferiority, instead of her function as a headmistress.

### Self-categorization

8. *[After Zoe realizes she is a witch, in the scene she is in a train being taken to the Academy]*

Zoe: *"So apparently **I'm a witch**. It runs in my family but it doesn't show up in every generation or in every girl."*

'**Witch**' can be considered an (1) identification: classification, since it connotes a stereotype class in society and (2) functionalization, since it also implies specific tasks, beliefs and practices. Also, the use of the modal adverb 'apparently', implies that Zoe is still processing the idea of being a witch.

9. *[The girls from the Academy prepare a prank to scare Zoe, after the prank is done, they introduce themselves]*

Madison: *"Madison Montgomery, **movie star**."*

Category: **movie star**: functionalization.

In the first speech of Madison's character, she states her full name and her function in society as a movie star, which she is famous for.

10. *[When Cordelia enters the room after Zoe gets into the Academy and is pranked by the other girls]*

Cordelia: *"Cordelia Foxx, **headmistress**... I'm like you. Just a **witch** and a **teacher**. I'm here to help you identify your gifts and teach you how to control them."*

Category: **headmistress**: functionalization; **witch**: functionalization; **teacher**: functionalization.

Followed by Madison, Cordelia's first speech also presents her full name and her functions: headmistress, witch and teacher.

Several issues can be discussed when dealing with social actors. In relation to the three types of categories used in the analysis, van Leeuwen (2008 p. 43) explains that "in contemporary Western culture, the role of relational identification has gradually become less important than that of classification and functionalization, especially where personal and kinship relations are concerned". In the analysis of the utterances from the episode it was possible to observe the use of relational identification of the actors with family members (Fiona and Cordelia). On the other hand, when actors categorize themselves, as seen in the self-categorization table (Table 3.2), they tend to classify themselves by their functions in society, rather than a relation to someone else. In example number 3, Cordelia talks about *Marianne Wharton* who, although remembered by her functions, was first referred to by a relational identification, thus, her role in the family came before her role in society. As a final point, the use of appraisal in the examples was done by the use of adjectives and usually carried a pejorative connotation or an exchange of offenses among the participants.

### 3.1.3 POWER RELATIONS IN DISCOURSE

For this section I show textual evidence to illustrate power relations among the characters. To analyze the verbal texts I use the transitivity system proposed by Halliday in order to explore the ideational metafunctions of the text and also any coherent linguistic device that I consider important and relevant to construct power relations. In a first moment I present the context and the dialogue transcription, followed by a linguistic analysis of the processes found in the text with a discussion on the main findings.

The first dialogue is the introduction of Fiona's character in the episode and helps to set the tone of her representation and power in the

story. In the scene, Fiona is trying to convince a doctor to give her some medicine to look younger.

**Table 3.3. Dialogue 1: Fiona and the doctor.**

*[the doctor shows a video of a dying monkey who is healthy again after some new medicine]*

**Fiona:** *I'll have what she's having.*

**Doctor:** *And you will. Sooner than you'd think. We should be ready for human trials in two years' time.*

**Fiona:** *This afternoon. Preferably in the next half hour. I have a dinner engagement.*

**Doctor:** *I'm sorry, but, uh... well, that's impossible.*

**Fiona:** *I hear you like to get sauced at biochemistry conventions and brag about how you're gonna win the Nobel Prize for the work you're doing here, research that has been entirely funded by my late husband's money. I have made you rich, soon to be famous. I want that medicine. I paid for it, and I want it. Now.*

**Doctor:** *You can't smoke in here. Fiona you are a very beautiful woman. But if you're just looking for something cosmetic, I can recommend a plastic surgeon.*

**Fiona:** *What I need is an infusion of vitality. Of youth. I want that drug, David, and I want it now.*

**Doctor:** *Even if I wanted to give it to you, I couldn't. What we do here is not magic. I'm sorry.*

### Discussion:

The dialogue consists of an attempt by Fiona to convince the doctor to give her a new-discovered medicine. Despite showing power over him regarding money matters she is weakened in the discourse when he states he could not give the medicine due to institutional matters. Nevertheless, there is a constant verbal attempt from Fiona to gain power over the doctor. Several of Fiona's utterances are demanding (*I want that medicine, I want that drug, David, and I want it now*), while the doctor's utterances show modulation with the use of modal verbs (*should, can*) and the subjunctive (*even if I wanted...*). In addition, most of the directive speech acts (demands and questions) comes from Fiona. Fairclough (1989) mentions that the constant use of direct speech may suggest a free access of a participant to give order and ask questions to the other, creating a subordinate relation between the participants. There is also the use of the personal name '*David*' in order to diminish his position as a doctor and claim proximity. However, the doctor is not aware that Fiona is a powerful witch. Thus, her power in the conversation relies on the contextual knowledge that she and her dead husband once gave money to the doctor.

**Table 3.4. Transitivity Processes in Dialogue 1**

PROCESSES	PARTICIPANTS	
	Fiona	Doctor
<b>Material</b>	To get, to go, to win, to do, to fund, to make, to pay [7]	To smoke, to look for, to give [3]
<b>Relational</b>	To have (5x), to be (3x) [8]	To be (7x) [7]
<b>Verbal</b>	To brag [1]	To recommend [1]
<b>Mental</b>	To like, to want (4x), to need [7]	To think, to want [2]

<b>Behavioral</b>	To hear [1]	[0]
<b>Existential</b>	[0]	[0]
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13</b>

In relation to the transitivity system, as seen in the table, the material processes occur mainly in Fiona's speech when she reminds the doctor of the previous financial support her husband gave him in order to convince him. The most frequent process is relational, considering that the dialogue consists of expressing the existence and connection of elements. Mental processes are also predominant in Fiona's speech, more specifically with the verb "want" occurring five times. In all the occurrences of the verb "want", Fiona is the senser, while the phenomenon is the same: the medicine. Although each participant has the same number of turns in the conversation, Fiona uses 24 processes while the doctor uses 13.

The second dialogue is between Fiona and Cordelia. It happens when Fiona returns to the Academy, it is the first interaction of the characters in the episode. Fiona fears the exposition of the new witches and the way her daughter is managing the Academy.

**Table 3.5. Dialogue 2: Fiona and Cordelia.**

**Fiona:** *I'm here to help you. Do you know that not 50 miles from here a young woman was burned at the stake? It's Salem all over again. There is a storm coming and you are leaving these poor girls under your charge completely unprepared for it.*

**Cordelia:** *I am aware of what's happening. My entire teaching philosophy...*

**Fiona:** *... Has been an abject failure. You teach them to cover and to hide in the shadows.*

*Well, there are no shadows, not anymore. Do you really think with Twitter and Facebook that a witch does anything at all she won't be videotaped and turned into some... viral freak show like a dog who says "I love you"?*

***Cordelia:*** No, no, no. This is my life. You can't come in here and piss all over it. I will call the council.

***Fiona:*** Do. Call the council. And then you can explain to them why you think it's a bad idea for the Supreme to teach them.

***Cordelia:*** When are you gonna die and stop ruining my life?

***Fiona:*** I'm here. I'm staying. So why don't we make the best of it?

The dialogue starts with Fiona stating some facts reasoning why she should help her daughter in the instruction of the new witches. When Cordelia starts to defend herself, Fiona completes her sentences: (*Cordelia: My entire teaching philosophy... Fiona: ... Has been an object failure*). Thus, Fiona does not respect her turn in the conversation and also states her opinion using the beginning of her utterance, which may suggest a certain degree of power. The use of an interruption is, as mentioned by Fairclough (1989), a tool to not only take the turn in the conversation but also to interrupt any contradictory idea that would come from the other participant.

Afterwards, Fiona keeps stating some facts about how the witches are unprepared and vulnerable nowadays. Cordelia then threatens to call the Council, which is the institutional political group that rules the witches all over the country. Fiona on the other hand, shows no fear. In the last two utterances, even though they are interrogatives, the questions are rhetorical to the point they do not need an actual answer but work as a discursive tool to say something in a more impressive way. It is also important to mention that this dialogue, different from the previous one, is performed by two witches, although Fiona's character carries more power in relation to Cordelia for being the Supreme witch and also the mother.

<b>PROCESSES</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	
	<b>Fiona</b>	<b>Cordelia</b>
<b>Material</b>	To help, to burn, to come, to leave, to teach (2x), to cover, to hide, to do (2x), to videotape, to turn, to stay, to make [14]	To come, to piss, to stop, to ruin [3]
<b>Relational</b>	To be (7x), to have [8]	To be (4x) [4]
<b>Verbal</b>	To say, to call, to explain [3]	To call [1]
<b>Mental</b>	To know, to think (2x), to love [4]	[0]
<b>Behavioral</b>	[0]	To die [1]
<b>Existential</b>	There is [1]	[0]
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>9</b>

Fiona's speech carries many more processes than Cordelia, since she produces larger utterances and talks more in the dialogue. Most of the processes in Fiona's speech are material, which in this dialogue often represent concrete events. The high occurrence of material processes can be related to the constant use of action verbs to describe what is happening to the new witches of the world and how they are endangered. They also represent some actions related to Cordelia. While in Cordelia's speech all the material processes are related to Fiona's actions (to come, to piss, to ruin, etc.). The second

most used process in Fiona's speech is relational, while it is the most used process in Cordelia's speech.

Relational processes, as mentioned by Martin, Matthiessen and Painter (1997), are processes that construe being in the utterances and are used in both participants' utterances to connect the topic of conversation and create links of identity and relation among things. Fiona is also involved in 4 mental processes, while Cordelia has none, which may suggest a certain emotional approach from Fiona towards her daughter. There is also the use of 4 verbal processes in both participants' utterances and in all of them the participants are the *sayer*, that is, they are the ones who start the process of saying something to someone.

The third dialogue happens when Zoe already knows she is a witch and goes to a party with Madison. It is her first interaction in the episode with a male participant. In the scene, a boy (Kyle) approaches her in a fraternity party and starts a conversation.

**Table 3.7. Dialogue 3: Zoe and Kyle.**

**Kyle:** *Thought you looked thirsty.*

**Zoe:** *Is that your superpower? You can sense dehydration?*

**Kyle:** *One of them.*

*[she looks at his clothes]*

**Zoe:** *Ah. Frat boy, right? I think frats are full of fascists.*

**Kyle:** *I don't mind being reduced to a stereotype, but... I'm on a scholarship. My mom lives down in the Ninth Ward. Besides, didn't you come here with a movie star?*

*[he looks at her uniform]*

**Kyle:** *Really? A finishing school?*

**Zoe:** *Miss Robichaux's Academy for Exceptional Young Ladies.*

**Kyle:** *Wow.*

**Zoe:** *I don't want to talk about me anymore, okay?*



*Kyle: You're the first hot girl I ever met who didn't want to talk about herself. There's got to be something wrong with you. I know. You have a boyfriend.*

*Zoe: No, I don't. Kyle, I like you. But it's not gonna work out.*

### **Discussion:**

The dialogue consists basically of a flirtation from the boy who approaches the girl. In her first utterance she challenges him with two interrogatives. After looking at his clothes, she assumes he is a fraternity boy and states what she thinks about 'frat' boys. Her discourse may suggest that she is not interested in his advances. He, on the other hand, challenges her by looking at her uniform regarding a finishing school<sup>14</sup>. He uses the discourse marker 'wow' in order to show surprise. She states that she does not want to talk about herself. He, then, uses the appraisal "hot girl" that somehow categorize her attitudes, that is, hot girls should love to talk about themselves. Thus, he assumes she has a boyfriend, while she denies it and claims she is not interested in his advances.

Concerning power relations, Zoe may be considered as more powerful since she is the object of desire of the boy. She is also the one who sets and changes the topic of the conversation, while he is the one who just maintains the topic. It is also possible to observe that both participants try to fit each other into stereotypes by using "frat boy", "hot girl" and the implicit judgement he makes when he notices she comes from a finishing school. According to Cranny-Francis (2003, p. 141), a stereotype is a reductive way of representing whole communities of people by identifying them with a few key characteristics. Thereby, although it was the first time they meet in the interaction, the way Zoe and Kyle dress and, most of all, their educational institution, which can be observed in their uniforms, makes each participant create stereotypes about each other relating them to certain social groups, and works as a means to assume previous knowledge about each other.

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<sup>14</sup> Finishing school, according to the Oxford online dictionary, is "a private college where girls are prepared for entry into fashionable society".

<b>PROCESSES</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	
	<b>Zoe</b>	<b>Kyle</b>
<b>Material</b>	To go, to work out [1]	To reduce, to live, to come, to meet [4]
<b>Relational</b>	To be (3x) [3]	To be (4x), to have [5]
<b>Verbal</b>	To talk [1]	To talk [1]
<b>Mental</b>	To think, to want, to like [3]	To think, to look, to want, to know [4]
<b>Behavioral</b>	To sense [1]	[0]
<b>Existential</b>	[0]	There is [1]
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>

In relation to the transitivity choices in the dialogue, Kyle is responsible for most processes since he is approaching her and making a conversation. Most of material processes appear in his speech while he is defending himself from her assumptions. Relational processes are present in the statements in which they make connections among things. On the other hand, the high use of mental processes suggests that, although this was their first conversation, it showed some inner connection between the participants.

### **3.1.4 POWER RELATIONS IN VISUALS**

As the visuals are quite significant when analyzing discourse in multimodal media. I will explore the meanings of visual images in some screenshots extracted from the episode. Guided by the tools of the

visual of grammar design (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006), I will focus mainly on the interactional meaning (contact and social distance) in order to explore how these elements help the creation of relations of powers in the images analyzed. I will examine some screenshots from three characters: *Zoe*, *Madison* and *Fiona*, in which power relations are explicitly visually constructed through the episode. The screenshots are followed by the verbal text (if existed) in the scene and the analysis and discussion of the findings.

### Zoe

**Figure 3.1. Screenshot 1**



*[In the train ,when Zoe is being taken to the Academy]*

Verbal text in the image: “- *Your life can change overnight. Or in a moment.*”

Regarding social distance, she is taken by the camera from a high angle, which gives the viewer a sense of power over her. The scene is in the beginning of the episode when she newly discovers she is a witch and is confused. Her expression also shows confusion and fear since her face is tense and she is looking serious with her eyes wide open and gazing over the window. In relation to her gaze, the image represents an ‘offer’ according to the visual grammar, since she does not look at the camera. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.120) claim that in films or television, the ‘offer’ is preferred since a “real or imaginary

barrier is erected between the represented participants and the viewers, a sense of disengagement, in which the viewer must have the illusion that the represented participants do not know they are being looked at".

The setting helps the creation of an atmosphere of inner conflict of the characters with the use of the shadows reflected on the mirror and dark colors to contrast with her face. The verbal text in the scene also reinforces the mood of desolation of the character, which works well with the angles.

**Figure 3.2. Screenshot 2**



*[Zoe arrives in the Academy]*

In this second screenshot, few moments after the first one, she arrives in the Academy. The angle is still higher than before, and, even though there is no verbal text in the sequence, the high angles and small salience over the gates suggests a power of the house (and the viewers) over her character. In the screenshot, Zoe is facing the house and looking straight at the Academy, where viewers are also positioned, establishing a demand, according to visual grammar. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.118) state that “the participant 'gaze' demands something from the viewers, it demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her”. Thus, its use is relevant and effective in the scene where Zoe is entering and confronting the unknown.

**Figure 3.3. Screenshot 3**

*[Zoe goes to the hospital to see the boy who survived the bus flip accident]*

Verbal text in the image: “- since I’ll never be able to experience real love, might as well put this curse to some use.”

In this screenshot taken in the last minutes of the episode, different from the previous ones, the viewers see Zoe from a lower angle suggesting that she finally builds power over the camera and over her previous situation as a fearful girl. In the scene, she is about to kill the rapist who raped Madison. The verbal text in the sequence indicates that she has found some use in her curse. Although the whole season of the TV series explores the development of the characters, in the first episode, by comparing the screenshots, it is possible to observe how Zoe’s character matures in the narrative with the aid of the visual elements.

**Madison**

**Figure 3.4. Screenshot 4**



*[Madison at the fraternity party]*

**Figure 3.5. Screenshot 5**



*[a guy approaches her when she is in the stairs]*

Verbal texts in the images:

**“Madison:** *You want to be my slave tonight?*

*Young man 2: What's in it for me?*

*Madison: Are you stupid? Slaves get nothing. Now why don't you get me another drink?"*

The scene revolves around Madison and Zoe in the fraternity party. In screenshot 4 Madison is in the stairs while she looks down on a guy. In the verbal text in the scene she says “*you want to be my slave tonight?*”. This notion of power over the guy is derived by the verbal and the visual elements, with the use of a lower angle, in a way she gains power over the viewer, and in this case, over the guy. In screenshot 5, the boy appears from a high angle suggesting less power over the viewer, and in this case, over her. Her face is portrayed with the use of an extreme close-up, connoting an intimate distance, while the guy is portrayed with a personal distance, since he appears from his waist up. The use of a staircase is relevant to the construction of the relations of power in the scene.

**Figure 3.6. Screenshot 6**



*[Zoe makes a final monologue, Madison appears in the shower in one scene]*

Verbal text in the image: “- *It's agony to let people see you so exposed.*”

Screenshot 6 was taken in one of the final moments of the episode. The scene is narrated by Zoe. Madison, as mentioned before, was gang raped in the party. In this screenshot she is seen from a high

angle. Different from the previous shot, now she has lost power over the viewers and it is possible to see her more vulnerable since she is depicted in a powerless position where she is curled up sitting in a bathtub. The verbal text “- *It's agony to let people see you so exposed.*”, also carries the idea of vulnerability and exposition of her character.

## Fiona

Figure 3.7. Screenshot 7



*[Fiona takes the girls for a field trip]*



**Figure 3.8. Screenshot 8**



*[Fiona walking with the girls in New Orleans]*

**Figure 3.9. Screenshot 9**



*[Fiona walks to a backyard in a house in New Orleans]*

Fiona is one of the most powerful characters in the show. In the first episode in several scenes the camera captures her from a lower angle, which gives her power over the viewer. There is also a focus in her walk with the camera in knee length creating a medium shot. In screenshot 7 and 8 Fiona is conducting the girls to a field trip in a

historical part of the city in order to know more about her people (witches). Fiona has salience among the participants and is the first in the walking. The use of a prop such as an umbrella helps the building of power in relation to salience in the scene. The black dresses help the creation of a notion of repetition, harmony and patterns among the participants.

In screenshot 8, the angle is oblique. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.136) state that the use of oblique angle says that “what you see here is not part of our world, something we are involved with”. Also, the lower angle captures the girls in the walk which may suggest that the girls gain power when walking with Fiona. The use of such angles are “made to people look up to them with certain envy” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p.132).

### 3.1.5 SOCIOCULTURAL PRACTICES AND GENDER

After exploring the context of situation, social actors and some issues of power relations in verbal and visual language, this section will explore issues of gender observed in the media. Since the object of study can be designated as communicative event, this section investigates the sociocultural practices, that is, the social and cultural goings-on of the episode in relation to gender. Fairclough (1995, p. 62) states three aspects when analyzing the social cultural context of a communicative event: political (power and ideologies), economic and cultural. In this study I will focus on gender ideologies as well as on cultural issues raised in the episode that could help us to understand the representation of women and witches.

To begin with, there is Zoe’s condition of killing men who engage in sexual intercourse, referring to the myth of the ‘*vagina dentata*’ (*toothed vagina*). Walker (1988 p. 328) claims that “Medieval Christianity made the vagina a metaphor for the gate of hell and revived the ancient fear-inducing image of the *vagina dentate* that could bite off a man’s penis”. Myths like this one are used to reinforce the taboo of women’s body and sexualization, portraying women as destructive machines against ‘innocent’ men. Although the inclusion of a reference to this myth in the episode could harm women’s sexual representation, it was somehow useful, since the curse was used, according to her, to gain justice over the rapist who raped Madison.

Another issue which shows a certain rupture from women’s stereotypical role in society is Fiona’s bohemian lifestyle and lack of

motherhood, more specifically a hegemonic notion of motherhood in relation to her daughter. Fiona, who happens to be the most powerful witch of the coven, is constructed by the notions of an independent and individualist strong woman who goes after what she wants in life. Besides, Fiona usually uses her physical attributes and sexuality in order to lure men and is deeply concerned about aging. In a scene Fiona sucks up the youth of a doctor through a kiss using her magical skills, killing the man and gaining visual youth for some minutes.

The episode is an attempt to empower women, since it deals with strong female characters and does not present any kind of male gaze. Mulvey (1975) explains that the male gaze is a concept which consists on exploring the focus of film industry in constructing elements for men's pleasure and developing the narrative through men's perspectives. Thus, women are often sexualized and objectified in such representations. The gaze itself not only represents the sexualization of the opposite gender, but also a perspective to look at the world in the film. As a response, some scholars have argued for the creation of the female gaze as a counterculture to the male gaze, which can be observed in the selected episode. Moreover, in terms of sexualization, the female gaze presents a burden, as Stewart (2014) points out:

(...) the objectification of men is a false equivalency to the objectification of women, because what's being fetishized is *strength*. Virility, capability, vigor, fortitude. *Power*. In a world where men *actually do have power*. You can't say the same about the standard objectification of women, which usually revolves around sexually-charged parts like breasts and buttocks, not biceps. In addition, "sexy" images of women generally involve us being relaxed, lying down, finger in the mouth like a child. Submissive, pliant, docile (para. 16).

In the episode, even though some female characters use their sexuality as a matter of power, for instance Madison at the party and Fiona with the doctor, they are not objectified. In fact, the narrative revolves around female perspectives that, despite carrying an attempt to break gender notions, still perpetuate some values linked to the feminine world, such as: motherhood, a concern with aging, slut-shaming and others.

Regarding the male representation, none of the male characters are witches or have any kind of supernatural power; on the contrary they are weak and powerless in relation to the witches/women. In the prologue scene of the episode, when the year of 1834 is portrayed, there is the scene of abuse and torture of a male slave, that soon is turned into a minotaur.



**Figure 3.10. AHS: Coven – Minotaur**<sup>15</sup>

The slave under the torture of women is sexualized throughout the season and has its introduction in the first episode. Another male representation is Kyle, and as seen in the dialogue 3 of the verbal analysis, he did not succeed with the flirtation game with Zoe. Lastly there is the doctor that is killed by Fiona sucking his youth through a kiss. All three characters do not represent any threat to the witches, neither do they have more power than them, and we as audience do not know what they feel, since the show is seen from the witches' perspectives.

It is also relevant to mention that the witches in the narrative acquire power by themselves, that is, they are born witches. Different from other representations in which witches have to make pacts with

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<sup>15</sup> Retrieved from

<http://vignette2.wikia.nocookie.net/villains/images/c/c1/Minotaur-0.jpg/revision/latest?cb=20150222212658>

male entities, the witches of the TV series do not need to rely on any other creature, especially male figures, to obtain power.

### 3.1.6 SUBCULTURAL ISSUES

In this section, I explore some implications of cultural issues in elements derived from the TV series that emerge into social practices. It is known that media has a big impact on influence, especially among teenagers all over the world. Considering that AHS is one of the most watched television series lately and has vast public, the propagation of trends derived from the show deserves to be observed.

The TV series won over 40 awards within 179 nominations. In her article on *Hollywood Reporter* website, Rose (2015) talks about the success of American Horror Story referring to John Landgraf's (FX Networks CEO) words: "AHS has pioneered a new television form, as well as becoming FX's highest-rated show, while also pushing every conceivable boundary of creative excellence and audacity" (para. 2).

Nowadays with the use of social networks, people spread information faster and trends become much more visible than in the past. In this study, by subcultural issues, I imply all trends and elements that could somehow have influence on social groups, or, as Clarke (2003) mentions, the youth itself as a subcultural group.

In the episode here analyzed, there are several references to pop culture, specially related to witchcraft, such as when Fiona mentions that the academy is not *Hogwarts* (from *Harry Potter* universe) or when Madison calls Zoe 'Sabrina', in reference of the famous 90's TV show *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch* (1996). In a scene Fiona also mentions that a witch nowadays would be totally exposed due to social networks such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*, and that a practice of witchcraft from a teenager would become viral videos on the internet. Such references from the show help the narrative 'fit' into the real world.

Another point is related to fashion trends. When Fiona asks the girls to go with her on a historical tour, she asks the girls to wear something black. The following scene occurs when Fiona and the girls walk in the street, as seen above in the visual analysis section. That scene became the most famous of the whole show, being diffused in

social networks and inspiration for several memes<sup>16</sup>, such as “*on Wednesday we wear black*” as a counter reference to the famous quote from the movie *Mean Girls* (2003) “*on Wednesdays we wear pink*”.

**Figure 3.11. Mean Girls (2003)** <sup>17</sup>



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<sup>16</sup> According to the Oxford online dictionary online, a meme is "an image, video, piece of text, etc., typically humorous in nature, that is copied and spread rapidly by internet users, often with slight variations."

<sup>17</sup> Retrieved from <https://static-secure.guim.co.uk/sys-images/Guardian/Pix/pictures/2014/4/30/1398878979518/e1d440f1-91ab-471b-8986-663f09060c6d-2060x1236.jpeg>

**Figure 3.12. Mean Girls (2003) Wear Pink**<sup>18</sup>



**Figure 3.13. AHS: Coven, Episode 01: Bitchcraft**<sup>19</sup>



Taking into consideration my experience as a constant user of several social networks such as *Tumblr* and *Instagram*, I could notice

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<sup>18</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.obaoba.com.br/system/pictures/2013/10/270802/cropped/8427856053-7947d94851-large.jpg>

<sup>19</sup> Retrieved from <https://theitalianbunnyreport.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/d85cc2481349af94f2932feed4603e6.jpg>

how much trends derived from the show have emerged into the networks. One example is the name of the episode, “*bitchcraft*”, which has also become very popular among teenagers. Several pictures with images from the series started to circulate on social networks, especially on *Tumblr*. The meaning implies feminine values of the “bitch” in the place of the “witch” in the word witchcraft, which is gaining a connotation of empowerment among social networks. Crystal (1997) mentions that specific language and the use of slangs is an important tool to create and develop identity and group membership among people, since it makes the user feel like as part of the “gang”.

**Figure 3.14. Bitchcraft** <sup>20</sup>

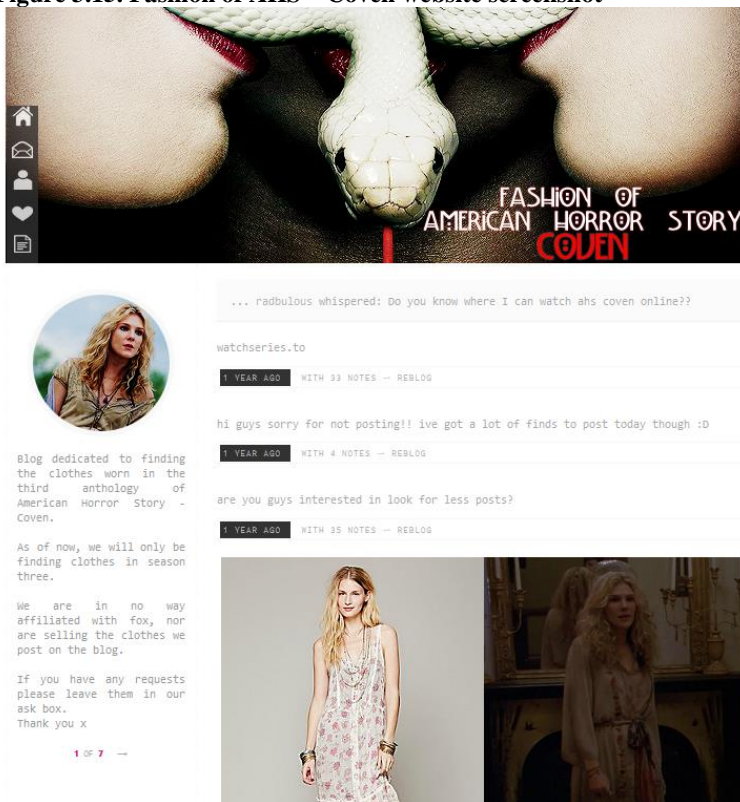


The success of the TV series and the witch theme is also responsible for trends in fashion and the development of consumption habits of (mainly) teenagers. McRobbie (1994) (as cited in Bennet, 1999) explores how female involvement in youth culture has been disqualified and overlooked. The author mentions that young women have always used fashion and aesthetics as a form of self-expression and resistance. Nowadays, aesthetics movements have also become a crucial element in order to create identity within a social group. Regarding the TV show, several blogs have been created with the aim of spreading information about the clothing that the female characters wear in the show.

<sup>20</sup> Retrieved from [https://media4.giphy.com/media/k4IcFHLglqqVa/200\\_s.gif](https://media4.giphy.com/media/k4IcFHLglqqVa/200_s.gif)



Figure 3.15. Fashion of AHS – Coven website screenshot <sup>21</sup>



Another element of propagation of subcultural issues from the TV show are the social networks. As a frequent user of *Instagram*, a social network focused on pictures for mobiles, I could also notice the amount of hashtags related to the show. Although all the seasons were popular in the social network, the third season of the show was responsible for over 124.000 hashtags (#ahscoven) on *Instagram* up to this date (January, 2016), and over 30.000<sup>22</sup> concerning the main character Fiona Goode (#fionagoode).

<sup>21</sup> <http://fashionofahscoven.tumblr.com/>

<sup>22</sup> Such numbers are retrieved from the actual social network.

## 3.2 VIDEO GAME: BAYONETTA

In this section I present the analysis and discussion of the video game *Bayonetta*. To begin, I explore the context of situation of the game. Afterwards, I investigate the representation of the social actors in the game and then I carry out a visual and a verbal analysis highlighting elements of power in the discourse. Later, I discuss gender and subcultural issues. For the field, I present the context of the game, for the tenor the main characters and the relation among them and for the mode, the way the game is approachable, the consoles and all the media that carry the franchise Bayonetta.

### 3.2.1 CONTEXT OF SITUATION

Concerning the field, that is, what is happening and the nature of social action that is taking place (Martin, 1992), I will explore the context of the game within the game industry and the plot of the game's narrative. *Bayonetta* is an action game released in 2009 centered on its title character. The game, developed by *Platinum Games* and distributed and promoted by *Sega*, was released for the consoles: *Xbox 360*, *Wii U* and *PlayStation 3*. It is rated 17+ age restriction given by the ESRB<sup>23</sup> rating system due to scenes with blood and gore, intense violence, partial nudity, strong language and suggestive themes.

Nowadays there is a successful second game of the franchise, but I will focus on the first release. The game, which uses third-person strategy, is famous and praised for the slowdown or "Witch Time" mechanic in the gameplay, in which the action of the game is presented in slow motion for some seconds. *Bayonetta*, however, is often referred to as the male version of Dante from the successful game "*Devil May Cry*" (2001).

The story centers around the title character and protagonist *Bayonetta*. She is a witch descendent from the umbra witches, a clan of European dark art practitioners from ancient times. The game narrative is divided into sixteen chapters, a prologue and an epilogue. The TV Tropes website<sup>24</sup> presents a synopsis and summary of the main plot of the game:

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<sup>23</sup> Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) is responsible for the rating system of electronic games marketed in the United States.

<sup>24</sup> <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/VideoGame/Bayonetta>

*“For millennia, history was overseen by two clans of magicians: the Lumen Sages and the Umbra Witches. Five hundred years ago, the clans erupted into a civil war that ended in the annihilation of the Sages. Not having enough time to recover from the battle, the Witches were quickly hunted to their own extinction by the combined forces of the angelic Laguna of Paradiso and the crazed townspeople of Earth. Twenty years ago, Bayonetta, the (almost) last of the Witches was awakened from a magical coma, and was immediately set upon by the bloodthirsty Laguna. Thankfully her pacts with the demons of Inferno still stand, so she uses her dark powers to hunt the angels down. Waking up from a five-hundred year sleep left her with no idea who she is, so she travels to the European city of Vigrid, whose spiritual make-up is getting uncomfortably close to that of Paradiso. There, she hopes to find the mysterious "Right Eye," the other half of the "Eyes of the World" brooch she possesses. There she meets another Witch named Jeanne who seems to know more about Bayonetta than herself, an Intrepid Reporter named Luka who has a long-lived grudge against her, and a seemingly lost little girl named Cereza. Her memories return progressively as she proceeds through the city while kicking a lot of ass”.*

Bayonetta has a remarkable talent for the bullet arts, the ability to shapeshift into animals, and perform magical attacks. In a first moment, her character is portrayed as an anti-heroine, due to a certain lack of empathy with other people, the use of sexuality to get what she wants and the constant use of irony in discourse. The fact that she fights angels and divine sanctities also helps the creation of this anti-heroine figure. Throughout the narrative, there is a development of the character in emotional levels and the players are able to see a deeper and intimate side of her personality. Regarding her appearance, she is portrayed as a tall young woman with a curvy figure. The black clothes and pale skin resembles gothic features and her constant use of glasses could suggest the creation of a ‘nerdy’ figure in order to match the target audience.



Figure 3.16. Bayonetta<sup>25</sup>

In relation to tenor, which refers to who is taking part in the social event, their status and roles (Martin, 1992), I will explore the main characters (with the exception of the protagonist mentioned before) in the game and the relations among them. They are: *Cereza*, *Jeanne* and *Luka*.

*Cereza* is a young girl Bayonetta meets while she is at *Vigrid*. She keeps calling Bayonetta ‘mummy’, although Bayonetta denies any type of relation with her. *Cereza* in the narrative represents a mystery Bayonetta has to face. *Jeanne* is a rebellious yet stubborn childhood friend of Bayonetta. She is from the same clan, and has always had a certain rivalry with Bayonetta, despite eventually becoming her ally in the name of the clan. Compared to the protagonist, Jeanne’s personality is far more aggressive and serious. *Luka* is a freelance journalist who is looking for answers about his father’s death, which he thinks was caused by Bayonetta. Luka, who is an escape artist, follows the protagonist throughout the game and is useful for the gameplay, helping her several times. He is a self-proclaimed ladies’ man, that is, a man who likes to flirt with many women, and very serious regarding his investigation but at the same time clumsy and silly regarding Bayonetta’s attitudes towards him.

Concerning the mode, which refers to the channel and the role of the object of the study (Martin, 1992), I explore all types of media that the game inspired beyond video games. The game, as mentioned

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<sup>25</sup> Retrieved from <http://vignette4.wikia.nocookie.net/platinumgames/images/b/b6/Bayonetta-bust.jpg/revision/latest?cb=20111120134538>

before, was released for three consoles: *PlayStation 3*, *Xbox 360* and *Wii U*. Not every successful game is developed for the three major video games consoles, which puts Bayonetta's franchise at a higher range among gamers and casual video game players. The success of the game contributed to the creation of an anime film adaptation released in November 2013 in Japan entitled *Bayonetta: Bloody Fate*. A 5-Disc CD was released in November 2009 in Japan, containing 150 tracks from the original soundtrack of the game. Moreover, a book entitled *Bayonetta Witch of Vigrid* was released in October 2009, showing pictures and an interview with the protagonist. The game also inspired an Anime film released in 2013 in Japan by the name of *Bayonetta: Bloody Fate*.

### 3.2.2 SOCIAL ACTORS

This section explores the representation of social actors in the game. As done previously, I analyze the identification issues among the characters using the three types of categorization: *functionalization*; *identification (classification, relational identification and physical identification)* and *appraisal*, grounded on van Leeuwen (1996)'s framework for social actors. The following utterances are retrieved from the game's narrative and carry the nominal groups that appeared in the speech of the characters, and is followed by the category and a brief discussion of the findings.

**Table 3.9. Bayonetta – Social Actors**

Categorization
<p style="text-align: center;">1. [on chapter II, when she first meets Luka]</p> <p><b>Luka:</b> <i>Fleur de Cirey, Eau du Parfum. Such a wonderful floral bouquet, with its subtle hints of Rosemary. You know, in the language of flowers, rosemary equates to remembrance. Which doesn't quite equate to you, now does it, Bayonetta.</i></p> <p><b>Bayonetta:</b> <i>That little bug on Enzo was a nice touch. Seeing you here, I suppose it wasn't the only one. You've certainly bloomed, haven't you, my little <b>Cheshire puss</b>?</i></p> <p><b>Luka:</b> <i>I'm not your pet. The name is Luka. A name you better remember. You can't just run away from me like that! I know what I</i></p>

*saw that day! I know all about your kind. Sure, my colleagues laugh at me for chasing fairy tales, amongst other things, but I know they're real! I know the truth. This smell... It's the same smell that clung to the air the day my father was murdered. Which means I'm right on your doorstep, Bayonetta!*

**Bayonetta:** *I'll let you in on a little secret, **Cheshire**.*

**Luka:** *The name is Luka.*

**Bayonetta:** *You need to hone your sense of smell, my dear. There's no rosemary in perfume. After all, rosemary's a demon repellent.*

Category: **Cheshire puss:** classification.

Throughout the game Bayonetta refuses to call Luka by his name and calls him Cheshire puss, which is a reference to the anthropomorphic trickster cat from *Lewis Carroll's Alice in wonderland* (1865). This is due to the fact that he appears and disappears all the time in the beginning of the narrative. The category classification is due to the fact that his character is often nominated in relation to his actions and habits, thus classifying him into a stereotype that resembles a literary reference.

2. *[on chapter III, when Bayonetta meets Fortitudo for a combat]*

**Fortitudo:** *Are you the one to have awakened me from my heavenly slumber, my world of light, and summoned me into this world of chaos? The taint of the dark world is upon you. Yet you have made but a pact with the darkness in exchange for the powers of a witch. It was said that one such **pitiful creature** survived the annihilation. Tell me, my **child**. What is your name?*

**Bayonetta:** *If I was your **child**, I'd be an **awfully ugly witch**, wouldn't I?*

Categories: **pitiful creature:** appraisalment; **child:** identification: relational identification; **awfully ugly witch:** appraisalment.

In this interaction there is a constant use of evaluations by both participants, thus there is the use of some forms of appraisalment: pitiful, awfully and ugly. Fortitudo, who is Bayonetta's enemy, calls her 'my child' as an attempt to weaken her power towards him. She, on the other hand, states that if she had any connection with him that

would make her an awfully ugly witch.

3. [on chapter V, when Bayonetta meets Jeanne again]

**Jeanne:** *I suppose coming here has given you a second wind.  
Feeling better, Bayonetta?*

**Bayonetta:** *Who are you? And don't you dare say my **long lost sister**.*

**Jeanne:** ***Sister!?** You've quite the active imagination. You and I once fought for the jewel upon the crown of the Umbra throne. And now that you've returned, my **sleeping beauty**, it is time to finish that fight. No time for daydreaming.*

Categories: **long lost sister:** identification: relational identification;  
**sleeping beauty:** classification.

In this interaction between Bayonetta and Jeanne, there is the use of the relational identification sister in order to try to identify who Jeanne is due to Bayonetta's lack of memory. The classification 'sleeping beauty' is, as the Cheshire example, a reference to the fairy tale *The Sleeping Beauty* (Disney, 1959), and thus a reference to Bayonetta's recent past.

4. [on chapter VI, when Bayonetta meets Cereza]

**Cereza:** ***Mummy!***

**Bayonetta:** *Whoa whoa whoa! I am not your **mother**.*

**Cereza:** *But... **Mummy!***

**Bayonetta:** *Will you quit calling me "**Mummy**"!*

**Cereza:** *[starts to cry]*

**Bayonetta:** *If there's two things I hate in this world, it's cockroaches and crying babies. Well, a crying baby cockroach would be truly terrible.... So don't you dare cry.*

**Cereza:** *Yes, **Mummy**.*

Category: **Mummy/mother:** identification: relational identification.

There is a frequent use of the relational identification "mummy" by Cereza towards Bayonetta throughout the whole narrative of the game, despite the fact that Bayonetta makes clear she is not anyone's

mother.

5. *[on chapter XII when Cereza talks to Luka about Bayonetta]*

**Cereza:** *Mummy is a witch, and witches protect people and are very strong. When I grow up, I'll be strong too and I'll protect my mummy!*

Category: **witch:** functionalization; **Mummy:** identification: relational identification.

Cereza refers to Bayonetta through relational identification as 'mummy' and then 'witch'. In this sense witch becomes a function since, the word connotes responsibilities and roles for the function. She also appraises the function with the use of the adjective 'strong'.

6. *[on chapter XV when Bayonetta is preparing to fight]*

**Bayonetta:** *Let's go. Stay next to me, little one.* [referring to Cereza]

Category: **little one:** identification: physical identification.

Despite the frequent use of the relational identification (mummy) by Cereza, Bayonetta calls her with the physical identification 'little one'.

*[on chapter XII, when Bayonetta talks to her father after a combat]*

**Balder:** Fear not my **child**, for no harm will come to you. I'm always watching over you... My **dear, sweet child**.

Categories: **child:** identification: **relational identification**; dear, sweet: appraisalment

Balder is Bayonetta's father. He appears in the narrative as a voice over that only the protagonist can hear. He uses the relational word 'child' in order to be identified in the narrative and the appraisalment dear and sweet to show affection towards her.



The utterances above represent most of the adjectives through which the participants in the narrative are represented and nominated. It is possible to observe that the protagonist Bayonetta explores almost all possible relational identification related to family, she is a mother, a sister and a daughter. Although her function as a witch who tries to save the world is built-in in the narrative, she is constantly nominated by others regarding family issues rather than functionalization. For being a strong and powerful character, she is never classified into a specific group, on the contrary, she is the one who classifies others. While Bayonetta represents one of the powerful female characters in game industry at the moment, with this analysis it is possible to observe that her narrative often revolves around her family.

In relation to Luka, Bayonetta keeps calling him by a pet's name as an attempt to show power over him. Barros (2011) claims that the use of "*animalization*" in discourse refers to the act of naming people pejoratively using animal characteristics as an attempt to dehumanize the person. Therefore, it is often used to try to ideologically diminish someone by calling them by an animal name, in this case a fictional animal character. It is also an attempt to gain power in the discourse, since she refuses to call him by his personal name. There is also a frequent attempt by Bayonetta to distance herself from others avoiding the use of personal names (as in Luka's case) and referring to Cereza as "little one" several times.

### **3.2.3 POWER RELATIONS IN DISCOURSE**

This section explores the power relations in discourse present in the game narrative. To illustrate with verbal examples, I analyze dialogues of the main character Bayonetta with other characters. More specifically, I have selected utterances with some of her famous catchphrases, well known by the players, thus, it has great significance in relation to her representation. The analysis consists of three dialogues of Bayonetta with other characters: *Rodin*, *Luka* and *Jeanne*.

The first dialogue occurs between Bayonetta and Rodin, who is Bayonetta's ally and the one responsible for creating Bayonetta's set of pistols. The dialogue takes place in the first chapter of the game narrative.

**Table 3.10. Dialogue 1: Bayonetta and Rodin.**

**Bayonetta:** *Another one looking to line his pockets. Huh, I'm beginning to see why Enzo is so fond of you.*

**Rodin:** *Real cute. But let's get one thing straight, your fights are yours alone. I'm only here to watch my handiwork in action. So don't get any bright ideas about coming to me for help.*

**Bayonetta:** *No, you get one thing straight. I'm not the slightest bit interested in the fact that you made these guns. If you get in my way, I will, how do the Americans put it? Oh yes. Bust a cap in yo' ass.*

**Rodin:** *Right-on, baby! Right-on!*

### **Discussion:**

The dialogue starts with Bayonetta's insinuation to Rodin: she is suggesting that he is only interested in money. Due to her use of irony, Rodin feels the need to be imperative about the meaning of what he is saying: he uses a sarcastic expression *Real cute*, followed by the imperative (command *let's get one thing straight*) then makes clear she cannot count on him for help. Fairclough (1989, p.45) mentions that the use of evaluation in the conversation (for instance: *real cute*) suggest some "techniques of control which would be regarded as presumptuous or arrogant if they were addressed to an equal or someone more powerful". Since she is more powerful than him, she replies with the same structure "*get one thing straight*", as an attempt to show power and demonstrate no fear over his threats.

While she refuses to be taken down on discourse, she uses a typical American slang, since he is American, in order to threaten him with the use of sarcasm. He agrees with the slang "right on", which shows a positive agreement to an idea, and calls her baby, implying that they are now on equal terms, trying to diminish her figure of a powerful woman by addressing her as 'baby'.

<b>PROCESSES</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	
	<b>Bayonetta</b>	<b>Rodin</b>
<b>Material</b>	To look (for), to get (2x), to make, to bust [5]	To let, to get (2x), to come [4]
<b>Relational</b>	To be (3x) [3]	To be (2x) [2]
<b>Verbal</b>	To put (as <i>saying</i> ) [1]	[0]
<b>Mental</b>	[0]	[0]
<b>Behavioral</b>	To see [1]	To watch [1]
<b>Existential</b>	[0]	[0]
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

Concerning the transitivity system, once again the process that appears the most is material. There are five relational processes from both participants and one verbal and behavioral from Bayonetta (to put, to see) and one from Rodin (to watch). Most of the material processes focus on actions performed by Bayonetta, making her more repetitive regarding actions. The absence of mental processes also indicates a less intimate and emotional string between the participants, which highlights the fact that the dialogue is focused on business.

The second dialogue is an interaction between Bayonetta and Jeanne. It occurs in chapter II of the game narrative and it is one of the first reenounters between the two participants.

<p><i>Jeanne: Fancy bumping into you here. Out to find some answers about your past, are we?</i></p> <p><i>Bayonetta: You've quite the familiar face. And using the same powers. But you'll have to forgive me, do we know each other?</i></p>
--

*Jeanne: Same powers!?! Don't make me laugh. Your little dip in that lake has left you a bit rusty.*

*Bayonetta: I've been high and dry for 20 years now. The only rust on me is from the lack of any real challenge. Perhaps you're up for the task.*

*Jeanne: You've already disappointed me.*

### Discussion:

The dialogue above is one of the first conversations between these two characters. In relation to the verbal text, Jeanne starts questioning Bayonetta about the reasons why she was there at that place. Nonetheless, Bayonetta still cannot remember her as her childhood friend, she then questions Jeanne if they know each other. Following the same topic, Jeanne denies that they both use the same powers and implies that Bayonetta is weaker than her. Bayonetta, then, indirectly challenges her for a fight while Jeanne implies that Bayonetta is weak for a duel. Since they are both witches and have apparently the same power, it is possible to observe some kind of equality, different when Bayonetta is talking to any other character.

**Table 3.13. Transitivity Processes in Dialogue 2**

PROCESSES	PARTICIPANTS	
	Bayonetta	Jeanne
<b>Material</b>	To use [1]	To bump, to find, to make, to leave [4]
<b>Relational</b>	To have (3x), to be (3x) [6]	To be, to have (2x) [3]
<b>Verbal</b>	[0]	[0]
<b>Mental</b>	To forgive, to know [2]	To disappoint [1]

<b>Behavioral</b>	[0]	To laugh [1]
<b>Existential</b>	[0]	[0]
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>

Concerning the transitivity system, most of the processes found are relational, since both characters are constantly identifying each other. Following there are the material processes and, different from dialogue 1, the mental process is the third process most found. It may indicate some kind of intimacy between the participants since mental processes are related to internal experiences. Some material processes are also found, usually in Jeanne's speech, with actions related to Bayonetta and a behavioral process is also present.

Dialogue 3 occurs in Chapter VI of the game narrative, in the beginning of the narrative and one of the initial dialogues with Luka.

**Table 3.14. Dialogue 3: Bayonetta and Luka.**

*[after listening Cereza calling her Mummy]*

**Luka:** *Mummy!?! You're a mom? You!?*

**Bayonetta:** *Come now Cheshire. Look at me. Do I look like I have any interest in children? Now making them... Well, that's another story.*

**Luka:** *Whoa! Whoa! You're getting the wrong idea. I mean, it might be the right idea. But not right now right, right? Yeah... Uh... Speaking of right, I'm glad I've been standing around waiting for you, because I knew we'd cross paths. See, the only way to reach the upper crust and their gated island of champagne wishes and caviar dreams is over Prominence Bridge.*

**Bayonetta:** *Oh... Yes... The island... Lovely place, isn't it? Oh, now what!?*

**Luka:** *Don't play games with me! You've worked your magic on this poor defenseless child, haven't you!?! You're a sad, sick woman, you*

*know that? I was her age when you killed my father. Wait... No... You couldn't... Oh my god, you did, didn't you? You killed her parents!*

**Bayonetta:** *Hmm... Come to think of it, she's better off with you. You two are more hassle than you're worth.*

**Luka:** *What!?*

**Bayonetta:** *Just keep a good eye on her, or you're going to catch hell for it. No good deed goes unpunished, and you never know when a monster may sneak up on you.*

### **Discussion:**

The dialogue starts with Luka questioning Bayonetta if she is a mother. He uses the interrogative form three times to show surprise and imply that she does not seem to be a mother. She answers him with another question and states that her only interest would be in the practice of making children, not motherhood, implying sexual connotations. As mentioned before, she keeps calling him Cheshire, which suggests a certain degree of power over him. The dialogue continues with a frequent use of interrogatives from Luka which may suggest that he is somehow intimidated by her since he is constant taken by surprise.

Although each participant has a turn, Bayonetta has shorter speech, which makes Luka wonder if she is playing some game due to her dubious use of irony in discourse, such as in "*The island... Lovely place, isn't it?*". He, then, keeps questioning her, now about Cereza. She, on the other hand, does not answer his questions directly, she only says what she is thinking instead of answering his questions. Lastly, Luka seems to be more emerged in the interaction with the constant use of interrogatives, while Bayonetta says what she wants to say and changes the subject/topic of the conversation when she feels the need to do so. Therefore, it may be suggested that Bayonetta has more power over him since she has the answers he needs.

<b>PROCESSES</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	
	<b>Bayonetta</b>	<b>Luka</b>
<b>Material</b>	To come (2x), to make, to keep, to catch, to go, to sneak up [7]	To get, to stand, to wait (2x), to cross, to reach, to play, to work, to kill (2x), to do [11]
<b>Relational</b>	To have, to be (6x) [7]	To be (7x), to have (2x) [9]
<b>Verbal</b>	[0]	To speak [1]
<b>Mental</b>	To think, to know [2]	To mean, to know (2x) [3]
<b>Behavioral</b>	To look, to look like [2]	To see [1]
<b>Existential</b>	[0]	[0]
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>25</b>

In relation to the transitivity system, most of the processes are material, followed by relational. Only four processes were found in mental (two for each participant), one behavioral in her speech and one verbal in his speech. These numbers suggest that the conversation had the focus on actions rather than any other aspect. Another important point is that, different from the first dialogue, most of the material processes found are related to the other, that is, the material process one participant mentions refers to an action of the other participant. With that in mind, it is possible to observe that although Bayonetta talks less than Luka she is more active since most of the material processes found in his speech are related to her actions.

### 3.2.4 POWER RELATIONS IN VISUALS

In this section, I explore the power relations in the visuals through some screenshots from the game. For the analysis I took some screenshots from famous scenes of the game in which the relations of power are explicit according to visual grammar. The game has an average duration of 12 hours, being two hours and a half made by cinematics of the storyline. I also took some screenshots from the introduction trailer of the game from the TGS (Tokyo Game Show) 2008 event and the official covers of the game. The trailer that premiered in the TGS event in 2008 was the introductory trailer of the game, and the first official appearance of her character in video, thus I judge important to investigate the way she is being represented.

#### Bayonetta:

Figure 3.17. Screenshot 1



[Bayonetta in the TGS trailer]

Verbal text in the image: “- *You want to touch me?... Come on!*”

The first screenshot is from the beginning of the video and it shows Bayonetta saying her famous catchphrase: “*You want to touch me?*”. The direct gaze for the viewers and her speech suggest an invitation to play the game. The view from a lower angle also gives her power over the viewers. The character is foregrounded and the background is created with solid dark colors connoting some



decontextualisation, according to visual grammar. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.161) argue that "the absence of setting lowers the modality" in the image, that is, the reliability and the degree of credibility that an image carry within modality markers.

**Figure 3.18. Screenshot 2**



*[Bayonetta fighting in the TGS trailer]*

**Figure 3.19. Screenshot 3**



*[Bayonetta fighting in the TGS trailer]*

**Figure 3.20. Screenshot 4**

*[Bayonetta fighting in the TGS trailer]*

Throughout the video (screenshot 2 and 3) the same low angles keep repeating in order to both build a powerful figure over the viewers and to oversexualize her sexual parts. In screenshot 4, where she magically loses her pants, there is another lower angle putting her ‘crotch’ in focus and the use of another famous catchphrase: “*Let’s dance boys*”. Over the internet, especially on *YouTube*, it is very easy to find comments about the exaggerated focus on her ‘crotch’ in this video. In these screenshots the character is better contextualized in relation to the background since there are elements of setting, such as the moon.

Following the analysis, the next images represent the two official covers of the game. The worldwide version was released all around the world while the Japanese version was released only in Japan. To illustrate, I will show the cover art from the *PlayStation* system, but for all the consoles the cover art are the same.

Figure 3.21. Worldwide Bayonetta version cover (2009)



Figure 3.22. Japanese Bayonetta cover (2009)



In a brief comparison between the two covers, it is known by the gamer public that Japan usually releases more abstract cover art comparing to worldwide (most cases United States) versions. Kalata (2006) mentions that gamers are familiar with the differences of the cover art from Japanese versions to, for instance, American versions. He states that Japanese arts are usually minimalistic while American versions have more garish *Photoshop* editing and collages. The Japanese tend to work with concept ideas while American and European versions tend to focus on logos and characters of the game in action, representing more a narrative than a concept. In this case, the worldwide cover also has a focus on action, showing several vectors, while the Japanese version tends to be more mysterious omitting the character's face, but it still focus on her physical attributes as the main information of the image.

In relation to the interactional meaning of visual grammar, the worldwide version represents a demand due to the direct gaze of the protagonist towards the viewers, while the Japanese version represents an offer. In both covers the actor is foregrounded and occupies the center of the image. Concerning the compositional meaning, the salience of the character is virtually the same in both. The title, on the other hand, occupies the lower part in the Japanese version, while in the worldwide version it is in the upper side. Therefore, the lower part of an image, according to visual grammar, is related to what is real, while the upper part is construed on what is ideal. It may suggest that the Japanese cover has the logo and the name of the protagonist as something closer to reality, while the back of her face and the gun show somehow an idealistic feature. On the other hand, the worldwide cover has the logo with the name of the protagonist as something idealistic and more distant while the lower part concerns on the character's legs and the focus on her gun-shaped heels.

In relation to her appearance, in both covers there is an exploration of her physical attributes, especially the buttocks being in evidence in both arts. The next images are taken from the cinematics, they are, however, screenshots from the actual game in the filmic parts.

**Figure 3.23. Screenshot 5**



*[Bayonetta in a screenshot from the game cinematic]*

In screenshot 5, Bayonetta is having a conversation with an enemy the player is supposed to fight against in the game. She is

constantly shown mostly from lower angles, highlighting her slender body. However, in screenshot 6, it is possible to observe one of the few moments Bayonetta is captured from a high angle: it occurs during a conversation with Jeanne, her childhood friend. Bayonetta does not remember who Jeanne is at the moment they met, she just knows she is as powerful as she is. In screenshot 7, Jeanne's face over Bayonetta indicates a sense of power over the protagonist and over the viewers. We, as players, do not know how much power Jeanne has but her self-confidence and her mysterious appearances are intriguing for the narrative. Regarding the verbal text in the sequence, Bayonetta invites her for a fight while Jeanne laughs implying she is weak and says that she has already disappointed her by watching her fights with some enemies.

**Figure 3.24. Screenshot 6**



*[Bayonetta in a screenshot from the game cinematic]*

**Figure 3.25. Screenshot 7**



*[Jeanne in a screenshot from the game cinematic]*

### **3.2.5 SOCIOCULTURAL PRACTICES AND GENDER**

This section explores the sociocultural practices and gender issues that could be observed and taken from Bayonetta's representation. To begin with, there is the high sexualization of the character: Bayonetta often uses her sexuality and physical attributes as a confidence booster to gain power over others in several situations in the narrative. She is constantly teasing men, especially Luka. One of the most famous quotes from the game is the phrase: "*You Want to touch me?*", appearing in several trailers in the promotion of the game, as an invitation for players to play the game.

Although the whole story in the game occurs through Bayonetta's eyes, it is undeniable that the construction of the atmosphere of the game is within what is known as a gaze for players attracted by women. The constant focus on her crotch and exposure of physical attributes work more as a lure to call the attention of players interested in sexualized images and actions than a tool for self-identification from the character to the players.

Considering the narrative, just like Fiona in AHS, Bayonetta also does not reproduce the hegemonic notion of motherhood and tries to deconstruct some biased views of women's role in society. As Maluf (1991) points out, the witch has the function of breaking and surpassing the roles women are expected to occupy. However, at the same time she

sexualizes her discourse with sex jokes connotations, she links the act of sexual intercourse with reproduction, for instance in the sentence: “*Do I look like I have any interest in children? Now making them... Well, that's another story*”. This suggests a vague attempt to sexualize the character without a critical point of view of possible discourse interpretations. Her character also perpetuates usual biased views of femininity, for instance, the fear of cockroaches, as in the following utterance: “*If there's anything I hate in this world, it's cockroaches and crying babies! ... Though, I suppose a crying baby cockroach would be TRULY terrible.*”. There is also a constant preoccupation with her physical appearance, such as her hair and her heels and also a scene where Luka attracts her with the use of a lipstick on the ground.

Nevertheless, Bayonetta’s character is powerful by herself, that is, there is no indicator in the narrative that her powers depend upon other people. Another famous quote from the game is the imperative sentence: “*Don't fuck with a witch!*”<sup>26</sup>, which states that she is fearless and aware of her powers as a witch.

### 3.2.6 SUBCULTURAL ISSUES

This section explores some issues derived from the game that are connected to pop culture and subcultures. To start with, I should mention some of the references the game carries, such as the literary ones, for instance *Cheshire pus* from *Alice in Wonderland* as a nickname for Luka and one of Bayonetta’s weapon named *Kafka*, in reference to *Franz Kafka*. There is also the theme song from the game which is a version of *Fly me To the Moon* by *Frank Sinatra*, and cinematically there is a reference to the movie *Apocalypse Now* (1973) in relation to the name of a weapon.

As a first social manifestation and a social practice derived from the game, I should mention the Cosplay<sup>27</sup> subculture. Gelder and Thornton (1997) state that subcultures have their manifestation visible and heard through aesthetics. Barboza and Silva (2013) claim that being a cosplayer is part of an identity and self for the individual and it is also an opportunity for people to feel part of a group, gaining group membership.

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<sup>26</sup> Inspiration for the title of this study.

<sup>27</sup> The Oxford online dictionary defines Cosplay as “the practice of dressing up as a character from a film, book, or video game, especially one from the Japanese genres of manga or anime”.



The most common characters that cosplayers take inspiration from comes from video games, movies and Japanese animes. Bayonetta, as a powerful female character, represents a frequent choice for Cosplayers, who dress and perform like Bayonetta in events or for personal matters such as photoshoots that are, usually, later published on the internet. Considering cosplay as a social practice, there is also a connection between the ideologies of the media and the individual self (the cosplayer). At the same time Bayonetta's cosplays could also carry and represent values of disruption of social paradigms regarding her outrageous personality, they may also represent a certain form of appropriation of women's empowerment for the purpose of consumption, since it has become a product of entertainment.



**Figure 3.26. Bayonetta's Cosplay** <sup>28</sup>

Another social practice derived from the video game into a subculture is Fandom. Fandom (Fan Kingdom) refers to a group of fans that have similar tastes and usually carry out discussions over the internet. Fandoms represent a growing interest area in the study of subcultures in many fields. For this research, fandom represents a large subculture that aggregates products derived from them such as the fanfics and Fanarts. Mentxaka (2007) explains that Fanfic is a fiction produced by fans, published on the internet that takes popular culture references (TV series, films, games, etc.). The author also mentions that the Fanfic represents a poststructuralist relation between reader and

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<sup>28</sup> The image is a collage of three pictures taken on google images, retrieved from [https://www.google.com.br/search?q=bayonetta+cosplay&safe=off&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewiE4fm18-bKAhVDhpAKHU9zBzoQ\\_AUIBygB&biw=1600&bih=767](https://www.google.com.br/search?q=bayonetta+cosplay&safe=off&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewiE4fm18-bKAhVDhpAKHU9zBzoQ_AUIBygB&biw=1600&bih=767)

writer, since the reader rewrites the text, adds and continues the narratives.

Fanfics are also known for not respecting the same textual structures as commercial fiction and are not worried about censorship. Several fanfics carry sex related themes, and several popular ones explore famous characters' intimacy and sexuality. Fanarts, on the other hand, are artworks created by fans and are also inspired by media characters. Cohee (2009) encourages the production of fanart, since it develops relevant content that can be found in popular narratives.

Bayonetta also represents a common topic for the creation of fanfics and fanarts. There are several forums, websites and social networks, such as *Tumblr* and *Deviant Art*, where users can show and share fan-works (fanfics, fanarts) related to Bayonetta's universe. While reading and checking Bayonetta's activity on fandoms, I could observe that most of Fanarts and even fanfics create a romantic and sexual relationship between Bayonetta and Jeanne. As a rising trend in the media, such as in the movie *Frozen* (2013), *Final Girls* (2015) and others, there is an exploration of affection between female character (usually family related), instead of the usual model of the heterosexual couple. With that in mind, fandoms, known for not following structural rules, try to romanticize both female characters instead of reproducing the typical heterosexual couple, which in relation to the videogame would encourage the relationship between the characters Bayonetta and Luka.



**Figure 3.27. Bayonetta Fanart 1**<sup>29</sup>

As a matter of explanation, although Bayonetta likes to sexually tease people, there is not any indicator of affective or sexual

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<sup>29</sup> Retrieved from <http://i0.kym-cdn.com/photos/images/original/000/788/362/331.jpg>

relation with any other character in the game. Thus, the creation of fictions and art by fans derive from their imagination and sensation over the media. Another point that I would stress is how the power relations between Bayonetta and Jeanne are built in the game narrative. Bayonetta has power over all the male characters but sees Jeanne as an equal. This, among other factors, could help to explain the high number of fanfics and arts mentioning a relationship between the two witches.



**Figure 3.28. Bayonetta Fanart 2**<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Retrieved from

[http://orig12.deviantart.net/d474/f/2010/020/8/b/bayonetta\\_and\\_jeanne\\_by\\_sbel02.jpg](http://orig12.deviantart.net/d474/f/2010/020/8/b/bayonetta_and_jeanne_by_sbel02.jpg)

### 3.3 FASHION ADVERTISEMENT: KILL STAR CLOTHING

The last medium type that I analyze in this study are fashion advertisements from *Kill Star* clothing company. This part explores notions of fashion and trends that carry the representation of witches within their clothing. I start with the context of situation in order to contextualize the data, then I carry out a visual and verbal analysis that highlight the power relations of discourse and finally explore issues of gender and subcultures. This part specifically, there is not a section for social actors since the object of study does not represent a narrative or any other type of media that the use of social actors' theory would be appropriate.

#### 3.3.1 CONTEXT OF SITUATION

Concerning the field, Kill Star is a clothing brand established in 2010. The motto of the company is the following: “*Clothing & Lifestyle company with a twist of darkness, channeling emotional power and raw energy into every thread*”. The clothes are inspired by dark and gothic elements such as devilish figures, skulls, nature figure (moons, stars), creative texts, drugs and mainly witchcraft. The brand is very active in social networks, such as *Instagram* and *Tumblr*. People from all over the world who buy from the brand can tag the company in order to be part of its community.



**Figure 3.29. Kill Star Logo**

In relation to tenor, the models who appear in the ads are usually unconventional, in the sense of wearing piercings, tattoos, fantasy-colored hairs and other features that escape from standard notions of fashion models. In relation to mode, the brand sells clothing

and accessories worldwide for men and women through its website. Although it is a clothing brand, the company states in the advertisements that they are a lifestyle company since their clothing evokes ideologies of several subcultures.

### 3.3.2 POWER RELATION IN VISUALS

Since most of the appeal of fashion clothing brands relies on aesthetics, the visual analysis to investigate the power relations comes before the verbal one in this section. I took several photographs from different photoshoots that are present in the website of the brand to be able to carry this analysis. These photographs represent the advertisement from the clothing and accessories that models wear from different collections. All pictures are from a period of 4 years now.

**Figure 3.30. Photograph 1**



**Figure 3.31. Photograph 2**

Photographs 1 and 2 represent an offer, that is, the participant is depicted impersonally, regarding the interactional meaning in visual grammar, since the models do not look at the camera. Both photographs have a central focus on the model, which, according to visual grammar, the center represents the nucleus of the information in an image. Regarding social distance the participant is seen in full body in both photographs, what may suggest some kind of informality and distance. Although photograph 2 could have been taken from a medium angle, photograph 1 has a slightly lower angle what gives certain power to the participant over the viewers. It is possible to observe in these photographs, the building of the witch image by famous trademarks (dark colors, body shaping), especially the clothing in photograph 1 which has explicitly the word 'witch' in it. In addition, the setting of the first photograph is in a cemetery which leads to the usual themes that the brand works.

A visual grammar analysis may propose that both images have a certain distance from the viewers, so the image of the witch is created as far from the public. This may be an indicator of the way the brand wants to sell the products. In terms of consumption or advertisement, the images may suggest that by wearing the clothes you may have a

unique style and differentiation from traditional clothing brands and fashion styles.

**Figure 3.32. Photograph 3**



**Figure 3.33. Photograph 4**






Photograph 3 also represents an offer, with a centric value and is taken from a lower angle. The difference from the previous photographs may be noticed by the use of a close shot, due to the focus on accessories (earrings and necklace) and the use of black and white in edition, which suggests a lower degree of visual modality. Modality, that, according to visual grammar, is usually used to describe the degree of credibility of an image. In photograph 4 the same model is taken from a lower angle, with a centric value and representing a demand, since she looks directly at the viewers. Photograph 4 as well as photographs 1 and 2 suggest the creation of the image of witches in urban spaces. Therefore, it is interesting to observe how the aesthetics of witch and witchcraft emerge into public and urban spaces to perpetuate consumerism habits.


### 3.3.3 POWER RELATIONS IN DISCOURSE

For this section I will gather some verbal text from catchphrases and texts from some clothes. Alternative brands are usually known for the use of ironic and comic texts into their clothing. Following, there are pictures of the clothes and the transcription of the texts. I have divided them into two categories as a matter of organization.

**Table 3.16. Kill Star F-word Table**

		
<p><b>Verbal text:</b> I Just F**king Love Cats, OK.</p>	<p><b>Verbal text:</b> Fuck Monday</p>	<p><b>Verbal text:</b> Fancy as Fuck</p>



		
<p><b>Verbal text:</b> 0 fucks given</p>	<p><b>Verbal text:</b> Happy Fucking Whatever</p>	<p><b>Verbal text:</b> F k You</p>

**Figure 3.34. Kill Star F-word**

The first category is related to the word “fuck” and its derivatives “fucking” and “fucks”. While browsing through the clothes collection of the brand I could observe the amount of texts that carried the word ‘fuck’. Usually referred as the F-word, the word can be used as a verb, adjective, adverb, noun, interjection and more. This flexibility earned the word ‘fuck’ several studies, as in McEnery and Xiao (2003). The authors state that:

‘Fuck’ in written English generally acts as we would expect it to, given how it acts in spoken English. It is correlated with writing for a lower level of audience, as it is associated with speech from the lower classes. It is a marker of male readership/authorship as it is a marker of male speakers. Also, it is a word used more frequently by younger writers, just as it is a word more often spoken by younger speakers (2003, p. 511).

Fairman (2006) carried his research on the word ‘fuck’ when he realized the power the word has over people: the word would aggressively influence people to lose their calm and rational reactions

and thoughts. Thereby, the constant use of the word fuck and its derivatives, working as several grammatical classes as mentioned earlier (adjectives, adverbs, verbs, nouns, etc.), represents an established taboo in society. Alternative brands have this tendency to try to break taboos and highlight issues that are somehow covert in society. The amount of clothing carrying the word, thus, tries to gain power by shocking, working as a counter-culture for traditional texts and fashion styles.

**Table 3.17. Kill Star Imperatives Table**

	
<p><b>Verbal text:</b>          Be Weird          Become a Witch          Stay Crazy          Don't Give a Fuck</p>	<p><b>Verbal text:</b>          Go to Hell</p>

**Figure 3.35. Kill Star Imperatives**

The second category that I observe and illustrate with these examples are the use of imperatives. The first saying has a sequence of imperatives implying that people do not need to follow rules. There is a certain kind of irony in the discourse since the whole style and use of words resembles laws and rules and the same structure is used to claim that people do not need to adapt themselves into society's fixed models.

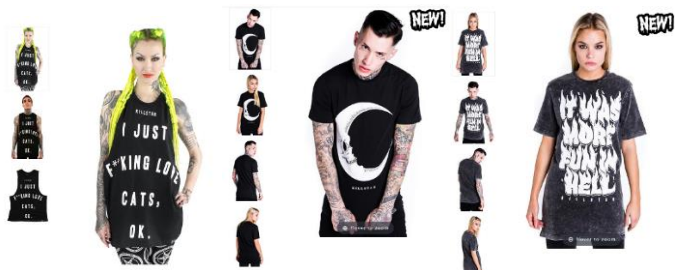
The word fuck is also used in the saying as well as the word witch. The two words try to create an identity both for the brand and for the people who buy the clothes and feel part of a group. The second example is the imperative 'go to hell' combined with a childish print of

an unicorn and icons of occultism. Therefore, both examples may suggest a parody in relation to normative forms, and the same normative forms are used to try to break the standards.

Different from the other media analyzed in this study, power relations within the verbal texts analyzed do not carry an inner conflict, but connotes rebellion and an attempt of power over society and its norms. The relations of power are not inside their culture but exposed through the culture of the other, that is, mainstream ideologies. Relying on teenage angst, the power of discourse in these examples explores a break from traditional standards working as a constant device for group membership and emerging in its subculture. Furthermore, in relation to the brand, in addition to the prints in the clothes and the models related to witches and witchcraft theme, there is also this notion of breaking traditional values and roles, which, in accordance with the brand's logo, sells not only clothing but also a lifestyle.

### 3.3.4 SOCIALCULTURAL PRACTICES AND GENDER

I could also observe some issues in relation to the sociocultural practices and gender in the representation of the participants on the advertisements. First of all, there is an attempt to break gender notions in clothing, that is, even though the clothes in the website are divided into *men* and *women* sections, the same outfit is usually modeled by a man and a woman. In the women's section it is possible to observe several men dressed with their clothing and vice versa. Nowadays, there are several movements among young people who try to break away from gendered stereotypes. Hence, clothing brands, especially the alternatives ones, look at it as a form of adaptation to possible new trends.



**Figure 3.36. Kill Star Unisex Clothing Collage.**  
(retrieved from its official website <http://us.killstar.com/>)

In relation to the photoshoots, most of the male models appear from the back or, when fronting the camera, they hardly look at it, while female models tend to be represented always looking at the camera (a demand in visual grammar), and from lower angles, (more power in visual grammar). Lastly, the word ‘witch’, although usually understood as female, does not imply gender. In the website the male models wear clothes defining them as witches too.



**Figure 3.37. Kill Star Male Models Collage**  
(retrieved from its official website <http://us.killstar.com/>)

### 3.3.4 SUBCULTURAL ISSUES

The clothing brand makes use of discursive devices that relate to youth subcultures (goths, witches, etc.) in order to reach its target audience. The texts in the clothes, as mentioned before, try to reproduce ideologies and aesthetics of several subcultures. The symbols and visual aids also evoke social groups that have similar tastes as in music and fashion styles.

One of the recent photoshoots of the brand has the name ‘squad goals’ which is a reference to groups of friends that takes pictures and share on social networks. The ‘squad goals’ expression represent what young people expect to have (material values) and perform (social practices) within their friendships. As many of these trends rely only on pictures, the strong device is mainly aesthetics. Thus, the language and the use of themes related to witches help the creation of an identity that, combined with the aesthetics, resembles the art of subcultures and works successfully as a device to attract new buyers that want to be part of this pseudo-revolutionary world.



**Figure 3.38. Kill Star Squad Goals Photoshoot**  
 (retrieved from its official website <http://us.killstar.com/>)

In addition to the use of slangs and F-word, the brand also parodies an iconic reference and adapt it into its subcultural aesthetics. The following t-shirt makes a reference to the *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) filmic-cartoon, portraying a goth Alice, with pink hair, antichrist cross earrings and a t-shirt with an inverted pentagram print, an usual symbol of Satanism. There are also several references from horror movies and witch-related movies, such as the famous quotes from the movie *The Craft* (1996): “*We are the weirdos mister!*”.



**Figure 3.39. Goth Alice T-Shirt, “We are the weirdos” Collage.**  
 (retrieved from its official website <http://us.killstar.com/>)

As a final statement about subcultural issues derived from the brand, I open up a bit to discuss witch themed clothing and aesthetics in mass media. One relevant example is the *Grammy Award* in 2014, a famous musical industry award ceremony, also considered a trendsetter of fashion aesthetics. *MTV* journalist Jocelyn Vena (2014) noticed that the witch themed trend hit the mainstream when it inspired three of the most expected singers on stage during the ceremony:

“Something magical was in the air at the Grammy Awards this year. It seems that three of pop’s leading ladies got the memo that witches are just so hot right now. That’s right: Madonna, Katy Perry and Lorde all seemed to have recently watched “The Craft” — or the current season of “American Horror Story” — and decided to use that programming as inspiration for this year’s show. Madonna kicked off the trend on the red carpet, walking into the show looking like pop music’s ultimate supreme. In her wide-brimmed hat and tailored black suit, the Material Girl looked like the leader of the pop coven. Her style quickly had fans commenting that she appeared to be auditioning to replace Jessica Lange on the witchy FX anthology series” (para. 1).



**Figure 3.40. Katy Perry, Lorde and Madonna on Grammy (2014)**<sup>31</sup>

Katy Perry's performance symbolism evoked a satanic ritual on stage, while Lorde's movements on performance had people talking about some kind of possession. Madonna on the other hand was most commented regarding her outfit that resembled the character of Fiona, from the TV series *American Horror Story: Coven*. These examples help to illustrate how themes related to witches hit the mainstream and mass media.

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<sup>31</sup> The figure is a collage from different images taken from the singers in the Grammy 2014, retrieved from <http://www.mtv.com/news/1721168/katy-perry-lorde-madonna-grammys-witches/>

### 3.5 GENERAL DISCUSSION

This final section tries to tie the knots and carry a general discussion of the main findings of the analysis as a whole. To start with, regarding the representation of social actors, with the exception of the clothing brand, the analysis suggests that despite the fact that the witches analyzed always embody power over others, they are usually nominated in discourse regarding family ties, that is, witches are mothers, daughters, sisters before having any other function. It perpetuates the biased notion that connects women with domestic life.

Following, the analysis could show that the witches' power is also construed linguistically, with the constant use of direct speech, imperative and being mostly represented performing material processes, realizing most of the action in the interaction. Another issue is that witches usually have power over 'normal' people and such power is due to several reasons: money, magical skills, beauty and others. There is, however, a certain degree of power among them that is respected, for instance Fiona against the young witches, and also the respect for having the same power level, for instance Bayonetta and Jeanne. In relation to the fashion brand, the building of power in discourse used cultural notions of rebellion, such as the constant repetition of the word '*fuck*' and the use of imperatives in the clothing brand texts.

In relation to the power construed within the visuals, the visual grammar illustrated how the use of interactional devices such as social distance may create relations of power in images with the use of lower angles as a form of empowerment in the representation. Concerning gender issues, Fiona and Bayonetta's lack of motherhood and use of sexualization represent a rupture from stereotypical and traditional notions of women's role in society.

Despite a noticeable attempt to create independent women, in several moments in Bayonetta's representation it is still possible to observe the narrative perspective through a male gaze due to a constant irrelevant objectification of her body, as in the frequent focus on her crotch. In addition, in both media, there is a perpetuation of femininity stereotypes as the fear of cockroaches, the constant preoccupation with physical appearance and the fear of aging. In relation to the clothing brand, the analysis diverged a little bit from the other media. Female models are usually depicted with more power than male models and there is also the use of both genders for the same clothes, representing an attempt of a gender break.



Each medium is also responsible for the creation and/or inspiration of several cultural trends that could be observe inside subcultural groups, such as internet memes, social network users, group language and slangs, fandoms inspired by the media and the use of aesthetics and fashion styles. Even though most of the trends are explored as commodities, the study of trends from subcultures represents a relevant and important manner to study society and its social practices, and how ideologies are diffused.

Concluding, witches represent a break from gender notions since they surpass what is expected of women in society. The power of the witches relies not only in magical skills but in the creation of a confident persona that knows how to deal with obstacles and problems. It is also funny to realize that once a stigmatized character, which started its representation as villains of children's book, the witch has become a reference of empowerment and a fashion trend nowadays. Therefore, several ideological notions about witches may have been weakened, but some of them still exist. A witch's attitude somehow has become desirable for those people who want to be as free as the witches, break patterns and inspire confidence.

## CHAPTER IV – CONCLUSION

This chapter presents some final remarks about the study, the limitations and suggestions for further research and some pedagogical implications.

### 4.1 FINAL REMARKS

The present study aimed to investigate recent representations of witches in the media. Conducting a verbal and visual analysis I could highlight notions of power relations of the participants as well as their identification within social actors theory. I could also discuss issues of gender presented in each media and explore trends of subculture that the objects of study revealed. The next section will revisit the research question in order to carry a better understanding of the findings.

### 4.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVISITED

(1) How are the participants identified in relation to social actors?

Most of the nomination among the representation of the witches in the study were classified into relational identification, that is, the witches were at first named as related to someone. These relations were almost always on a family basis - they were mothers, daughters and sisters before having their functions explored.

(2) How are power relations among the participants built through visual and verbal modes?

The creation of power used visual devices (use of lower angles) and discourse (language use) to convince viewers, players and buyers about the witches' power. In the first medium (TV series), it could be observed a degree of power among witches (young witches with less power than mature ones) but they were always more powerful than any other character. In the second medium (game), the protagonist had power over other characters, with the exception of Jeanne, who was another witch, and such power relations were construed visually and verbally. The third medium (fashion ads) also presented similar devices in the creation of power. In several situations, however, the power

construed was not linked to magical skills but issues as money, intimidation, good use of discourse and physical appearance.

(3) What sociocultural practices and gender issues do these representations explore?

Although there was an attempt to build the image of strong independent women who have power over men and confidence about themselves, there is still a perpetuation of femininity values such as concerns of beauty, fear of aging and cockroaches, etc. In the first and second medium, the witches deny motherhood and are highly sexualized (visually and verbally). At the same time it connotes freedom and women empowerment over their bodies and sexuality, it also concerns that such views (Bayonetta's game) perpetuate the male gaze, since her character is often over sexualized becoming satirical throughout the game. In the last medium, on the other hand, there is an attempt to break gender stereotypes by presenting models wearing the same clothing (feminine and masculine) and a construction of women as urban witches in visual advertisement.

(4) What items of subcultures are related and created from each media analyzed?

Each specific object of study represented also an inspiration for the creation and reproduction of several cultural trends, that in this research, I nominated subcultural issues. The TV series was famous for the creation of slangs and memes on the internet, the game was inspiration for several cosplays and the creation of fanfics and fanarts in which fans could explore and be part of the narrative. Lastly, the fashion ads, beyond playing with the language for the creation of creative texts, also represented a big impact on fashion styles and aesthetics for several groups that identified themselves with witch-related themes.

(5) How is the image of the witch represented in the media lately?

The new image of the witch is constructed as independent and powerful. Their powers not only rely on magical skills but on confidence and a high self-esteem. They have discourse abilities and know how to convince. They may be a teenager or a grandma, wear

black or rainbow colors. They are no longer negatively stigmatized, on the contrary, they are actually glorified and appreciated.

### **4.3 LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Due to time constraints and a space limit to fit the thesis structure, I could not explore other representation of witches in recent media. Although the media here analyzed was the most impactful in my opinion, as it is a new trend, several other representations are emerging in media lately. It is also interesting to carry reception studies to try to investigate the interaction with the public since it deals with media.

### **4.4 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

As a critical discourse analysis research, this study aims at social change and raising awareness about social representations with the use of several different analytical frameworks, especially the grammar of visual design. Several issues of this study could be applied in classrooms to explore multiliteracies. The subject of representation is also relevant for teaching environments since students usually pay attention to multimedia elements. Also, notions of gender and culture could contribute to raise students' awareness in relation to their context of situation.

To conclude, witches have a long way of controversial representations and now they are back, not only as villains but also as heroines. The witches, the misfits, the outcasts. You may be afraid or you may be enchanted, but anyhow they will try to change the world. And lastly if I may have a final word I must mention...

**Don't Mess With A Witch!**

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