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**“WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?” AN SFL ANALYSIS ON THE
WAVES OF THE WAR IN MARVEL’S CIVIL WAR**

João Pessoa
2021

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Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso, apresentado à
Coordenação do Curso de Licenciatura em Letras
– Inglês, da Universidade Federal da Paraíba –
UFPB, como parte das exigências para a obtenção
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João Pessoa, 15 de Julho.

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ABSTRACT

Comic books are part of the mass culture in the people's lives from different generations and until now, they remain relevant and present in our social, political, historical and cultural contexts. The objective of this study is to give direct attention to the verbal text in the synopsis and recap pages from Civil War, a seven issue event from Marvel Comics. To analyze the profile of Captain America, Iron Man and other relevant characters in the text the Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) offer theoretical tools to construe a metafunctional profile of the participants through the text's lexical choices, especially by the textual and experiential metafunction. Through the Macrothemes (Martin & Rose, 2007) identified, it was possible to find elements that function as point of departure to the flow of information that guides the narrative through the synopsis and recap pages to the main question for the characters and the readers: Whose side are you on? Finally, focusing in Obligatory and Optional lexical patterns (Halliday, Hasan, 1985; Hasan 1996) highlights the Registration Act as an Obligatory main element in which orients the war in peaks of information through the Optional elements. Packing all the theoretical framework, giving direct attention to the lexical choices highlighted by the analysis, the investigation describes the functions of these patterns in the characters and main narrative, as a way to understand how the orientation describes Captain America and Iron Man and, through the investigation, the narrative takes a stand.

KEYWORDS: Civil War. Systemic Functional Linguistics. Captain America. Iron Man.

RESUMO

Os quadrinhos fazem parte da cultura de massa e da vida de pessoas de diferentes gerações e até os dias de hoje permanecem relevantes e presentes em nossos contextos sociais, políticos, históricos e culturais. O objetivo deste trabalho de pesquisa é uma análise com atenção direta ao texto verbal presente nas sinopses e páginas de recapitulação de Guerra Civil da Marvel, evento de sete edições da Marvel Comics. Para analisar o perfil de Capitão América, Homem de Ferro e participantes destacados pelo texto, a Linguística Sistêmico Funcional (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) ofereceu ferramentas para se construir um perfil metafuncional dos participantes através das escolhas lexicais usadas, especialmente nas metafunções textual e ideacional. Através dos Macrotemas (Martin & Rose, 2007) identificados, foi possível encontrar elementos que são o ponto de partida para o fluxo textual que guia a narrativa através das sinopses e páginas de recapitulação para a principal questão desenvolvida pela própria narrativa, tanto para os personagens, quanto para os leitores: De que lado você está?. Finalmente, focando em padrões de elementos lexicais Obrigatórios e Opcionais, a Estrutura Potencial de Gênero (Halliday, Hasan, 1985; Hasan 1996) evidencia a Lei de Registro como o principal elemento Obrigatório que orienta a guerra em picos de ondas de informação através dos elementos Opcionais. Ao juntar todo o arcabouço teórico, voltando-se para as escolhas lexicais evidenciadas pela análise, a investigação descreve a função dessas escolhas para com os personagens e a narrativa principal, numa forma de entender como a orientação descreve o Capitão América e Homem de Ferro e se, através desta descrição, há um lado tomado pela narrativa.

PALAVRAS-CHAVES: Guerra Civil. Linguística Sistêmico Funcional. Capitão América. Homem de Ferro.

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INTRODUCTION

Comic books since the beginning of its time, that is, the boom in the 1940s, have been seen as a form of entertainment. As such, this type of text is usually meant for children and teenagers. However, comics hold a position as a piece of literature that embraces complex issues that many times go unnoticed. Comics became popular and its access even more possible, due to the range of stories that could not only entertain, but also create connection with the audience's reality by its special form of reading through image and text. According to Eisner (apud. Weiner, 2000), this special connection was part of the comics' journey, which went from entertaining reading to a popular practice of reading that could be part of people's lives as meaningful and acceptable.

In the early 1900s the United States was living in a revolutionary time in its culture, the beginning of the movie industry and the debut of radio. Comics were read in the classic form of comic strips in newspapers, very popular until nowadays. At that time, these comic strips were well accepted by readers, catching the attention of newspaper producers as an advantage, since comic strips were selling newspapers. In a time when the radio could not offer visual features to its narratives, comics got the audience through its clear language and readiness.

Comic books in the form of magazines, consisting of genres such as romance, mystery and adventure, started being published in the 1930s, mostly reprint of comic strips from newspapers. Due to the popularity of this medium, publishers started hiring artists and writers to develop stories "as quickly and cheaply as possible" (Weiner, 2003 p. 1). It was the very beginning of DC Comics and Timely (future Marvel Comics), both the most popular publishers of comic books, especially in the superhero genre. In 1939, the huge popularity of Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel's Action Comics #1, which debuted Superman to the world, started its Golden Age and a tradition of superhero storytelling. The following superheroes that made up the classic from the Golden Age of Superheroes were Captain America, Wonder Woman, Batman and many others.

In World War II, in a time in which the War propaganda was spreading among people, comic books played a patriotic role and it was a vehicle to spread this propaganda regardless of age. Trying to reach the younger audience, sidekicks, known as superheroes young supporters, were attached to the classic heroes, such as Bucky from Captain America, Robin from Batman, Wonder Girl from Wonder Woman and so on. All these efforts were undertaken to encourage people to believe and to cheer for those heroes without a common enemy that they could fight against. According to Weiner (2003), the

war came to an end, there were no more enemies and values to inspire people to fight and cheer for the protagonists of the superhero comic books, so the interest in this genre started to fade. Post war, the “teen-agers”¹ were recognized as a new commercial target in the United States in different media, and also comic books, therefore, these "teen-agers" were the first generation to grow up with comic books as part of their culture.

The following decade was marked by the rise of new comic book genres, as superhero comics decreased in terms of the public’s interest, and the war was nonexistent. In response, Romance comics focused on conservative values of the 1950s, Crime comics and Horror comics, both approaching the transgressive part of society. These two were the main points to Fredric Wertham, a psychiatrist, who wrote the bestselling book “Seduction of Innocence” (1954), accusing comics of corruption of young people and also of ruining their taste in “fine literature”. According to Wertham (1954 apud Weiner, 2003) comics were too violent, too sexual, too bloody and too disrespectful to authorities and based on this judgement, comic book publishers created the Comic Code Authority with requirements that comic books were supposed to follow. To fit The Code, for example, good always had to win evil and crime or violence should be toned down and portrayed as a bad thing. Although Wertham had never mentioned fear of communism in Seduction of Innocence, Weiner (2003) says that the political anticommunism that was being spread in the United States in the 1950’s was one of the factors that led comic books publishers to create the guides of the Comic Code Authority. With images and text narrowed to fit the code, due to the artists being affected by their creativity and freedom, comics needed reinvention.

Under the Marvel Comics seal, further on the ideals of superhero comics as more than child stories with heroes that could be “grounded in the real world and face real problems and not only fighting superheroes” (Weiner, 2003, p. 7), Stan Lee worked with both co-creators of Captain America: Steve Ditko and Jack Kirby to launch some of the most famous titles from Marvel Comics; Fantastic Four (1961), The Amazing Spider-Man (1962) and The Uncanny X-Men (1963). Together, they developed the Lee’s ideal of realistic superheroes by raising realistic new heroes, considered violent to the common superhero tone required on The Code, but also with diverse features, as for example, more characters with different race and ethnicity among the classic Caucasians.

¹ This term was used by the author when the book was written, to cover the meaning of teenage or teenager.

Finally, comic books developed their own fandom; people of different ages shared their passion for comic books through meetings and conventions. With the audience stabilized, comic books started being commercialized in specific markets or comic book shops. Nowadays, comics are still being adapted, reinvented and also becoming part of the people everyday lives in different forms, such as a simple twenty/thirty pages edition to the book-length graphic novels, but especially the superhero genre, that inspired a whole cinematic age with remarkable film adaptations and boxscore records. Comic books are still a source of leisure and also ideologies, moral and social values through their narratives. Comic books' popularity can be recognized by its easy, catchy and popular reading, and also due to the range of narratives and contexts that are close to the public's reality with real issues.

Even though the realm of comic books is a range of probabilities, it still has resistance in the manner of its application in academic research. While comic books are seen just as colorful images, the complexity of its reading form is not recognized by the idea of a mass culture instrument focused on children, teens and specific groups such as the modern nerds. Mass culture or popular culture can be defined, according to Adorno (2004) as dominant practices, beliefs and objects that influences the society everyday lives. Summarizing Comics without understanding its cultural impact and relevance on society is a loss, especially when we have, for example, *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons winning a Hugo Award, acclaimed science-fiction literature award in 1988, putting superhero comic books in the literary spot. Other known award-winners superhero comics are *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* (1986) by Frank Miller, *Batman: The Killing Joke* (1986) by Alan Moore and Brian Bolland, *Superman: Peace on Earth* (1998) by Alex Ross and many others.

According to Babic (2014), Comics function as a portal for young people and its language and discourse operates with representations of social and cultural conceptions, interacting with modernity and serving as markers for dialect, gender, nationalism and highbrow discourse.

One of the most classic examples of the last decade was Marvel's Civil War. This event changed the whole Marvel Universe, bringing Captain America and Iron Man as rivals after an incident involving a group of teen superheroes that caused an explosion devastating the city of Stamford. Such events initiated the backlash on superheroes by citizens and the media. On the one hand, Iron Man proposed The Registration Act to put superheroes under the government's watch and criminalize those who were not registered. On the other hand, Captain America was against The Registration Act and left his team to

join a bunch of other rogue superheroes to team-up a resistance, dividing the whole Marvel Universe and the readers in two opposite sides.

Considering Civil War and its complex narrative involving politics, social and ideological elements, this study tends to dive into in Linguistics purposes rather than allegorical issues or themes interpretations of this specific comic. This force drives this study, as there are existent studies focusing on historical context and allegories, such as the Cold War and 9/11, Red vs. Blue, Captain America and Iron Man representing both the old and New America respectively or general themes as Freedom vs. Security and also studies focusing on ideological conflicts between the main characters can be found in some studies, such as: “*Never awake a sleeping giant...*”: A multimodal analysis of Post 9-11 Comic Books (Veloso, 2016), A multimodal analysis of Post 9-11 Comic Books (Dantas, 2011), Marvel Comics’ Civil War and the Age of Terror *Critical Essay on the Comic Saga* (Scott, 2015), Marvel Comics’ Civil War: An Allegory of September 11 in an American Civil War (Erdermani, 2013), Secret Identity Crisis Comic Books and the Unmasking of Cold War (Costello, 2009), Captain America vs Iron Man: The representation of conflicts between divergent ideas (Duarte, 2019), War, Politics and Superheroes *Ethic and Propaganda in Comics and Film* (DiPaolo, 2011) and so on.

Besides the main characters, in which their points of view are explicit to the audience, the previous orientation, which is what comes before the reading of the narrative, has much to talk about the whole situation described in the narrative. Through the verbal text, it is possible to understand how the narrative's orientation is organized by the synopsis and the recap pages, influencing the view of both sides of this Civil War, since the narrative invites the reader to take a stand with the iconic question: “Whose side are you on?”

Looking at comics as language functioning beyond simple words or pictures, but as multimodal, that is “the interaction and combination of multiple modes within single artefacts” (Bateman, 2008, p. 1), which image and words involved in this scenario create the semiosis of the whole narrative, and even taking into account that the combination of both is indeed necessary to have a complete experience on the narrative inserted on a larger socio-cultural context, this study intends to look at the verbal text of this specific genre from a Systemic Functional Linguistics perspective (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) as a way of fulfilling the following specific objectives:

- i) to analyze the MacroThemes of the 7 (seven) issues of Marvel’s Civil War;

ii) to observe the metafunctional profile of the point of departure construed in the verbal texts of each of the 7 issues;

iii) to describe how this meaning construal influences the reading of the War.

The specific objectives proposed above, may be translated in the following research questions:

i) How are the seven issues orienting the conflict within the pages?

ii) What is the metafunctional profile construed for this event?

iii) To what extent can the orientation be biased through the verbal texts?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Comics exercise the role of communication through the combination of both image and text and according to Eisner (1985, p. 7) “Comics communicate in a ‘language’ that relies on a visual experience common to both creator and audience”. Even with the mix of image-word as a part of this language, the term “reading” is commonly applied to the action of deciphering comics and when image and words are used “again and again to convey similar ideas, they become a language — a literary form, if you will. And it is this disciplined application that creates the ‘grammar’ of sequential art” (Eisner, 1985, p. 8). Due to this principle, it’s undeniable the importance of words and images as a unity to the whole understanding of comics narratives, McCloud (2006) says that pictures and words together function in a way that they cannot do it separately.

The main aim of this study is to give direct attention (Espindola, 2010) to the verbal text present in the synopsis and recap pages in the seven issues of Marvel’s Civil War comic books, identifying its MacroThemes (Halliday, Hasan, 1985; Hasan, 1996) and HyperThemes (Martin, 1993) to investigate how these elements present in the comic books orient the readers to the question “whose side are you on?”. Based on this objective, the next subsections are dedicated to exposing the theoretical framework followed in this monograph.

2.1. ORIENTATION

Considering the text orientation of the present study, the Generic Structure Potential (Halliday, Hasan, 1985; Hasan 1996), under a Contextual Configuration “permits statements about the text structure” (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. 56), allowing to identify the patterns, or the set of elements on text that characterize it as part of a genre. These elements, based on its structural function are: Obligatory, Optional and Iteration and, according to Silva & Espindola (2013), the choices and patterns of these elements is the same as any other choices made in the language system, it is chosen based on contextual reasons.

The obligatory elements define the genre the text belongs (Hasan, 1989), as elements that are always found in texts of the same genre and by recognizing these

elements, it is possible to understand the sequential structure of these choices as part of the whole text identity inside the genre. Different from the Obligatory elements, the Optional elements do not determine the identification of a genre and display the "characteristic instability of language" (Silva & Espindola, 2013, p. 282). Iteration is the element that also occurs as textual structure and it can be either an Optional or an Obligatory element.

To identify the functions of these elements in the text, Hasan (1989) proposes some questions:

- i. Obligatory elements – What elements must occur?
- ii. Optional elements – What elements may occur?
- iii. Sequencing of elements – What arrangements of elements are obligatory and optional?
- iv. Iteration – How often may what elements occur?

As the Generic Structure Potential looks into elements that are lexically realized, the three functions of language proposed by Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) will be discussed in the following subsection.

2.2. METAFUNCTIONS

To comprehend the lexicogrammatical choices made in verbal texts, Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, Matthiessen, 2004) offers theoretical and methodological tools. Following the idea that comics are language and communication, it is possible to analyse comics to understand what is done with it to make meaning. According to Halliday (1978), language displays a social functional role in which people can exchange meanings with each other in a system that is not random, construing meaning. According to Thompson (2013, p. 29):

"this idea of matching meanings and wordings is central. Because we are concerned with functional grammar (the study of linguistic forms in relation to the meanings that they express) rather than only semantics (the study of meaning) – we have to keep firmly in mind the wordings that people use in order to carry out these functions"

Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, Matthiessen, 2004) depicts language as a system of choices in human communication that contributes to meaning creation. According to Thompson (2013) none of these choices are voluntary or predicted, because the range of choices and kinds of wordings that we want to express are inside a context and by investigating these meaningful choices “we can explore in detail how resources of the language have been used to construct meaning” (Thompson, 2013, p. 35). Systemic Functional Linguistics also defines language as social semiotic, since language is used “to make sense of our experience, and to carry out our interactions with other people” (Halliday, Matthiessen, 2014, p. 25) and the meaning-making process is instantiated by the construal of experience and social processes together.

Considering language as interaction, construal of experience and as social practice as a whole implies that language has its functional organization based in:

(1) every message is both about something and addressing someone, and (2) these two motifs can be freely combined – by and large, they do not constrain each other. But the grammar also shows up a third component, another mode of meaning that relates to the construction of the text. To build up sequences of discourse, organizing the discursive flow, and creating cohesion and continuity as it moves along.” (Halliday, Matthiessen, 2014, p. 30).

By mastering how language functions, Thompson (2013, p. 11) says that "we should be able to deduce a great deal about the context in which the language was produced, the purpose for which it was produced, and the reasons why it was expressed in the way it was". Even though Davies (2019, p. 7) says that "Halliday's framework has not yet been adapted fully and specifically at monograph length to describe how comics realise meanings", it still offers resources that take account of the functional organization of language in Comics. As such, Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) propose three metafunctions:

“(i) ideational: refers to what is going on in the world, what is being represented; (ii) interpersonal metafunction: refers to the speaker's role in the speech situation; and (iii) textual metafunction: relates to the organization of

the message, it is used to organize the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions into a continuous and coherent discursive flow" (Espindola, 2010).

Next, this study describes each metafunction in isolation.

2.2.1. TEXTUAL METAFUNCTION

For the textual metafunction the clause assumes the character of a message in a line of meaning known as thematic structure and it organizes the message into a flow of information. According to Davies (2019, p. 11), "we are constructing a text, weaving together images and perhaps language, making threads of connection that tie the elements we inscribe together so that identities, links, continuities, casualties and affinities can be seen between them. This is the textual function, which manages the organisation of information and its cohesion".

Part of this organization is given by the presence of a Theme, "the element that serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its context" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 89) and by having Theme as the point of departure, the remainder of the message, where the Theme is developed, is characterized as the Rheme. Theme and Rheme function together in a textual structure as Theme is a structural element at the starting point of the message, functioning as "the first experiential structure of the clause, i.e. that functions as a participant, a circumstance or the process" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 91) and the Rheme follows. The Theme and Rheme also follow the rule of an information unit, that is "a tension of what is already known or predictable or what is new and unpredictable" (Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004, p. 116), with this structure based on what is Given and what is New. In this information unit, the Given information precedes the New by prominence in the structure, responsible for recovering information. As the Theme functions as Given information, the Rheme functions as New, that is the new and unrecoverable information.

If the Theme is a Subject in a declarative clause, it is an unmarked Theme. If the Theme is not a Subject, but something other, then it is marked Theme and the most usual

form of marked Theme is an adverbial group or prepositional phrase without any warning functioning as an adjunct in the clause. The less frequent thematic element is a Complement, which is a nominal group that is not functioning as a Subject.

In interrogative clauses, those elements that indicate that we request an answer, the Theme is always the first element in the clause, no matter what, such as the Finite verbal operator, or “the element that embodies the polarity” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 101) that expresses positive or negative to yes/no questions, such as: is, isn’t, do, don’t, can, can’t. In a WH- question, the Theme is the element that requests the information: the WH- element, such as what, where, who, when, how, etc.

Imperative clauses, often are unmarked Themes elements such as let’s in first position, or marked when the Theme is marked when involves a Subject, but the common is the verb in thematic position. In negative imperatives, the principle is the same of yes/no questions: the unmarked Theme is don’t, plus the following element, either Subject or Predicator. The same occurs in positive form with do plus Subject or Predicator. In imperatives is the only type of clause that usually the Predicator (verb) is regularly found as Theme.

2.2.2. INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTION

Following the metafunctions, Systemic Functional Linguistics analyses language in the perspective of interaction that relies on giving or demanding (Halliday, 1984) information or goods-&-services through language that plays the role as exchange between people. Davies (2019, p. 11) says that "we are operating on other human beings—causing them to engage with us in a shared creation of meaning, showing them what we think about the world we’ve rendered and encouraging them to respond to it".

The two main variables, information and goods-&-services, set the four primary speech roles that Halliday and Mathiessen (2004) define as offer, command, statement and question, with accepting an offer, carrying out a command, acknowledging a statement and answering a question as desired responses.

2.2.3. EXPERIENTIAL METAFUNCTION

According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2004, p. 212), the clause also can play the role of representation, that is, it "construes a quantum of change in the flow of events as a figure, or configuration of process, participants involved in it and any attendant circumstances' ". Davies (2019, p. 11) says that, in Comics "we are rendering our experience in images and words, building a world and a sequence of events that contain a message". The grammatical system that provides lexicogrammatical resources for construing "a quantum of change in the flow of events" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 213) is the system of Transitivity.

The sequence of events is described by Halliday & Matthiessen as "a figure of happening, doing, sensing, being or having". According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014, p. 212), there are three fundamental elements in this metafunction:

- (i) a process unfolding through time;
- (ii) the participants involved in the process;
- (iii) circumstances associated with the process.

The Process carries the meaning, realized by a verb; the Participant is directly involved in the Process and the Circumstances, which can be of time, space, cause, manner, etc, are not directly involved, but associated with the Process. Together, these elements are the basis of a language construal of our experience of the world.

The processes, as the center of the representation of a clause, plays the role of constructing meaning by the world experience through a set of manageable process types and every process holds a distinct way of building the experience. The main processes in the construal of experience in the world of consciousness are Material processes, the doing or external action; the Mental processes, the sensing or the inner experience; Relational process, related to identifying and classifying; Behavioural; Verbal and, finally, Existential.

Recognizing the role of the three main elements of a clause as experience is important to differ the roles of these elements in each type of process. For example, in Material processes, the Participant is the Actor, or in: "the one that does the deed" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 224) and also a Subject, but when Material process of one Participant affects other, this second Participant is named Goal. Still in the

Material process, there are also Recipient and Client, both Participants in benefactive role, for example.

Mental processes “concerned of the world of our own consciousness” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 245) there is the participant called Senser or the one that senses and the Phenomenon, that which is felt.

In Relational processes, the clause functions to characterize or identify. Both experiences occur between two Participants, construed by the processes of being or having. For example, in attributive clauses, Attribute is ascribed by a Relational process to a Carrier which carry this attribute and in identifying clauses, the Participant is the Identified and the element that identifies it is the Identifier and there are also Token and Value, that express lower expression and higher content, respectively.

The physiological and psychological behaviour are the Behavioural process. The Participant is the Behaver and the Process is the Behaviour.

The Verbal processes function in the clauses of saying. There is always a Participant in these clauses, representing the speaker: the Sayer, but also secondary Participants, for example: Receiver is the Participant who is addressed by the saying and realized by a nominal group. The Verbal Process is the Verbiage, or “the function that corresponds to what is said, representing it as a class of thing rather than as a report or quote” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 306) and there is a third Participant in a subtype of verbal clauses which is targeted by the process of saying: the Target.

Last but not least, Existential clauses represent the happening or existence of something. The Existential process functions with the verb be, similar to Relational process, but it differs from the attributive and identifying representations as it only carries the existent, or the one that exists.

These three metafunctions are inter-related and expressed in one form — the clause, which, as text, holds traces of these meanings, since “the three categories above are used as the basis for exploring how meanings are created and understood, because they allow the matching of particular types of functions/meanings with particular patterns of wordings to an extent that other categorizations generally do not” (Thompson, 2013, p. 28-29). For the purposes of the present study, the three metafunctions will be taken in

consideration but, due to the nature of the text analysed, the Interpersonal metafunction will not be highlighted in this study, considering that there is no human interaction inside the synopsis or the recap page text.

2.3. MACROTHEME

While Theme functions as the point of departure of the message and Rheme develops the information given previously by Theme, MacroTheme is given by Martin & Rose (2007) as a point of departure in the text's periodicity, which is the information flow, or "the rhythm of discourse — the layers of prediction that flag for readers what's to come, and the layers of consolidation that accumulate the meanings made. These are also textual kinds of meanings, concerned with organising discourse as pulses of information" (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 31). MacroTheme can predict the argumentation of the text and "the order in which they will unfold" (Derewianka, 2016, p. 271) as a guide into the structure, including HyperTheme which "predict how a text will unfold as higher-level Themes, and peaks which sum up what has unfolded as higher-level News." (Martin & Rose 2007, p. 36) and the Theme (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) as part of departure of a clause. According to Derewianka & Jones (2016), these elements offer tools to analyze the text structure in a form of organization of ideas and orient the reader towards what is to come. The synopsis and recap pages from the Civil War comics are the main resources to understand not only the orientation to the narrative given by their authors, but also to understand the building of the identity of the current conflict and polarization between the characters, since we use language "to talk about our experience of the world, included the worlds in our own minds, to describe events and states and entities involved in them" (Thompson, 2013, p. 28).

Through a metafunctional analysis, it is possible to study patterns of choices in detail in verbal texts that might influence directly on the worldview of the reader. Following Thompson's (2013, p. 32) claim in terms of "who did what to whom" allows the view of Themes and Processes that lead the orientation for the conflict present in the comics. To the relevance of this study, Davies (2019, p. 7) says that "Comics incorporate verbal language to those ends, as well as using images to serve and support those purposes. So, it will be useful to describe what comics are up to using a framework that has described the functions of language, rather than just the forms of language".

Considering the verbal text in the context of Comics as a part of an organized structure of lexical elements that might influence in its reading, Halliday (1994, p. 300) says that "the speaker can exploit the potential that the situation defines, using thematic and information structure to produce an astonishing variety of rhetorical effects" and by unfolding the language through a social semiotic analysis, it is possible to understand the set of choices given in the process of meaning-making. Comics, as a medium in which one of the main aims is to communicate with the readers, having procedures to unfold the language in comics is important, since "comics is a secret language all its own, and mastering it poses challenges unlike any faced by prose writers, illustrators or any other creative professionals — most of that territory has remained unexplored until now." McCloud (2006, p. 2)

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. NATURE OF THE RESEARCH

This Final Year Project, namely Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso, is a descriptive type of research, which aims at describing characteristics of a certain population. In this type of research, data are observed, registered, analyzed, classified and interpreted with the interference of the researcher. In parallel with the theoretical apparatus of this investigation, descriptive studies look at the data in its environment of use, that is, language in use. For data composition, seven issues of Marvel's Civil War were chosen.

To set the historical chronology of comic books in the United States, *Faster Than A Speeding Bullet: The Rise of Graphic Novels* (2003) presents the ascension of comics, since the first comic strips until the graphic novels and the contemporary digital editions. This work also considers the impact of comics in Pop culture worldwide and especially superheroes comic books and the cinematic adaptations. To the introduction of comics, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (1994) and *Making Comics* (2006) by Scott McCloud introduces through the comic book itself the structure of a comic book, in a simple and didactic language, always setting the process of communication between artist and reader through the narrative of image and text decoded by reading.

According to Millar (apud. DiPaolo, 2011, pg. 2), through turbulent political times, especially war and social unrest, superheroes comic books reach their most popular and evocative moment. Even though superheroes are dealing with fictional worlds, sciences and politics are still associated with the real context outside the comic pages. Besides that, comic books are still established as a low-level intellectual reading habit, even though it reaches all masses due to its readiness. More than a vague or childish medium, comic books in superhero genre has a broad field for research, considering its unique hybrid form through image and text, also the historical, social and political context that these stories portray. Comics might have affected the mood of the public "by being pro-war during wartime and pacifistic during peacetime almost as often as they have served as the voice of the minority crying for peace during wartime and advocating going to war when the public is reluctant to do so" (DiPaolo, 2011, p. 12). From twenty/thirty pages to full-length book graphic novels, the superhero genre

from comic books expands through media, reaching the cinema with blockbuster movies, TV series and games.

Therefore, describing the verbal language constitutive of comics is of great importance as the message that is construed in the orientations of the synopsis and recap pages does not only 'portray the fictional context of its characters. Davies (2019, p. 9) says that "in Comics, verbal expression constitutes a means through which abstract relations can be supplied, with features offered by the visual and these resources are at the creator's disposal to use comics to aim in representing the full range of human experience. In superhero comics, more specifically, language needs to be unfolded so as to be aware of the meanings construed in the whole environment where the story is depicted.

3.2. CORPUS COLLECTION

Marvel's Civil War, a Marvel Comics event created by Mark Millar and Steven McNiven was launched in seven issues between May 2006 and February 2007. With tie-ins throughout multiple Marvel titles as Fantastic Four, X-Men and The Avengers, Civil War is a consequence of previous events in the Marvel Universe as Secret War by Bendis and Dell'Otto and House of M by Bendis and Coipel. As the title suggests, Civil War puts heroes against each other when the government installs the Superheroes Registration Act after an incident involving superhumans that destroyed a city. On one side, the pro-registration goes by the law to serve in the name of the country, revealing their real identities; on the other side, the anti-registration is persecuted by pro-registration heroes and declared enemies from State.

Defending personal freedom and the idea that superheroes should not be involved in politics, Captain America/Steve Rogers was against the SRA. A man who lived and fought in World War II as a symbol of an American nationalism, wearing the US flag, an emblematic shield and representing the values of a different time. A supersoldier created through scientific experiments, this superhero was an inspiration for soldiers and Americans to fight for freedom against their enemies in the name of the nation. After awakening from the ice, Captain America lives decades after World War II, facing a new modern America with completely different definitions of being a superhero, turned himself a misfit.

Originally created in 1963, juxtaposing Captain America and supporting the SRA, Iron Man/Tony Stark believes that the registration could protect civilians from threats caused by both villains and superheroes. A wealthy “playboy” and a genius man behind the Stark Industries where he was responsible for developing advanced weapons for wars. After an attack against his life, he uses his intelligence to escape from captivity to create his first iron suit that inspired him and changed his mind about selling weapons to become Iron Man. This superhero was constructed to fight against threats around the world, Iron Man represented what was most advanced in terms of science and, in specific, advanced security.

The verbal text plays a fundamental role in the whole setting of the narrative, because “the deployment of words and the architecture of the structure composed expands or develops the concept of the story” (Eisner, 1985, p. 123). Besides the general views of allegories, ideology debates and general narrative themes that set the context of the narrative, the verbal core itself is missing, even though it is a crucial factor when the main characters are juxtaposed in two sides and the rest has to decide which side, they jump in.

Further of the main characters and their extremists sides, focusing mainly in the verbal text, or language *in* comics (Bramlett, 2012), the previous organization and orientation influences the construction of both Captain America and Iron Man’s sides, but also the lexicogrammar set of choices that describes the war, as peaks of informations like the oscillations of waves (Martin & Rose, p. 26), displayed for the readers to get involved with since this relation author x reader, according to Davies (2019, p. 6) is "a communion more than a transfer of information".

3.3. PROCEDURE OF ANALYSIS

To compose the data set, all the seven issues of Marvel Civil War were considered to be analysed, taking the back cover synopsis of all issues and the recap pages present from the second issue to the seventh. The first issue does not need present a previous orientation as it is the start of the whole event. For the purpose of the analysis, the synopsis and recap pages were specifically chosen for its relevance in the reading of these comics, that is, these features rely on patterned lexicogrammar choices that may indicate the reading of the whole narrative.

For the comprehension of the text analyzed, Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary² defines synopsis as “a condensed statement or outline (as of a narrative or treatise)”. According to Marvel Wikia³ website, a recap page is a resource that helps readers to understand the whole context of the ongoing narrative as “an expository device that constitutes of a single page (and sometimes a splash page) at the beginning of a comic that features a summary of important events that have occurred in previous issues and even basic information about the series’ protagonists” with the title of the comic story together with the author credits and issue number. According to Wolk (2007, p. 86), a splash page is “a literal or symbolic representation of a conflict or dramatic moment that would happen later in the story. The sort of story it was to be having been determined, the narrative proper could begin with a quiet moment, since the reader knew that something exciting would be happening later; the only question was how the story would get there”, which means that the role of these pages is to guide the readers, only.

The analysis of both synopsis and recap pages will be developed in the next chapter below.

² <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/synopsis>>. Acesso em: 10 jul. 2021.

³ <https://marvel.fandom.com/wiki/Glossary:Recap_Page>. Acesso em: 5 jul. 2021

4. THE ANALYSIS

In this section, the seven issues of Marvel's Civil War will be analysed. To organize the data collection, this analysis is divided in three parts of investigation: i) analysis of the emergent lexicogrammatical processes taking into consideration the System of Transitivity; ii) identification of both Macrothemes and Hyperthemes in the verbal structure of the recap pages; iii) setting the text orientation through the synopsis and recap pages, taking as reference the Generic Structure Potential elements.

Since the synopsis and recap pages repeats information by using the likewords in clauses and full paragraphs during the seven issues of the current, the analysis will focus only in the first occurrence of the repetition. By analyzing the processes instantiated in the meaning production of the Macrothemes, a pattern might emerge in terms of the themes involved in the clause configuration, mostly related with salient participants.

4.1. SYSTEM OF TRANSITIVITY

Processes function as a nuclear part of the meaning in the text and without this element in a clause, it is not possible to create meaning. To this study, the process here analyzed are central in the construal of the message in the synopsis and recap pages as it functions as identification of meaningful participants in the text, which are: i) Captain America and Anti-Registration team; ii) Iron Man and Pro-Registration team; iii) Spider Man; iv) the public, and v) the Superhuman Registration Act. Through the processes unfolded by System of Transitivity, it is possible to characterize the current participants that play this crucial role in the text.

For identification and research purposes, the following table will be used for color coding the process types:

MATERIAL	MENTAL	RELATIONAL
BEHAVIOURAL	VERBAL	EXISTENTIAL

The Processes are identified, analyzed and displayed in this study in a chronological sequence for the further analysis on text orientation and the Generic 19

Structure Potential. The Participants and Circumstances, elements of the System of Transitivity, are present in the analysis to set the Process role in the clause as representation of this salient occurrences, but the analysis will not dive into discussing Participant or Circumstances, since the main focus is the nuclear element: the Process as by unpacking it the clause configuration is brought to the fore.

4.1.1. CAPTAIN AMERICA

All of Captain America's occurrences happen in the recap pages from the first, third, fifth, sixth and seventh issue, respectively. The character is the leader and representation of the Anti-Registration side, so processes related with his teammates will be considered, since it's part of Captain America's context and identity in the narrative. Most of the Processes found in Captain America's investigation are Material processes that function as actions and events, often relating to his decision to take his stand against the Superhuman Registration Act.

The first occurrences that Captain America appears in the first issue's recap page are:

I) Others, embodied by Captain America, **take umbrage** at this assault on their civil liberties.

II) When Captain America is **called upon** to hunt down his fellow heroes who **are** in defiance of the Registration Act, he **chooses** to go AWOL, becoming a public enemy in the process.

In the first sentence, the Anti-Registration side are represented by a Phenomenon, as a definition of their personal feelings towards the Superhuman Registration Act and Captain America himself is put at a Circumstantial element to this Participant. In the second sentence, Captain America is put as an addressee of the Verbal process symbolising an order that was given, but he takes the action as an Actor in Material process to decide to go against the law and become a public enemy. Both processes represent his first step to establish the Anti-Registration side.

In the third issue's recap page, Captain America appears in two occurrences:

I) Captain America **goes** underground and **begins** to form a resistance movement.

II) Others **view** the Act as an assault on their civil liberties.

Again, as the second occurrence in the first issue, the Material processes represent Captain America as an Actor of both actions of going against the law and also founding his resistance that shares the same opinion on the Superhuman Registration Act as him. The second occurrence put the Anti-Registration side as a Sensor, using the Phenomenon to represent their opinion on Superhuman Registration Act in the text, similar to the first occurrence in the first issue above.

In the recap page of fifth issue, Captain America's Anti-Registration side appears in two occurrences:

I) Other members of Captain America's resistance **have been captured** and **brought** to the pro-registration faction's holding facility in the Negative Zone.

II) While some of Captain America's allies **have joined with** Tony Stark

The Captain America team's related members are main Participants of both Material processes. In the first occurrence, the Anti-Registration team is the Goal, since there are the ones who did the action, the Actor, was the Pro-registration team that is realized as a Circumstantial element bringing it to thematic position put the Pro-Registration members to mark the Theme of the clause. In the second occurrence, the Material process realized the function of choosing sides of members from Anti-Registration side who changed to Pro-Registration side.

In the recap page of the sixth issue, Captain America and Anti-Registration team appear as Actors in Material and Relational processes:

I) Captain America currently **leads** an underground resistance movement against the new law.

II) The resistance now **has** Frank Castle on their side.

In the first occurrence, the Material process sets the choice of Captain America being against the Superhuman Registration Act as an Actor. In the second occurrence,

the Anti-Registration team is also put as an Possessor in an possessive Relational process.

In the recap page of the seventh and last issue, Captain America and the Anti-Registration team is realized through Material processes:

I) But Captain America **has gathered** an underground resistance movement against the new law.

II) Finally, the resistance **mounts** an attack on the pro-registration faction's holding facility in the Negative Zone.

Again, the Material process in the first occurrence refers to Captain America's action of creating his team now often named resistance. In the second occurrence, the resistance is the main Participant in the clause as an Initiator and the Pro-Registration team here appears as the Goal.

4.1.2. IRON MAN

The occurrences that Iron Man or the Pro-Registration side participate are found in both synopsis and recap page from the second, fifth, sixth and seventh issue, respectively. He has less participation in the orientation than Captain America.

The two first occurrences are in the second issue's recap page:

I) Some heroes, such as Iron Man, **see** this as a natural evolution of the role of superhumans in society, and a reasonable request.

II) In a closed-door meeting with the President and his Cabinet, Iron Man, Mr. Fantastic and Yellow jacket **vow** to bring Cap to ground.

Different from Captain America which takes his stand by making use of Material processes, Iron Man and Pro-Registration heroes here define their side by the use of Mental processes. But, at the same time, the Pro-Registration side also uses Mental processes to externalize their opinion on Superhuman Registration Act. Similar to Captain America, there is also a Verbal process related to an order, but different from Captain America that was the Addressee, Iron Man and his fellows are the Sayers, the

main Participants in the Verbal process. This verbal process also marks the official counterattack by Iron Man on Captain America.

In the synopsis of the fifth and sixth issue, Iron Man's action towards Captain America is expressed by the same Material Process:

I) In an effort to win out over the anti-registration forces, Iron Man **reveals** the latest element of his plan: a new, more brutal team of Thunderbolts!

II) Iron Man **reveals** the newest element of his plan: a massive prison complex **located** inside the extradimensional Negative Zone!

What differs from one to another is the thematic structure, since the first occurrence relies on marked theme to justify Iron Man's action, the second, Iron Man himself is the Theme of the message.

In the seventh issue's recap page, the process that refers to Iron Man and Pro-Registration team's response to Captain America and his team is a Material Process, not a direct action against the other team, but a preparation for the upcoming and inevitable confront:

I) But Iron Man and his forces are **lying in ambush**.

4.1.3. SPIDER MAN

Spider Man, as an iconic superhero of Marvel Comics, plays a fundamental role in Civil War. In the beginning, he chooses the Pro-Registration side, unmasking himself and revealing to the world his identity as Peter Parker. But, when the sides clash in combat, Spider Man starts to doubt his choice, because he was not intending to take his actions into violence, so he changes his side and goes to Captain America's Anti-Registration side. The character appears in the third, fifth and sixth issue, respectively.

In the third issue, Spider-Man appears in both synopsis and recap page respectively:

I) Spider-Man **makes** a bold move and **unmasks** in front of the media...

II) Spider-Man, who **has allied** himself with Iron Man and the pro-registration side, not only **registers**, but also **unmasks** as Peter Parker in front of the media.

The Material processes are the mark of the character's choice between the two sides and Spider-Man is the Actor of all his processes that function as his decision.

In the fifth issue's recap page, Spider-Man realizes a Mental Process related to the side that he already chose in the narrative. The Mental process does not only functions as the act of choice itself or taking actions against the opposite side, but also for questioning the character's place in the whole conflict:

Spider-Man is **beginning** to question his loyalty to Iron Man

In the sixth issue, Spider Man appears in both synopsis and recap page and, again, the Material Process marks his choice to change his side from Pro to Anti-Registration side in the synopsis, as is seen below:

I) Spider-Man **defects from** the pro-registration side

In the recap page, the Material Process is resumed as his action of leaving the Pro-Registration side, but he is part of a sequence of events that is orientated by Material Processes, presented below:

Spider-Man **has left** the pro-registration side. Jack O'Lantern and the Jester — members of a newer and more vicious Thunderbolts team — **were sent** to track down Spider-Man. After nearly **killing** him, the villains **were gunned down** by the Punisher, who **took** Spider-Man's battered body back to one of Captain America's safehouses.

The Participants Jack O' Lantern and Jester are villains working for the government acting as the Actor, while Spider-Man is the Goal of their action. In the next clause, the villains are the Goal of Punisher's Material Process and, at the end, Spider-Man is the Goal of Punisher's Material Process that is also a mark of choosing a side.

The same metafunctional resources that this character relies on to choose the Pro-Registration side, which are the Material processes, it is the processes that function in the meaning of Spider-Man doubting and changing side, becoming an allied of the Captain America's resistance after almost dying by the hands of villains

that were sent by Pro-Registration forces to hunt down Spider-Man after his decision to dare and go against Iron Man himself.

4.1.4. THE PUBLIC

The public also plays a major role in the narrative context, because it is after the claims of the population that the Superhuman Registration Act is debated and passed. In some excerpts, the public can be represented by names or adjectives. The occurrences are found in the second and third issue, respectively.

In the synopsis of the second issue, the public reaction is expressed by a Verbal Process that was realized as a consequence of a Material Process in which superheroes were the Actor. The public itself is the Sayer, and the superheroes are part of the Verbiage.

I) After the rash actions of four young heroes **cause** the destruction of the city of Stamford, Connecticut, the public **calls for** reform in the way super heroes **conduct** their affairs.

There are also three occurrences involving public people in the recap page from the second issue:

I) In response to this tragedy, public sentiment **is** turning against super heroes.

II) Johnny Storm, the Human Torch, is **attacked** outside a nightclub and **beaten** into a coma.

III) Advocate Miriam Sharpe, who **lost** her son in the Stamford Disaster, **calls for** reform in the way super heroes **conduct** their affairs.

Due to the thematic choice to put the tragedy as the Theme in the first occurrence, the Relational Process appears as a consequence of the Theme.

In the second excerpt, the public is omitted, but it is implicit the involvement of civilians in the attack on Human Torch, that owns the attack as an attributive Relational Process. The public is omitted, but the Material Process that reveals the violence against the character is implicit that were caused by civilians, different from the third occurrence, that the public against superheroes is now represented by a woman that operates both Material and Verbal processes. The Material Process serves to set her in the tragedy, so as

the heroes in choosing sides and the Verbal Process is an indicator that she was at the side of the law.

These next occurrences are from the recap page of the third issue:

I) After Stamford, Connecticut **is destroyed** during a televised fight between the New Warriors and a group of dangerous villains, public sentiment **turns against** super heroes.

II) Advocates **call for** reform and a Superhuman Registration Act is debated, which would require all those possessing paranormal abilities to register with the government, divulge their true identities to the authorities and submit to training and sanctioning in the manner of federal agents.

In the first, the thematic choice conveys to put the tragedy as the Theme with an attributive Relational Process as it's center as motion to the happening of the Material Process that is realized by the public sentiment. In the second, the public subject is specified with another name, but realizing the same Verbal Process as the other previous occurrences.

4.1.5. THE SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT

The motion of the whole conflict, the Superhuman Registration Act also is an important participant in lexical patterns in the following corpus. The predominant process in this particular participant is Relational Process and all the occurrences can be found from the second to the fifth issue, respectively.

In the synopsis of the first issue, the Superhuman Registration Act realizes two processes, previously introduced by a Verbal Process. In sequence, a Verbal Process made by the Superhuman Registration Act projects the Material Process that conveys the idea of taking a stand, in this case, the side of the law:

I) In the wake of a tragedy, Capitol Hill **proposes** the Super Hero Registration Act, **requiring** all **costumed** heroes **to unmask** themselves before the government.

There is an occurrence in both synopsis and recap page from the second issue:

I) A Superhuman Registration Act **is proposed**, which would **require** all those possessing paranormal abilities to register with the government.

II) On Capitol Hill, a Superhuman Registration Act **is debated** which would **require** all those possessing paranormal abilities to register with the government, divulging their true identities to the authorities and submitting to training and sanctioning in the manner of federal agents.

The same word choices from the previous synopsis are used, except for the Theme. In the first occurrence, the Superhuman Registration Act is a marked Theme, also realizing a Relational Process before the Verbal Process. The information previously given in the synopsis is repeated with similar lexical choices in the Processes, but a different Theme, since the Circumstance of Place was highlighted.

In the third issue, the repetition happens with synopsis and recap page:

I) After the rash actions of four young heroes **cause** the destruction of the city of Stamford, Connecticut, a Superhuman Registration Act **is** passed by Congress, and now all those possessing paranormal abilities are required to register with the government.

II) One week later, the Act **is** passed. Any person with superhuman powers who refuses to register **is** now a criminal.

The thematic choice highlights the tragedy in the first occurrence, turning the Superhuman Registration Act approval as a consequence, which is realized in the Relational Process. However, in the second excerpt, the thematic structure sets the Circumstance of time as the highlight of the message, and the Relational Process now is to identify those who are targeted by the Superhuman Registration Act.

In the synopsis of issue four, the Superhuman Registration Act is not explicitly addressed, but its consequence is realized by an attributive Relational Process:

I) Any individual with paranormal powers who refuses to register **is** now a criminal.

The following excerpts are from the recap page on issue five, bringing the Superhuman Registration Act with a Material Process to mark its approval. So as before,

the SRA is not explicitly present in this sentence, but its consequence on people who are against it is realized by an attributive Relational Process:

I) A Superhuman Registration Act **has been passed** which requires all people possessing paranormal abilities to register with the government.

II) Those who do not register **are considered** criminals.

4.2. MACROTHEME & HYPERTHEME

To identify the Macrothemes and Hyperthemes from the text, both synopsis and reca pages were considered. All the results are displayed in a table, including the possible variations in the results.

For organization purposes, the analysis is divided in two subchapters: i) The tragedy of Stamford as Macrotheme; ii) The Superhuman Registration Act as Macrotheme.

4.2.1. THE TRAGEDY OF STAMFORD AS MACROTHEME

In the first issue of Marvel Civil War, the reader is caught in the middle of a televised action of young heroes in a city, trying to catch some villains that were hiding in the city of Stamford, but one of these villains employs himself and destroys the city with him, also taking heroes and civilians' lives. After this scene, the credits are shown in pages, marking the beginning of the conflict narrative. The incident is the point of departure of the reader since they open the comic book, but it also appears in the whole narrative as a reminder of why heroes are fighting. The synopsis and recap pages are not different.

The tragedy of Stamford is present at the very beginning of all seven synopsis, highlighting the action of the young heroes and the public as Themes. So as the characters in the narrative, the Macrotheme sets the reader as a reminder of this starting scene as the first peak of this ongoing war.

4.2.1.1. MACROTHEME IN THE SYNOPSIS

ISSUE	MACROTHEME
#2 - #7	After the rash actions of four young heroes cause the destruction of the city of Stamford, Connecticut, the public calls for reform in the way super heroes conduct their affairs.

There are two Hyperthemes in these seven synopsis. Even though some events are added and repetitive words change, the Hyperthemes are still the same: The Superhuman Registration Act is proposed, leading the reader to understand that there are consequences for those who go against the law. However, in the sixth and seventh issue, a new Hypertheme is added: a brutal battle, an event that is also a Hypertheme in the recap pages.

MACROTHEME: Stamford Disaster
Hypertheme 1: Superhuman Registration Act is proposed;
Hypertheme 2 (issues #6 and #7): The brutal battle;
New: Cliffhanger

The New information is realized in all occurrences as a cliffhanger; a piece of information that the readers are going to find in the current issue. This element is analyzed further on subchapter 4.3.

4.2.1.2. MACROTHEME IN THE RECAP PAGES

Different from the synopsis, the tragedy is not a current Macrotheme in the recap pages. The issues that this Macrotheme is found are the second, third and fourth.

ISSUE	MACROTHEME
#2	Hoping to boost their ratings, four New Warriors — young super heroes and reality television stars— attempt to apprehend a quartet of villains holed up in Stamford, Connecticut. When confronted, the explosive Nitro employs his self-detonation ability, blowing the heroes and a large chunk of Stamford into oblivion. The entire incident is caught on tape.
#3 - #4	After Stamford, Connecticut is destroyed during a televised fight between the New Warriors and a group of dangerous villains, public sentiment turns against super heroes

The Hyperthemes identified in these three issues are also different between them. In the second issue, there is only one Hypertheme: the response of the tragedy, where the public opinion on superheroes is shown, but also is the moment that Iron Man and Captain America set themselves on opposite sides. In issues three and four, this only Hyperheme turns into two: the response of the tragedy, stating the public opinion on superheroes and the Superhuman Registration Act passing by the Congress, setting both Captain America and Iron Man sides by their different views of the law.

MACROTHEME: Stamford Disaster
Hypertheme 1: The response of the tragedy;
New: Cliffhanger

Recap page #2

MACROTHEME: Stamford Disaster
Hypertheme 1: The response of the tragedy
Hypertheme 2: SRA passed by the Congress
New: Cliffhanger

Recap page #3 and #4

4.2.2. THE SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT AS A MACROTHEME

Since the tragedy of Stamford is the count zero of the Civil War, the Superhuman Registration Act is the main reason that the protagonists decide to divide themselves into Pro or Anti Registration Act.

4.2.2.1. MACROTHEME IN THE SYNOPSIS

ISSUE	MACROTHEME
#1	In the wake of a tragedy, Capitol Hill proposes the Superhuman Registration Act, requiring all costumed heroes to unmask themselves before the government.

Through the thematic choice, the Stamford tragedy is a Circumstantial element announced as the Theme, introducing the Superhuman Registration Act as the Rheme.

Even though the tragedy is highlighted, the following Hypertheme relies on the Registration topic, since the information given to the reader is that the heroes are divided by their opinions on the Superhuman Registration Act.

MACROTHEME: Superhuman Registration Act
Hyperheme 1: Heroes divided
New: Cliffhanger

4.2.2.2. MACROTHEME IN THE RECAP PAGES

In the recap pages, different from the synopsis, the Macrotheme is highlighted as the Theme. The Hyperthemes also differ from some issues to another.

ISSUE	MACROTHEME
#5	#7 A Superhuman Registration Act has been passed which requires all people possessing paranormal abilities to register with the government.

MACROTHEME: Superhuman Registration Act
Hypertheme 1: Those who do not register is considered a criminal
Hypertheme 2: The battle
Hypertheme 3 (Issue 6): Spider-Man
New: Cliffhanger

Recap #5 and #6

In the fifth and sixth issues, there are three Hyperthemes developed through the recap pages.

The first Hypertheme is the criminalization of those who do not register, when Iron Man supports the law and Captain America automatically becomes a public enemy by refusing to register himself. The second is the battle, where Goliath was killed by Thor and some members of the Anti Registration team were captured. The third Macrotheme happens only in the sixth issue, focusing on Spider-Man. The MacroNew as the cliffhanger follows a pattern in these two issues, since they focus on Spider-Man changing from one side to another.

However, the seventh issue has two Hyperthemes: the first is also about the criminalization of those who do not register, rescuing Captain America and Iron Man's reactions after the law being approved. The second Hypertheme develops the conflicts and tensions that rage between the two sides, warning that these two armies of heroes are ready to fight against each other and there is no turning back:

MACROTHEME: The Superhuman Registration Act
Hypertheme 1: Those who do not register is considered a criminal
Hypertheme 2: Conflicts and tensions
New: Cliffhanger

Recap page #7

4.3. GENERIC STRUCTURE POTENTIAL

In this third and last part of the analysis, this study tends to explore the elements in the text by using the Generic Structure Potential, to understand i) what are these elements?; ii) how these elements function as orientation to the reader?

ORIENTATION ELEMENTS
SRA (Obligatory, not fixed)
Stamford Tragedy (Optional, not fixed)
Public opinion (Optional, not fixed)
Heroes divided (Obligatory, not fixed)
The Battle (Optional, not fixed)

Spider-Man (Optional, not fixed)
Cliffhanger (Obligatory, fixed)

As the Macrotheme and Hyperthemes analysis suggest, the main elements set at the beginning of the periodicity of text are: the Stamford tragedy and the Superhuman Registration Act. The difference between them is that Stamford tragedy can be considered an Optional element, since there is no mention in recap pages of the fifth, sixth and seventh issue, but the SRA is depicted as an Obligatory element, mentioned in the whole verbal text analyzed.

The public opinion functions as an Optional element and its place is not fixed, because it often follows the Stamford tragedy (Optional) or the SRA (Obligatory) as a consequence. In the Macrotheme analysis, this element also appears as part of some Hyperthemes related to the SRA or response of the tragedy.

The second Obligatory element is the "Heroes divided", that is present in all synopsis and recap pages. It is indeed necessary to recognize this element to go back to the iconic subtitle that Marvel's Civil War carries in all of its covers: whose side are you on? Depicting Captain America and Iron Man views on the law, this element might occur after the SRA (Obligatory) element or after the public (Optional) element, classifying its position as not fixed.

Other topics can be considered Optional elements, even though they did appear in a few issues, as the battle and Spider-Man. The battle element, occurring in fifth and sixth issue, and the Spider-Man element, occurring in the third, fifth and sixth issue in different positions of the orientation.

The last element is the Cliffhanger, or the piece of information that increases curiosity in the audience to know what comes next. It does occur only at the end of all synopsis and recap pages. Independent of variations in its topic, the function of cliffhanger remains the same.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

To develop this study, it was necessary to go further in the origins of the Comics. Through its history, it is possible to set its importance as part of our culture that remains in evolution until nowadays, especially superhero comics. From World War II with the creation of Superman, through the birth of Marvel Comics in 1960's, the superhero narrative is still popular, influencing different generations until now, in the age of the internet. Superheroes are influencing modern culture, with its unique storytelling that approaches the audience's reality, present in different media, such as cinema, books, games, TV series and streaming. However, due to its unique combination of words and pictures, the definition of Comics as art form, literature or language remains open to question, even though in this study the main focus was the language functioning inside this specific genre. As a multimodal resource, Comics has a huge territory to be analysed under different perspectives and sciences, especially Linguistics.

In Marvel's Civil War, the iconic conflict between Captain America and Iron Man is depicted a little more specific than their chosen sides. In the verbal text, it is possible to recognize that the author exerts some influence in the way that the readers are introduced to this event. Beyond Pro or Anti Registration Act fighting in the pages of the seven issues, it is possible to perceive how the verbal text plays a major role in the synopsis and the recap pages before the comics itself, setting the previous and the following events to the readers.

Focusing on the verbal text, by giving direct attention (Espindola, 2010) to the verbal language of the synopsis and recap pages of the 7 (seven) issues of Marvel's Civil War, it was possible to fulfil the following objectives: i) to analyze the MacroThemes of the 7 (seven) issues of Marvel's Civil War; ii) to observe the metafunctional profile of the point of departure construed in the verbal texts of each of the 7 issues; iii) to describe how this meaning construal influences the reading of the War. The back cover synopsis of all the issues and the recap pages were chosen for its relevance in the reading of these comics, since these features rely on patterned lexicogrammar choices while they are orienting the reader to the narrative.

To investigate the verbal text, Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Mathiessen, 2014) offers three metafunctions as theoretical and methodological tools to understand the meaning-making process through lexicogrammatical choices, instantiated by the construal of experience and social process together: i) textual metafunction, the clause assuming the character of a message, organized into a flow of information; ii) interpersonal metafunction, referring to the exchange or interaction between speakers; iii) experiential metafunction, the clause as representation of what is going on in the world by processes. In this study, due to the composition of the verbal text, only the textual and experiential metafunctions were considered, since the interpersonal metafunction focuses on dialogues and interactions between participants and there is no described interaction between characters in the synopsis or recap pages that play a role is guiding the reader in a brief introduction of the following narrative.

The identification of MacroThemes (Halliday, Hasan, 1985; Hasan, 1996) and HyperThemes (Martin, 1993) in the verbal text, as a way of predicting the information flow of the text, unfolds how the narrative was guided through the introduction of both synopsis and recap pages. However, the Generic Structure Potential (Halliday, Hasan, 1985; Hasan 1996) looks into patterns of certain elements that are lexically realized to characterize the text as part of a genre. Focusing in the patterns of lexical choices, the Generic Structure Potential aligns with the metafunctional analysis as tools for identifying the salient choices that lead the orientation through the seven issues of Marvel's Civil War. This is helpful to describe how these synopsis and recap pages construe meaning in the orientation to the narrative, directly contributing to the way the reader chooses to decide: Whose side are you on?

The organization of the text and the orientation describes the war as sequences of peaks of information, like oscillations of waves (Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 26), by a sequence of choices highlighting certain events through thematic choices or in a higher level Macrotheme in a sequence of salient elements in all the texts analyzed to guide the reader to the conflict in the narrative. As a way of describing the specific objectives proposed, the research questions will be revisited in the subsection below.

5.1. REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The specific objectives of this study were translated in the following research questions: i) How are the seven issues orienting the conflict within the pages? ii) What is the metafunctional profile construed for this event? iii) To what extent can the orientation be biased through the verbal texts?

All the results will be described in the subsections below.

5.1.1. HOW ARE THE SEVEN ISSUES ORIENTING THE CONFLICT WITHIN THE PAGES?

Through the identification of Macrothemes and Hyperthemes in the text, it was possible to identify the peaks of the waves of information of the text in which guides the reader through the conflict.

The first Macrotheme that leads the information flow in the text is the tragedy of Stamford, where a villain exploded himself, destroying the city and killing people in the process. This is the scene that opens the first issue of Marvel's Civil War and all of the subsequent events are consequences of this point of departure of the whole narrative. The text, in the first issues, tries to bring the tragedy as a reminder of how it all started, relying also in thematic structure to highlight this event. The Hyperthemes that follow this Macrotheme are the Superhuman Registration Act being proposed and the response of the tragedy, in which are: the heroes divided, the public opinion and the law.

The second Macrotheme is the Superhuman Registration Act, which split the superheroes in two sides. The law implies in criminalizing those heroes that do not register and unmask themselves, defended by Iron Man and his team. The Hyperthemes that follows this major topic are: the heroes being divided, as a consequence of the law being passed by the government and the heroes having different opinions on it; the criminalization of superheroes that do not register, identifying Captain America and his resistance as public enemies; Spider-Man changing from the Pro-Registration side to the resistance, after almost being killed by the villains sent by the government to hunt him; the battle in that some members of Anti-Registration team were captured and one

of the heroes died and, finally, the conflicts and tensions rising among the sides that lead them to the final battle.

In terms of Generic Structure Potential, a pattern of elements was identified in the texts, being possible to classify these elements in Obligatory or Optional elements and even define their position as fixed or not fixed elements. The Obligatory elements identified were the heroes divided and the final cliffhanger, a fixed element that describes part of an event that might be developed in the current comic book. Other Optional and not fixed that could be found were: Stamford tragedy as not fixed element; the public opinion; the battle and Spider-Man.

Even though Stamford tragedy sets the beginning of the event, the analysis of Macrothemes, Hyperthemes and the elements of Generic Structure Potential shows that the text structure highlights the influence of the Superhuman Registration Act as the center of the conflict, influencing heroes to go against the other in physical or ideological combats. As a consequence of the tragedy, without the law approval, none of the following events, that could be identified in Hyperthemes, could not happen.

5.1.2. WHAT IS THE METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILE CONSTRUED FOR THIS EVENT?

The System of Transitivity on the experiential metafunction highlighted the Process that represents the Participants of the conflict in the pages of Civil War. For the study purposes, all processes that were identified and analyzed were associated with specific Participants: Captain America, Iron Man, Spider-Man, the public and the Superhuman Registration Act.

Through the texts analyzed, it was possible to see Material Processes as a current element functioning as the action of choosing sides, especially by Captain America joining his resistance team of Anti-Registration heroes to go against the law and Spider-Man by choosing to unmask himself as a decision to stay at the Iron Man's side and further, changing from Pro to Anti-Registration Act in the last issues. The narrative sets that both characters are the ones who act to take a stand.

Different from Spider-Man and Captain America, Iron Man, the leader and representation of Pro-Registration Act, relies on Mental Process to express his opinion and point of view of the law. There is a Material Process that defines his action on revealing his plans to intercept and capture those who are against the law.

The public, some specific people or actions that represent the civilians relies mostly on Verbal Processes, since the population is the first who claims for the law, culminating in the creation of the Superhuman Registration Act. In some excerpts, the public sentiment is described with Material Process

The Superhuman Registration Act, the law itself, plays a major role in the lexical choices depicted in the text. The main processes that this participant relies on are the Relational Processes, especially the attributives, because of the focus to describe or identify the law through the synopsis and the recap page. In the first issues, the Relational Processes were followed by a Verbal Process, representing the requirements of the law that the heroes must follow.

5.1.3. TO WHAT EXTENT CAN THE ORIENTATION BE BIASED THROUGH THE VERBAL TEXTS?

Considering the results of the analysis of orientation by identifying Macrothemes and elements of the Generic Structure Potential, adding the metafunctional overview in the Processes of the main participants, it is convenient to say that some of the analyzed elements are highlights in terms of lexical choices that is crucial in the flow of information of the text.

At the highest peak of the wave, the reader is guided to understand that the main force of all the conflict of Marvel's Civil War is the Registration Act that is followed by a sequence of events where the main characters are developed and moved during the whole narrative. Understanding that the Registration Act is the main element of the conflict, it justifies the iconic question that the Civil War comic books ask to the reader: whose side are you on? right after splitting the heroes into two divergent factions that clash to defend their sides. By choosing sides, using the metafunctional profile of the characters construed by the Processes as a lexical choice to identify the role of the main

characters depicted in the text, it is possible to have a metafunctional interpretation of these main characters.

The Iron Man's position in the conflict is construed by Mental processes that made him stay on the side of the law. The Mental processes also can be interpreted as a rational side of the character, as someone that thinks before any action. However, observing the actions inflicted on the other main characters, especially Captain America and Spider-Man and most of these actions are Material processes, out of the character's mental realm, showing that the Iron Man's force is used against those who are against him.

During the events described in the synopsis and recap pages, the Iron Man's actions with the Pro-Registration members make Spider-Man start to question the side he stands for and through Material processes, Spider-Man chooses sides. The violence or, in metafunctional terms, the Material processes inflicted on Spider-Man after he questioned about the actions of Iron Man and Pro-Registration side helps to put Iron Man as an antagonist.

As Spider-Man, the choices of Captain America are given by Material processes since the very beginning, as the character is represented as a force of action against the law, with these processes functioning as a form of Captain America reuniting his resistance team against the law. While the orientation emphasizes the approval of the law and, through Relational processes, focuses on the attributive profile of criminals for those who are against the law, Captain America started as a public enemy and against the rules established by the narrative. However, the Spider-Man role benefits him when both Captain America and Spider-Man relies on Material processes to express the decisions that they are taking and also both being victims of Material processes that are related to Iron Man, making Spider-Man see the resistance team as a reasonable decision. There are other characters that also shares the same metafunctional profile of relying in Material processes to take decisions and also being affected by Material

process related indirectly to Iron Man: Susan Storm and Johnny Storm, this second one being victim of civilians that used violence, or Material Process, to beat him into a coma, which resulted in Johnny and Susan leaving the Fantastic Four and again, putting Iron Man as an antagonist.

Even though the orientation and the metafunctional profile of the characters reveals that the antagonist role ends up with Iron Man, this data collected came from the synopsis and recap pages only. Understanding the metafunctional role of language and considering that there is the event itself happening inside the pages with a range of different characters and identities, with a range of interactions during the conflict and polarization, it is possible that some aspects of results can be completely different, especially when it comes to compare what is told in the orientation and how it happens inside the pages of the comic books. Analyzing the peaks of the information in the orientation is a surface overview of a deep and complex narrative that can be resumed in future research.

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