

METAPHOR ANALYSIS IN SONGS THROUGH CDA: GREEN DAY SONGS AND POWER RELATIONS

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RESUMEN

Las canciones constituyen uno de los medios más poderosos a través de los cuales se transmiten pensamientos e ideas. Por medio de frases y rimas, las canciones pueden mostrar diferentes aspectos de una cultura dada en momentos particulares de la historia. El propósito del presente trabajo es analizar las metáforas conceptuales de algunas canciones de la banda de rock Green Day para develar el contenido implícito en los dominio fuente (*source domain*) y dominio meta (*target domain*) de esas metáforas. Siguiendo los lineamientos del Análisis Crítico del Discurso (Fairclough, 2010) y considerando tanto el contexto político como el social de producción de estas canciones como así también el propósito del escritor, se seleccionaron cinco canciones del álbum *American Idiot* (2004). Las metáforas conceptuales, entendidas como el dominio conceptual utilizado para entender otro dominio conceptual (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), fueron identificadas y agrupadas de acuerdo con las entidades (dominio meta) a las cuales se refieren los dominio fuente. Encontramos que diferentes dominio meta en las canciones hacen referencia a los mismos dominios fuente, exponiendo la situación de un grupo social en un período específico de tiempo y de relaciones de poder entre las entidades a través de la perspectiva de una banda de rock.

PALABRAS CLAVE: análisis crítico del discurso; metáfora conceptual; dominio fuente; dominio meta.

ABSTRACT

Songs constitute one of the most powerful means through which thoughts and ideas are conveyed. Through phrases and rhymes, songs may depict different aspects of a given culture in particular moments in history. The purpose of the present work is to analyze the conceptual metaphors used in a group of songs by the rock band Green Day to unveil the content implied in the source and target domains of those metaphors. Following Critical Discourse Analysis main tenets (Fairclough, 2010) and considering both the political and social context in which these songs were written as well as the purpose of the writer, five songs from the album *American Idiot* (2004) were selected. Conceptual metaphors, understood as one conceptual domain used to understand another conceptual domain (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), were identified and grouped according to the entities (target domain) to which source domains referred to. We found that different target domain in the songs refer to the same target domains, exposing the situation of a social group in a specific period in time and power relations among entities through the view of a rock band.

KEYWORDS: critical discourse analysis; conceptual metaphor; source domain; target domain.

1. Introduction

The year 2001 is remembered as one of the saddest and most violent years in the history of the United States. On 11 September 2001, the financial and military headquarters of the United States were attacked and near 3,000 people were killed. Since the founding of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in Iran in 1909 (Bamberg, 2000, p.4), the oil thirst and the money it moves have motivated most of the wars following the period. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the actions taken, motivated by the world's fear of Hussein being in control of the Iraqi reserves, as well as the operations to disarm Iraq on behalf of America and coalition forces in 2003 (Bush, 2003) appear to be some of the examples of the power invested by the black money. From the period following the attacks on the United States in the year 2001, the feelings of North American population have been expressed in different ways. All these facts have been reflected through different forms of artistic expressions- such as painting, films, poetry and even music. This latter, apart from arousing feelings and emotions through its rhymes, is also a way of showing reality and makes people reflect on it through its lyrics. Thus, songs constitute one of the most accepted ways of conveying ideas, while at the same time they appear to entail one of the best ways to access and control public discourse. Since songs are considered poetical works, they are not often considered a source of linguistic analysis. However, given the popularity of the rock band Green Day and the influence they have exerted on people's way of thinking, we have decided to analyze five songs of the album *American Idiot* in this work. This research has mainly focused on the content underlying in the conceptual metaphors used in their songs and on the attempts to throw some light over the source and target domains of such metaphors. Green Day is a punk rock band that was founded by Billie Joe Armstrong and Mike Dirnt (Michael Ryan Pritchard) in the suburbs of California. Influenced by the drums, the jazz and the country in Armstrong's house, as well as marked by the background of the grey towers and containers of an oil refinery on the shores of San Francisco Bay, friends Armstrong and Dirnt with Sean Hughes and John Kiffmeyer started the punk band Sweet Children that became Green Day in 1989. The band became famous on the rock arena after the debut of *Dookie* in 1994. After the tracks of an album titled *Cigarettes and Valentines* were stolen, the band decided to begin a new album. On September of 2004, the band released its seventh album studio *American Idiot*, through Reprise Records. It is a politically charged album explaining the punk-rock public what it is like to be living during disturbing and confusing times, including the titles *American Idiot*, *Jesus of Suburbia*, *Holiday*, *Boulevard of Broken Dreams*, *Are We the Waiting*, *St. Jimmy*, *Give Me Novacaine*, *She's a Rebel*, *Extraordinary Girl*, *Letterbomb*, *Wake Me Up When September Ends*, *Homecoming*, and *Whatsername* (Egerdahl, 2010).

2. Method

This work has been framed under the main tenets of Critical Discourse Analysis with a view to analyzing the use of metaphors in the album *American Idiot* written by the band Green Day. This analysis intends to throw light on the relationship between structure and agency and between the meaning hidden behind the conceptual metaphors and the social events surrounding the attacks to the United States in 2001. Critical Discourse Analysis, as Fairclough (2005) asserts, can be used as an approach to describe how discourse is used to represent what happens in social life in a particular way. Taking into account Fairclough's definition of discourse, the present analysis will consider the social structures and the social events—as social practices which may constitute a form of social activity for more or less

endurable periods of time-; as well as the social agents that constitute social fields, institutions and organizations. It is well known that certain groups or institutions may have power over others, more specifically the control over certain resources. According to van Dijk (2009), access to or control over public discourse and communication constitutes a resource that is symbolically important because somebody may decide not only on the content but also on the structures of text and talk in a given context. “Controlling context involves control over one or more of these categories, e.g. determining the definition of the communicative situation, deciding on time and place of the communicative event, or on which participants may or must be present, and in which roles, or what knowledge or opinions they should (not) have, and which social actions may or must be accomplished by discourse” (van Dijk 2009: 356). The central notion to take into consideration, as van Dijk states, is that of power, being this notion connected to that of control. Control over the acts and minds of the people in a group means having power based on social resources –money, information, fame, or force among others. The power of dominant groups may be found in laws, general consensus, habits, or even songs through persuasion and manipulation that are not always obvious.

Describing abstract concepts such as power –among many others- may be facilitated by the use of more concrete concepts. Therefore, the use of metaphors as a device to allow others to comprehend some political decisions or certain processes in a given point in history will be used in the present work as a tool borrowed from cognitive linguistics to expose the power invested by those who choose a source domain to explain a target domain. The traditional concept of metaphor entails a property of words, an artistic or rhetoric device, the resemblance of two entities, conscious and deliberate use of words, and the acceptance that metaphors are a device that we can always avoid (Benkczes 2006:48). In Zoltán Kövecses’ words (2010), from the cognitive linguistic perspective, a metaphor is defined as one conceptual domain used to understand another conceptual domain. The conceptual metaphor is then defined –by the same author- as a conceptual domain which is used to explain another conceptual domain, being one the source domain and the other the target domain. The source domain is the conceptual domain from which metaphorical expressions are conveyed in order to help us understand another conceptual domain called the target domain.

3. Results

Written by the same members of the band for the album *American Idiot* (2004), five different songs were analyzed in search of conceptual metaphors. The songs were *American Idiot*, *Jesus of Suburbia*, *Holiday*, *Letterbomb* and *Wake Me Up When September Ends*, appearing in the same order as in the album. As became evident throughout the analysis, the target domains of the conceptual metaphors used by the band became the headings for the categories analyzed as the following chart shows.

Metaphors making reference to the media and its power:	Explanation:
<p>“...Don't want a nation under the new media And can you hear the sound of hysteria? The subliminal mind fuck America...” “One nation controlled by the media Information age of hysteria”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>American Idiot</i></p>	<p>The <i>new media</i> may refer to a global media that easily spread news all around the world, in this case the news on the war.</p> <p>References to the propaganda in the media about the American dream,</p>

<p>“...In a land of make believe That don't believe in me...” “...The motto was just a lie It says home is where your heart is But what a shame Cause everyone's heart Doesn't beat the same It's beating out of time...” “...At the end of another lost highway Signs misleading to nowhere City of the damned...” “...Born and raised by hypocrites...” “When you've been victimized Tales from another broken home” <i>Jesus Of Suburbia</i></p> <p>“...I beg to dream and differ from the hollow lies...” <i>Holiday</i></p> <p>“...Raised in the city under a halo of lights The product of war and fear that we've been victimized...” “...Where have all the riots gone As the city's motto gets pulverized?...” <i>Letterbomb</i></p> <p>“...ring out the bells again...” <i>Wake Me Up When September Ends</i></p>	<p>and about the purpose of going into war.</p> <p>The tales accounting from the story told in the media about the citizens of the United States being victims of terrorist attacks (related to the ideas transmitted by the US government)</p> <p>The hollow lies making reference to the stories told in the media</p> <p>The <i>bells</i> may be symbolizing the breaking news echoing all around the world. <i>Again</i> makes reference to a previous war (Gulf War).</p>
<p>Metaphors making reference to the government and its power:</p>	
<p>“...Welcome to a new kind of tension All across the alien nation Where everything isn't meant to be okay...” “...I'm not a part of a redneck agenda Now everybody do the propaganda And sing along to the age of paranoia” <i>American Idiot</i></p> <p>“...From Anaheim to the middle east...” <i>Jesus Of Suburbia</i></p> <p>“...The representative from California has the floor Zieg Heil to the president gasman Bombs away is your punishment Pulverize the Eiffel towers Who criticize your government Bang, bang goes the broken glass Kill all the fags that don't agree Trials by fire, setting fire</p>	<p>Referring to fear introduced by the government to convince people they needed to go to war to defend from terrorist attacks.</p> <p>The singer separates himself from the ideas the government is trying to convey.</p> <p>Anaheim is a city of Orange county, in California, where there are nuclear plants which were –according to the BBC- subject of terrorist threats after the attacks on 11 September. The Middle East referring to the region attacked by US soldiers. (BBC, 2002)</p> <p><i>Zieg heil</i> is German for "We Will Win".</p> <p>Gasman may be a reference for George W. Bush seeking for seeks oil</p>

<p>Is not a way that's meant for me Just cause, just cause, because we're outlaws, yeah..."</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Holiday</i></p> <p>"...It's not my burden..."</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Letterbomb</i></p>	<p>in the Middle East as a source of energy (gas). Zieg heil is also an allusion to Nazi Germany and may be comparing Germany to United States.</p> <p>By stating that <i>it is not</i> [his] <i>burden</i>, the singer may be trying to expose the indifference of the government to the reality of the victims of the war.</p>
<p>"... This is the dawning of the rest of our lives On Holiday..."</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Holiday</i></p>	<p>Six months after taking office, President Bush began a month-long vacation that was significantly longer than the average American's annual getaway. (McQuillan, 2001)</p>
<p>Metaphors making reference to the victims of the war: (soldiers)</p>	
<p>"...Lost children with dirty faces today No one really seems to care..."</p> <p>"...Hearts recycled but never saved From the cradle always to the grave We are the kids of war and peace..."</p> <p>"... We are the stories and disciples Of the Jesus of suburbia..."</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Jesus Of Suburbia</i></p> <p>"... The shame, the ones who died without a name..."</p> <p>"...There's a flag wrapped around a score of men A gag, a plastic bag on a monument..."</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Holiday</i></p> <p>"...Where have all the riots gone As the city's motto gets pulverized? What's in love is now in debt..."</p> <p>"...Standing still when it's do or die You better run for your fucking life..."</p> <p>"...It's not over 'till you're underground It's not over before it's too late..."</p> <p>"...Where will all the martyrs go when the virus cures itself? And where will we all go when it's too late?..."</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Letterbomb</i></p>	<p>Making reference to the young soldiers that went to war, and leading attention to the indifference of the people that were not affected by the war –or may be even benefited from it-.</p> <p>The stories of soldiers who sacrificed their lives for their country is compared to Jesus suffering and sacrifice for its people.</p> <p>The unrecognized soldiers, or the soldiers who died in vain, under false pretenses; or it may also make reference to the innocent people that died in the towns and cities attacked by the US army. As regards the flag, it represents the flags that draped coffins of soldiers whose bodies returned to the US for burial. The plastic bags are nameless people who died in vain.</p> <p>Citizens of the US, tired and in debt because all the money was used for guns and military equipment for the war.</p> <p><i>Standing still</i>, people who were doing nothing when young people were sent to the war without training. The soldiers had</p>

<p>“... The innocent can never last...” “...like my father's come to pass seven years has gone so fast...” “...as my memory rests but never forgets what I lost...” “...like my father's come to pass twenty years has gone so fast...” <i>Wake Me Up When September Ends</i></p>	<p>to run for their lives because they did not know how to fight. Virus referring to the alleged weapons of mass destruction, the virus sent to any citizen of the use in products of everyday use – pens, letters, etcetera-.(Moore, 2004) Soldiers die at war and civilians at war field also die. Parents at war also die; the children who stay at war are also victims as families are torn apart. – seven years and twenty years referring to different wars affecting two or more generations in the same family-</p>
<p>Metaphors making reference to the power invested by the possession of money</p>	
<p>“Television dreams of tomorrow We're not the ones who're meant to follow For that's enough to argue...” <i>American Idiot</i></p> <p>“...But it only confirmed that The center of the earth Is the end of the world...” <i>Jesus Of Suburbia</i></p> <p>“...Hear the drum pounding out of time Another protester has crossed the line To find the money's on the other side...” <i>Holiday</i></p>	<p>The band is not the one to be followed because they're against the establishment, against of what is represented by the power given by money. Referring to where the money is (the center), which is what leads to destruction, war, death. Making reference to the side that benefitted from the war on terrorism, the companies that actually made money from war armament and equipment, from people being scared and buying equipment to protect themselves from alleged terrorist attacks on their own homes.</p>
<p>Metaphors making reference to the war (images of the war)</p>	
<p>“...Hear the sound of the falling rain Coming down like an Armageddon flame...” “...And bleed, the company lost the war today...” <i>Holiday</i></p> <p>“... This city's burnin'...” <i>Letterbomb</i></p> <p>“...here comes the rain again falling from the stars...” <i>Wake Me Up When September Ends</i></p>	<p><i>The falling rain, gun shots.</i></p> <p>The city, it may be making reference to the cities attacked by the US military forces. The rain again, a new war: the first one, probably the Gulf war; and the second one, the war against terrorism after the 9/11 attacks on the US.</p>

	Falling from the US, the country whose flag has the stars.
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4. Discussion

Throughout the five songs analyzed the different source domains appear to refer to the same target domains: the media and its power, the government and its power, the victims of the war, the power invested by people who possess money and the war itself. From the perspective of the previous analysis, the album *American Idiot* seems to be exposing the socio-cultural distress to the North American population after the attacks on the United States in 2001, and therefore exercising the power they have as a popular rock band of showing their personal perspective on the issue. The analysis on the use of metaphors also exposes the social structures in the form of power invested by certain institutions –the government, the media, and groups with economical resources- over the US citizens in the role of victims of the war, according to the point of view presented by the rock band during the years following the 11 September attacks (2001).

5. Conclusion

An analysis of metaphors as the one presented in this paper may be the result of a subjective perspective and dependant both on the researcher and the context. However, it could be used as a basis for future analysis of other songs or poetical compositions of different periods of time or different bands immersed in the same context. Apart from that, given the attractive and popularity of the genre –especially among teenagers- it could probably be of particular interest in the EFL or ESL teaching context –for older children, adolescents or adults- .



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Appendix

Lyrics

American Idiot

Don't wanna be an American idiot
Don't want a nation under the new media
And can you hear the sound of hysteria?
The subliminal mind fuck America
Welcome to a new kind of tension
All across the alien nation
Where everything isn't meant to be okay
Television dreams of tomorrow
We're not the ones who're meant to follow
For that's enough to argue
Well maybe I'm the faggot America
I'm not a part of a redneck agenda

Now everybody do the propaganda
And sing along to the age of paranoia
Welcome to a new kind of tension
All across the alien nation
Where everything isn't meant to be okay
Television dreams of tomorrow
We're not the ones who're meant to follow
For that's enough to argue
Don't want to be an American idiot
One nation controlled by the media
Information age of hysteria
It's going out to idiot America

Jesus Of Suburbia

[Part 1]

I'm the son of rage and love
The Jesus of Suburbia
From the bible of none of the above
On a steady diet of
Soda pop and Ritalin
No one ever died for my sins in hell
As far as I can tell
At least the ones I got away with
And there's nothing wrong with me
This is how I'm supposed to be
In a land of make believe
That don't believe in me
Get my television fixed
Sitting on my crucifix
The living room or my private womb
While the Moms and Brads are away
To fall in love and fall in debt
To alcohol and cigarettes and Mary Jane
To keep me insane,
Doing someone else's cocaine
And there's nothing wrong with me
This is how I'm supposed to be
In a land of make believe
That don't believe in me
[Part 2: City Of The Damned]
At the center of the Earth
In the parking lot

Of the 7-11 where I was taught
The motto was just a lie
It says home is where your heart is
But what a shame
Cause everyone's heart
Doesn't beat the same
It's beating out of time
City of the dead
At the end of another lost highway
Signs misleading to nowhere
City of the damned
Lost children with dirty faces today
No one really seems to care
I read the graffiti
In the bathroom stall
Like the holy scriptures of the shopping
mall
And so it seemed to confess
It didn't say much
But it only confirmed that
The center of the earth
Is the end of the world
And I could really care less
City of the dead
At the end of another lost highway
Signs misleading to nowhere
City of the damned
Lost children with dirty faces today

No one really seems to care
[Part 3: I Don't Care]
I don't care if you don't...
[X4]
I don't care
Everyone is so full of shit
Born and raised by hypocrites
Hearts recycled but never saved
From the cradle always to the grave
We are the kids of war and peace
From Anaheim to the middle east
We are the stories and disciples
Of the Jesus of suburbia
Land of make believe
And that don't believe in me
Land of make believe
And I don't believe
And I don't care!
I don't care! *[x4]*
[Part 4: Dearly Beloved]
Dearly beloved are you listening?
I can't remember a word that you were
saying
Are we demented or am I disturbed?
The space that's in between insane and
insecure
Oh, therapy, can you please fill the void?
Am I retarded or am I just overjoyed

Holiday

Say, hey!
Hear the sound of the falling rain
Coming down like an Armageddon flame
The shame, the ones who died without a
name
Hear the dogs howling out of key
To a hymn called "Faith and Misery"
And bleed, the company lost the war today
I beg to dream and differ from the hollow
lies
This is the dawning of the rest of our lives
On Holiday
Hear the drum pounding out of time
Another protester has crossed the line
To find the money's on the other side
Can I get another Amen?
There's a flag wrapped around a score of

Nobody's perfect and I stand accused
For lack of a better word, and that's my
best excuse
[Part 5: Tales Of Another Broken Home]
To live and not to breathe
Is to die In tragedy
To run, to run away
To find what you believe
And I leave behind
This hurricane of fucking lies
I lost my faith to this
This town that don't exist
So I run
I run away
To the light of masochist
And I leave behind
This hurricane of fucking lies
And I walked this line
A million and one fucking times
But not this time
I don't feel any shame
I won't apologize
When there ain't nowhere you can go
Running away from pain
When you've been victimized
Tales from another broken home
You're leaving...
Ah you're leaving home...

men
A gag, a plastic bag on a monument

I beg to dream and differ from the hollow
lies
This is the dawning of the rest of our lives
On holiday
The representative from California has the
floor
Zieg Heil to the president gasman
Bombs away is your punishment
Pulverize the Eiffel towers
Who criticize your government
Bang, bang goes the broken glass
Kill all the fags that don't agree
Trials by fire, setting fire
Is not a way that's meant for me

Just cause, just cause, because we're
outlaws, yeah
I beg to dream and differ from the hollow
lies
This is the dawning of the rest of our lives

I beg to dream and differ from the hollow
lies
This is the dawning of the rest of our lives
This is our lives on holiday

Letterbomb

Nobody likes you...
Everyone left you...
They're all out without you...
Having fun...
Where have all the bastards gone?
The underbelly stacks up ten high
The dummy failed the crash test
Collecting unemployment checks
Like a flunkie along for the ride
Where have all the riots gone
As the city's motto gets pulverized?
What's in love is now in debt
On your birth certificate
So strike the fucking match to light this
fuse!
The town bishop is an extortionist
And he don't even know that you exist
Standing still when it's do or die
You better run for your fucking life
It's not over 'till you're underground
It's not over before it's too late
This city's burnin'

It's not my burden
It's not over before it's too late
There's nothing left to analyze
Where will all the martyrs go when the
virus cures itself?
And where will we all go when it's too
late?
And don't look back
You're not the Jesus of Suburbia
The St. Jimmy is a figment of
Your father's rage and your mother's love
Made me the idiot America
It's not over 'till you're underground
It's not over before it's too late
This city's burnin'
It's not my burden
It's not over before it's too late
She said I can't take this place
I'm leaving it behind
Well she said I can't take this town
I'm leaving you tonight

Wake Me Up When September Ends

Summer has come and passed
The innocent can never last
wake me up when September ends
like my father's come to pass
seven years has gone so fast
wake me up when September ends
here comes the rain again
falling from the stars
drenched in my pain again
becoming who we are
as my memory rests
but never forgets what I lost
wake me up when September ends
summer has come and passed
the innocent can never last

wake me up when September ends
ring out the bells again
like we did when spring began
wake me up when September ends
here comes the rain again
falling from the stars
drenched in my pain again
becoming who we are
as my memory rests
but never forgets what I lost
wake me up when September ends
Summer has come and passed
The innocent can never last
wake me up when September ends
like my father's come to pass

twenty years has gone so fast
wake me up when September ends
wake me up when September ends
wake me up when September ends